

MEMORIES COME TO US IN THE RAIN AND THE WIND



ORAL HISTORIES AND PHOTOGRAPHS OF NAVAJO
URANIUM MINERS & THEIR FAMILIES

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“So a lot of the Navajo ladies became widows”

Narrative by Timothy Benally

I am a former uranium miner. I was Director of the Navajo Uranium Workers Program (ONUW) for the Navajo tribe up to June 1996. This program was established in 1990 to identify the former Navajo uranium miners in anticipation of the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act: Public Law 101-426 (RECA). RECA was designed to pay compassionate compensation to uranium miners during the Cold War era of 1947-1971.



At the Rico mine in Colorado John Martinez (right) loads charge in the rock face while Willy Akeha, miner, waits to tamp it into place. Photograph by Ralph Leubben, 1953.



Miner Alfred Francis operating a mucking machine. Bill Shorty, a train operator is in the foreground. Taken at the Rico mine in Colorado. Photograph by Ralph Leubben, 1953.

The Navajo Nation was still in its childhood stages of economic development in the early 1940's, mainly recovering from the devastating stock reduction period of 1930. To meet the economic gap that was created by this stock reduction, Navajo men sought work away from the reservation on railroads in the western states. Families who had no livestock sought farm work in Pheonix and California.

Employment sources were the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), traders on the reservation and a few of the border town businesses. Employment was based on the amount of education the person had, especially with the BIA which had about 90% Anglos.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs, through the Treaty of 1868, had responsibility to care for Navajo economic, education and health services. The Navajos' needs became greater as the population increased. During the 1930's, BIA built elementary day schools throughout the Navajo reservation and a few high schools.

When World War II broke out many Navajo men aborted their education and went into the military. High schools were closed for lack

of students. The Cold War followed the end of WW II. The Navajo Nation was still dependent on BIA for its economic needs. The Tribe now had a council and hired some of its people. States and counties were getting involved in Navajo affairs.

The U.S. had gone into the nuclear age, and the Navajo were still struggling economically. The U.S. Government's demand for uranium started mining booms in the Four Corners area. On the Navajo reservation, uranium was discovered in Cove, Arizona and then in other parts of the reservation. Work became available right near home and the young men dug the uranium. This was a time when transportation was still by horse-drawn wagons, horse-back riding and walking to get to a place. In our community, with a population of about 3,000, only four families had motor vehicles.

When the mines started on the reservation, most families were very thankful that they had employment. This is what they express when they come to the office of the Navajo Uranium Workers. They said, "we were glad that our husband had a job and that he didn't have



Dumping tailings over the side, somewhere near Cove, Arizona in 1952. Photograph by Milton (Jack) Snow, courtesy of the Navajo Nation Museum.

to go away to other places to do railroad work. The job was right here and he could go from home to the mine and it was great. But what the people that operated these mines didn't tell us was, that danger was associated with uranium mining, and this is what is hurting us today. If they had told us that danger was there, we might have done something else to find employment. But they didn't tell us and we just enjoyed our people working."

The miners and the widows themselves found out about this danger on their own, from actually experiencing the sickness themselves. The reports they made were very sad. They said that they tried every kind of medicine; they tried western medicine and went to the hospitals, but the doctors didn't know what was wrong with their husbands. Until it got to the real bad stage of lung cancer, then they told them he was dying from what's called lung cancer. And most of these were at an advanced stage, there was no more that could be done for them. So a lot of the Navajo ladies became widows.

When that happened they acquired the responsibility that the miner had at home and this included a lot of the daily chores around the house, like chopping the wood, hauling wood, hauling water and feeding live stock, and so forth. And these are the hard chores that the widows ended up doing, themselves. The widows encountered a great hardship.

In 1960, the people, the widows, started coming together and they talked about their husband's deaths and how they had died. The widows gathering was done in the Red Rock chapter, and the meetings had a snowballing effect and more people came together, more widows and sometimes children. They formed a committee and the committee talked more and more about the death of the uranium miners. And then they hired an attorney to assist them and they got the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act passed. They started receiving their government compensation but that didn't serve justice to these Navajo families. Today they say that no amount of compensation of money is going to replace the loss of their husbands, or their fathers. This is a very sad situation that these people had experienced or are experiencing today.

A lot of them come in to file claims and when they do, we

Navajos working mines in the area around Cove, Arizona in 1952. Photograph by Milton Jack Snow, courtesy of the Navajo Nation Museum



have to explain the legislation to them and how they can receive compensation if their husband is still alive or if they survive him, *if* they qualify. It's another sad situation that the government had promised compensation and then tied up the legislation with a lot of red tape, which makes it hard to meet the criteria that are in the legislation or the regulations. And this is what we're working with today, trying to get people, miners and widows, qualified for compensation.

There are a lot of hurdles that they have to pass and each of those hurdles has other sub groups that they have to meet. This makes it very difficult for a miner or the widows to get the compensation they rightly deserve. Right now, we're working on amending the legislation, RECA legislation. The President of the United States, William Clinton, formed a committee in 1994 to investigate human radiation experiments. When this group came into New Mexico, we made

testimonies that we were getting compensation and that there was a lot of red tape. So they did some investigation and they came up with some proof that the government was biased as far as compensating the uranium miners as compared to the other two groups that were being compensated, downwinders, or people who lived downwind from nuclear testing, and on-site workers. They recommended that the U.S. Congress liberalize the RECA legislation and in 2000 legislation was passed to amend RECA and fix many of the problems that we saw. Thank you.

The Interviews

The interviews which follow are, with the exceptions of those originally done in English, presented in both Navajo and English. The original interviews were considerably longer than the excerpts presented here. We have selected passages out of the complete interviews that are representative of what was said throughout. We have also chosen statements so that the book as a whole covers the broad range of points raised during the 25 individual interviews.

Because different people translated and transcribed different interviews the translation/transcription styles and approaches are not necessarily consistent with one another. For similar reasons, the comments that have been preserved in Navajo are not always identical to those presented in the English translations.

As far as I am aware, there were no safety warnings told to us. But when I was working with Kerr McGee they did tell us something. Just before we began our work every morning, they told us to be sure before you enter in there where you are going to work to feel the ceiling for any loose rocks. Do not stay under too long. I knew what they were telling us. So I obeyed their rules

.... there were two of us working one day, Kelleywood Yazzie and I were working together. We had finished digging out the stuff with our shovel and we were told to dig more out. We were getting ready to go back in as we moved on each side of the entrance. In the place where we were a few moments ago, there was a rock slide, with a big boom sound. We were both very scared, looking at each other with wide eyes. We were very lucky that the rocks did not fall on us while we were still digging/mucking stuff around. We were both shaking all over.

Did they tell you about the smoke? Did you wear nose guards?

None, they did not tell us to wear such things. When the explosion of dynamite did not take place, whatever was in it that did not burn would be so smelly. It got us all very sick for sometime. That stuff was so smelly. The smoke was bad too. We were treated rough. They told us to hurry up and enter the mine. "If you do not dig out all the stuff, you will be standing there digging again tomorrow," we were told. Kerr McGee treated us bad almost as though we were slaves.

I think it did something to my feet. I was wearing my rubber boots so it did affect my feet. I almost became crippled because of my leg/feet. (His wife: He suffers from his legs). My feet get very cold (freezing like) and they get fire like. So it bothers me in two ways. My feet cannot stand the cold.

How about your lungs?

It does bother my breathing especially when I go up a hill. It is not strong. It is like that, and my blood pressure is high. They (clinic staff) told me that I have high blood pressure. My thyroid is not working right, I was told. Yes, my eyes are bothering me too. When I look at something like paper or other things, they get blurry or I cannot see a long way anymore.

Shí baa ákonisingo éí doo deiyíists'áá' da ashúkë. Ákohgo nléí kojí Kerr McGee-jí éí ákónidí' doo' níid. Biníiyé áhah ánáníhi' díil'íííí nít'ée' k' adéé dadiilnfishgo áko. Nléí yah ahokáahgo nléí wóhadhéé' ígíí kódaal' í nléí tshéígíí kódaol' í' íshjááshj' t' ááyó bit' át' áli hodíits' a' go don't get under too much níhi' dí' níí nít'ée'.

Shí éí baa ákonisin shináál ákohodoo' níid. Áko shí éí ákósh't' íí' leh nít'ée'. Ákohgo ákonidi azhá ákót'ée ndi nidiniilt' é ákóne' neit' aashgo nít'ée' nléí t'ée' go nideilnishgo nahdóó Kelleywood Yazzie bil naashnishgo. Ts' ídá ánífídí altsó ch' íniíyeedgo, altsó ch' ínooyeedgo nléíííí anáá' doogol níhi' dí' níígo áko. Nít'ée' ánífídí altsó ch' íniíyeedgo ts' ídí alts' áájí níniit' áazhgo kwé' é neit' aash yéégi tsé léí' kóníitsohgo nááldááz ts' íyog yists' áá' t' óó báhádzídigí át' éégo háágoóshj' níhináá' t' óó kóníitsohgo ahiníí' í. Doo lá dó' na' íiyeedééjéé' doo ákódzaa da lá díí' ní. Háágoóshj' hatah hodítíid, shí dó' .

Question: Lidígíí daats' í áldó' bee níí hóone', nííchj'íí daats' í' báqah na' ázníl nít'ée'?

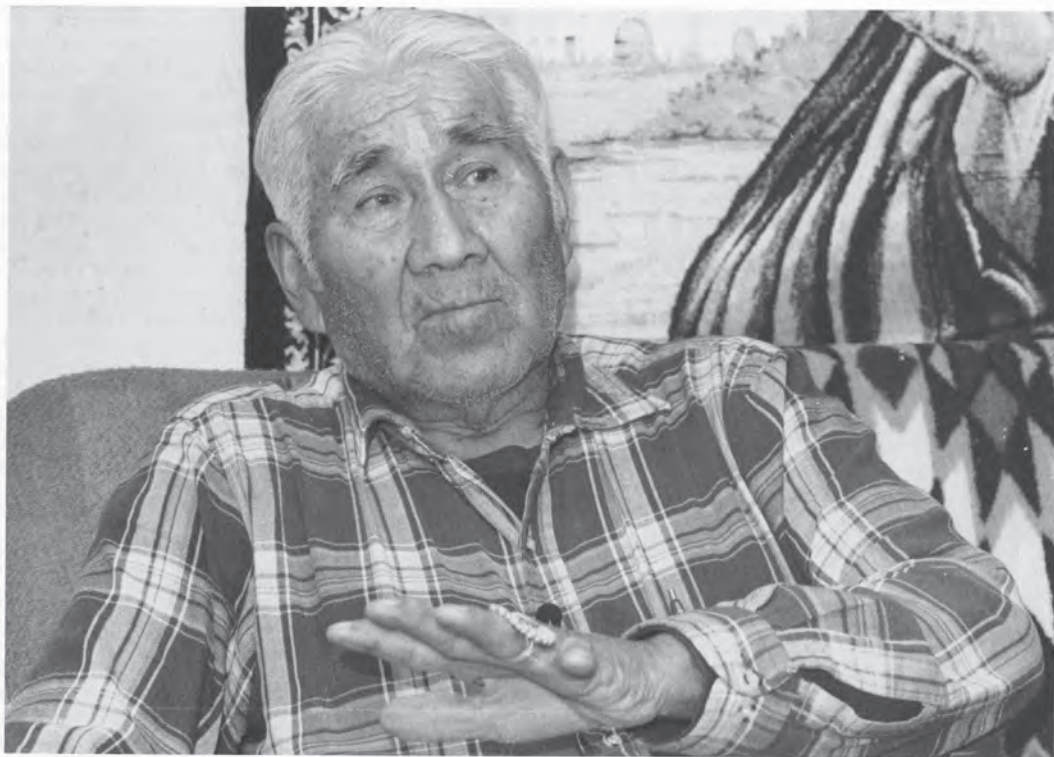
Ádin, éí t' áadoo ákóníhi' doo' níid da. Jó t' óó t' áá íyisíí nléíí ak' ah t' áadoo díilidqóhígo nléíí t' óó háádahajeehgo doo hazhó' ó díilidqóhí nléíígóó ak' ah naazkáá' leh ne' t' óó báhádzídigí át' éégo daníílxon. Áko lahda t' áá íyisíí síck ánidanihíí' ííh haashj' í nízhaj' í. Éí ákwe' é t' éí ákót' é. Áko éí t' áá íyisíí níílxon leh t' áá aaníí ákwe' é éí t' éí ákót' ée ní'. Áko lídígíí dó' t' áá na' níle' díí nahalín. Kóne' tsxííjgo yah oojeeh.

T' áadoo altsó ch' í íniíyeedgóó yiskáágo t' áá ákqó náásínidzj' doo danihi' dí' níí nít'ée'. T' áá na' níle' díí nahalíngo áájí nida' anish nít'ée' éí Kerr McGee, naalte' nahalíngo.

Jó íinisingo éí díí shíkee' ígíí sha' shin nisin. Jó díí kéjeehí bíí' sé' eezgo áko díí hááhgoóshj' díí daats' í shínidíích' aal nít'ée' nisin. Jó k' asdájá' shíneestléé' díí shíjádígíí. (his wife: eii k' ad bíjád yik' ee tí' hoonííh k' ad). Díí k' ad ákót' é, díí shíkee' ígíí t' óó báhádzídigó náííh. Náííh dóó t' óó báhádzídigó t' áá áájí' náádíítlí' leh. Áko naakl nahalíngo yee sheín't' í. Hak' azígíí yíeh' í' doo ha' ólníí da áko k' ad.

Question: Níjéyííltzólii shá'?

Jó éí éí shiyolígíí t' ááyó nléíí níinah da haasháahgo shiyolígíí



Interview by Phil Harrison
Translation by Martha Austin-Garrison
Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Logan Pete
Mitten Rock, New Mexico

.... several of my brothers have died from the effects of uranium [one was married to Mary Frank, pages 46-47]. So their lives ended in front of my eyes, and several others who are related to me have had the same thing happen to them My sympathy goes to them and I am affected from it (I have silicosis) and have become weak. I lack energy to work even at my own home. If they told us about it at the time of uranium mining, perhaps we would not have worked. This is what I think, and our families are worried and concerned about how I worked, and its effect on me And later, when it really starts to affect me, I think I'll also be one of the victims.

There are many things we could talk about regarding uranium mining on our land. Some of our animals have been affected; calves have been born deformed and sheep had lung problems, these we learned about ourselves. Uranium is really dangerous, we learned, and that is how it is. Why did they not tell us this? Perhaps we were just experimental subjects to them, I wonder. "How will it affect them, and what will it do to them in the end," perhaps this was what they thought. Were these the reasons they did not tell us? It generates many thoughts. They were studying us. Doctors learn about surgery using various animals and others. Perhaps in that way we were used for experiments. There are many thoughts.

Are we disposable to the government? These are some of our thoughts this uranium brings out to the front For sure water has been contaminated from it. Tributaries wash uranium ore from different mines and concentrate it in the main washes and thus contaminate land and livestock From the government's point of view they tell miners that they will only be compensated if they [have] lung cancer. I think this is wrong. I watched two of my brothers die from cancer. Sores appeared all over their bodies. It does not just affect the lungs!

[Added in English by Mr. Frank in January, 1997] They just piled low grade ore and put it around our cabin So we didn't know if that was dangerous. They didn't tell us. Low grade is just waste, but there is some uranium in it. Here is the mine and our cabin is about 100 feet from the mine. We mined the ore and piled it up and the children played on it. They didn't tell us that our kids should not play on it. This is what I really worry about for our kids.

Díjǫjǫdi baa nitséskeesgo éí t'áa aaníí t'áa ídǫǫ' shil bééhózingo dóó hazhó'ó bee nihil dahojoolne'go éí doo nishishnish da doo nít'ée' nisin. Éí naanish t'áa haada yit'éhígíí da binishishnish doo nít'ée'. Áko kót'éego baa nitséskees dóó bil hadashjée' danilíí, shitsilíí da danilíí nít'ée', yits'áǫdóó ádin daazlíí, leetsoh. Áko t'áa íyisíí shináát nidahonees'áad. Dóó díkwíí shíí shik'éí shináát ákódzaa. Áko t'áa íyisíí t'óó bahajooba'íǫí ádaadzaa. Éí t'áa íyisíí baa shíni'go baa nitséskees. Áádóó t'áa shí aldó' shaa dahoo'a' bits'áǫdóó. Biniinaa doo shidziil da sélǫíí dóó kǫǫ níhíghan, t'áa shí shíghan yéǫdóó nidi naanish t'áa bi'oh neesh'á sélǫíí. Áko t'áa ídǫǫ' hazhó'ó nihil nidajósta'go t'áa át'é, áko shíí éí doo nidashiilnish da nít'ée'. Kót'éego éí baa nitséskees dóó ha'álchíníí aldó' éí yaa dabíni', ákót'éego nishishnishígíí, shaa dahool'a'íǫíí, éí baǫh dabíni'. Yéego bida'diil'a'la'. Éí aldó' ákót'éego baa ákonisin. Áádóó índá háadi léí', náás hodeeshzhízh yéego shaa nást'íǫdgo sha', éí shí aldó' shahojooobá'í atah ádeeshníil nisin. Ákǫǫ da éí ách'í'í nínásh'áahgo baa nitséskees dóó dídíí biníyé bik'énihich'í' nááda'íisya'go nidi éí t'áa íyisíí t'íǫhíǫígo. Doo síh da, t'óó ahayóí ákódaanf. Áko t'ah t'áa yíwóhígo t'áa ídǫǫ' dooleet nít'ée' lá daanf'la', shí aldó' t'áa ákwínisin. T'óó ahayóíǫó éí baa hojólne'íǫíí át'é nidi ákǫǫ kéyah bikáá' nida'azhnishgóó kǫǫ nihilíí'íí da yaǫh dah dahool'a', la'. Bits'áǫdóó bééǫshíí yáázh da la' doo ákót'éégoó nidahaazheh, la'. Dóó díbé da la' bíjéí da altsó his da daazlíí' lágo ákót'éego béédahoozin. Áko yéego éí t'áa íyisíí báhádzid lá, jó kót'é. Ha'át'éego lá éí t'áadoo nihil hóone' da lá? T'áa daats'í íyisíí t'óó ha'át'íí da, t'óó bee na'alcaah ha'níníǫíí át'éego daats'í t'óó níhee na'askáá' nisin. Haa'al'íí dóó haadabidoolíí íǫígo níhaa nitsáhákeesígíí daats'í biniinaa t'áadoo nihil hóone' da. Lá'íǫóó éí nits'íilkees. Áádóó t'óó daats'í níhee óhoo'aahgo daats'í áhóót'íǫíí. T'áadoo le'é da nidaalgizhgo bee óhoo'aah ha'níí leh, azeé' ál'íní yídahool'aah, t'áadoo le'é, t'óó daats'í ákót'é nahalingo níhee óhoo'aahígíí át'é. Éí doodago daats'í lá'íǫóó nitsáhákees, t'óó daats'í doo nihidí'nídzíngóó daats'í biniinaa t'óó ákót'éego nihich'í'í naaz't'í'í da náá'ídlíí leh. Kǫǫ da éí lá'íǫóó nits'íilkees. Áádóó t'áa aaníí níha'álchíníí náasdi dóó nihidíne'é' haada nízáadi nahalzhiizhgo daats'í hózhǫ yéego bidadidoolnah, t'áa éí



Interview by Phil Harrison
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Lydia Fasthorse-Begay
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Floyd Frank
Oakspring, Arizona

Virginia: In 1960, I think, he first started working in the mines. Rico, the first?

Leroy: Remember the copper mining. There I worked for several years. Yes, that was the first. Several years over there.

Virginia: Our children were small. He used to go on railroad jobs, but could not make it. But someone told him that a job was available. He just went. About a month later, he came back for us; we all followed, taking the children. That happened, and we spent about four years there, but because of hardships back here we just came back here. Left again to Slick Rock, Colorado. Union Carbide was operating the mines, that one. In 1960 - Union Carbide was leasing the mines, they put him here and there. Another one, Delaney Mining - they put him here and there because he knew how to drill tunnels, etc. So, there's the main tunnel, and there are other tunnels going off from this. So these companies put him on different jobs. We spent several years there.

There was no work on the reservation, so he went where work was available. They did not tell him about the effect it would have on his health. That's how we were forced into uranium mining. One area of main concerns and worries was about our children. We were exposed. They played with and on the waste. Also myself, he comes home with mud, and I washed his clothes. I breathed in steam from washing. Later I used the same water. As much as the miner, I think I'm exposed to uranium. Sometimes my respiration bothers me, it does not work correctly.

Leroy: Yes, there were air blowers, but see - the hole was very deep - #2 or #3, that's where I worked. I shot tunnels, when I found the ore, then I was sent to another area. Others took over and mined the ore. I really worked at it. Later three of us worked. That's where I fell off. I was making an upward tunnel, 150 yards with — I don't know if he's still living — Jack Lee from the Colorado state line north of Shiprock. My hips were injured.

Virginia: 1960 yééddáá' sha'shin. Níléi Ricodish áltsé?

Leroy: Sháá' béésh haagééd ha'nínígíí. Éí áájííngíí, Díkwú shjǫ shinááhái áájíí.

Virginia: Áłchínf ádaalts' fíisigo níléi railroadgóó t' éf nídídááh nít' éé' gu doo bñghahgóó nít' éé' t' ah nít' éé' háflá áá éí t' ah nít' éé' naanish níláahdi hólǫ hahnígǫ. T' óó ákǫǫ akéé' dashdiiyáhi t' éiyá. Éí áádéǫ' díkwúshjǫ' la' daats' í éf hwée nideezid nít' éé' áádéǫ' nihíká nídzdídzá. Áádǫó t' áá ániiltso akǫǫ níikái áłchínf t' áá bil. Díj' gi át' é. iyááh áádéǫ' t' áá kodi anfdahazt' i' fǫíí biniinaa áádéǫ' nfnáániikái. Éí áadi t' óó hónízahjǫ' nǫjishnish. Éí áádóó dah náádiikái éf kojigo níléi Slick Rock hoolyééǫó Colorado.

Jó naanish éf ádaadin nít' éé' t' áá iyisíí bidin dahóyée' go t' óó t' áá bizááká. Díí leetso bááhádziid kót' é. Kó' oolíí t' áadoo ndi ho' doo' niitl t' óó ákóne' anihída' diisdzil. Ts' idá t' ááláhigo t' éf ts' idá t' áá awolibeé bąąh shini', díí áłchínf ts' idá t' áá át' é béésíikái. Hada' alkááh nít' éé' góó ákǫǫ nidaanéego. Aadóó shí dó' éé' háfshjǫ' át' éego háájíidááh. Éi leetso ha' nít' léi' lizhingo éi yisigizo díí háágóshjǫ. kodéǫ' shjǫ shiyah hiitsxaazgo tó sído bee há ná' iisgí. Áko nda níléi da' ligisgóó alnáádeiyééh. Tóó bááhádziidigi át' é. Leezh nahalingo kót' éego bil daazgango ninájiidááh. Áko éf t' áá nǫjishnish bíghahdi ákót' éego leetso nǫjizhch' id nahalingo shjǫ shąąh hólǫǫgo át' é. Lah da shiyi' góyaa doo ákónáadahoot' ée da teh díí dískosgo da.

Leroy: Aoo' naaznil ąą'. Áko ndi níléi a' áan yíijahgo, níléi doo deeghání góyaa ahoodzá. Áádóó níléi number 2, 3 daashin éf haa' ishjǫ' naashnishgo. Eii leetso éf biniiyé na' fídon shí' dí' níigo biniiyé na' ashdon. T' áá bik' é' éshdǫǫh t' áá ákódí. Aadóó t' óó náána lahjǫ' anáashi' díll' eeh níléigi, Neeznádiin dóó bí' aan ashdladiin adées' ees ákódeí ha' níigo tsin shiyaa hááteełgo biniinaa bíl adah ch' fítlizh níléi góyaa. Jack Lee dabjǫjínígǫ éf bíl naashnishgo, éf bíl naashnishgo éf bidah ch' fítlizh. Éf shik' ai' bąąh dah hoo' a' nít' éé'. Díí shik' ai' sít's' íl nít' éé'.

Leroy & Virginia Deal

Two Grey Hills, New Mexico

Interview by Timothy Benally

Translation by Timothy Benally

Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison

Photograph by Doug Brugge



How it is, I'm not sure, but what I think is that all the residents of Cove Community have been affected in one or more ways, this is what I think. From there [pointing], waste and ore that were hauled out, some of these washed down with water. Also here [pointing], they hauled some in front of where the trading post is. It used to be piled over across; there was a pile. Then they hauled it over the roads, uranium fell off the trucks, so this makes uranium everywhere. Some homes, they used rocks for foundations which are radioactive; perhaps in the community there are also some like that. Some houses are also built with these same rocks.

Water too, this wash, irrigation ditch — the same water. Dig wells, you drank the same water, there was no water system then. We carried water home in buckets from there. So, they just dumped the waste into the washes, they flow down, that way everything was exposed, animals as well. This is what I think. Even down to the babies are like that.

Effects are not noticed until later on, some years later. From observation, this is what I have determined. When it starts on you, there is no turning it, nothing to back it off with. It just progresses to the end. Several people here in Cove, this happened to them, from that came my thinking. If they had informed the people, perhaps something would have been done then, perhaps our leaders could have done something about it, this I think about sometimes.

Why did I work there, is what I often ask myself, when I'm lying with chest pain. Perhaps, if I had not worked, I would be well. There are some men who worked for short periods or had not worked at all and they're well and living their healthy lives. Some are old, still they are in good health. From this I form my opinion. From these observations. If the people knew, if brothers, cousins, etc. had not worked in mines, they'd be with us today, this is what I think. If they try to open more mining they should say no! We've found out it is a very dangerous material, no cure.

Jó ka'd éí kóné' nástl'ah góné' kééhwiit'ínígíí t'áá ánfiltso béésiikai nahalin. Ákót'éego baa nitséskees. Aadéé' waste da ore da ha'át'íí shíí ch'ídahageeh éí aadéé' tó da bil ch'ídaazl'. Áádóó díí kóó nahgóó trading post nít'ée' bich'éhéđáá' góó dó' la' nehegeeh nít'ée' kóó. Áádóó-níléí hónanjíí dó' nehegeeh nít'ée'. Áádóó kodéé' atíndéé' dó' ch'éhégeehgo adah dah hinidééh nít'ée'.

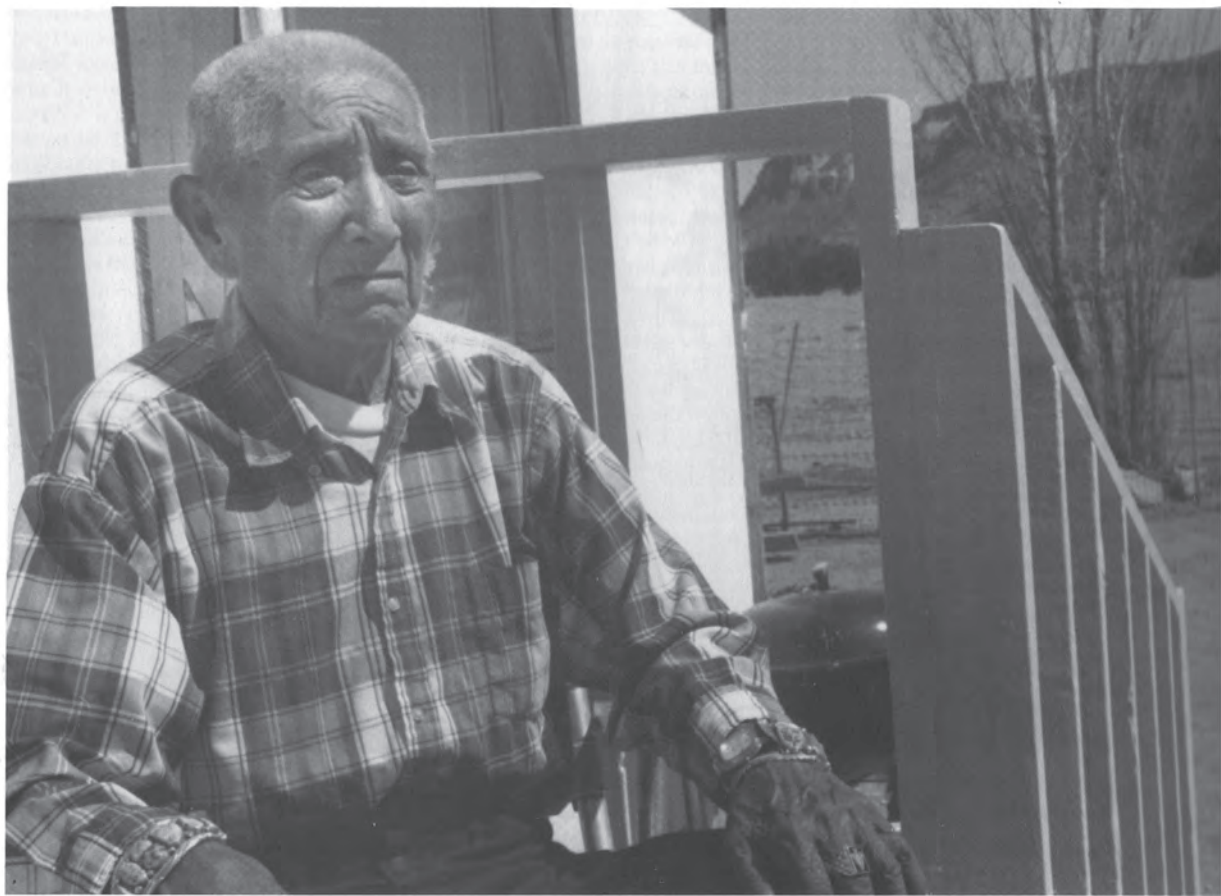
Tó dó' díí bikoooh tó haasgeedígíí níléí t'áá éí tó háádaha'nít nít'ée' t'áá éí dajidláá' nít'ée'. Íídáá' díí doo díné tó bitaadaaz'áa da íídáá'. Ásaa bee nínádajíikaahgo áádéé'. Áko níléí dzil di éí áádéé' t'óó bikoooh góyaa yadahiigeeh, waste yéé. T'óó bikoooh góyaa yadahiigeehgo aadéé' bil danííjigo. Ákót'éego éí ts'ídá shíí altsó t'áá ha'át'íí shíí naaldloosh ndí shíí ts'ídá altsó yénáskaigo át'é. Nisingo dííshjįđi áko. Díí níná'níyázhjį' shíí ákódaat'éego ákódaat'é shíí nahalin. Áadi haah dahool'aahgo éí éí doo nít'áá' kóná'néehgí át'éé lá. Jó kóó díkwíí shíí díné nástl'ah góné' ákódaadzaa. Éí binahjį' ákót'éego baa nitséskeesgo áko, ákó'é'él'íínií át'éé lá nisin. Dííshjįđi índa. t'áá íídáá' ákwá'ál'í dajinígigo shíí aldó' t'áá ha'át'éego da daats'í ályaa nít'ée'. Nihinanit'a'í da, t'áá daats'í ha'át'éego shíí binida'azhnish doo nít'ée' nisin.

Shejéits'iin gónaa. Áko doo atah nishishnishgóó daats'í doo át'éé da nít'ée' nisin leh. Jó díí kóó díné t'áádoo la' doo ayóo nízaadgóó nidaashnish yéé. dóó t'áádoo nidaashnish yéé doo baah tééhgóó nidaakai k'ad akóó. Azhá t'áá íyisíí náás daazlį'í ndí, éí bee ákót'éego bee nesh'įjigo dóó bee naaskaahgo ákót'éé leh aoo'. Jó naaghéí díí kóó danihínaaf da nít'ée' dóó danizhé'é da dóó danihik'éí da, t'áádoo naanish ch'ídeet'áá'góó t'áádoo nidaashnishgóó da shá' t'áá át'é nidaakai la' nít'ée' ákót'éego da baa nitséskees leh áko. Kóó shíí dahólóó nít'ée' áko. Áko díí háadi da shíí t'áá binááda'deezhnishgo shíí t'áá ha'át'éego da shíí dooda dajinígigo da shíí t'áá daats'í ádooníí. Jó bááhádzidígíí át'éé lá t'áá íyisíí. T'áádoo bídeétnhígíí át'éé lá.



Interview by Phil Harrison
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Donald Yellowhorse
Cove, Arizona



BoydeTsosie

Sweetwater, Arizona

Interview by Timothy Benally

Translation by Timothy Benally

Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison

Photograph by Doug Brugge

At the mine at Setah, a white man just came and advised. The guy asked the supervisor what would happen if they stayed with mining and they said he replied, "Nothing will happen." Well, three of my co-workers have died now. I have a lung condition. I was told this. I went over there for it. I wonder what can cure it. I wonder if there is somewhere I could find a cure.

Well, it's their job, whatever the reason they are after it (uranium). So, the work goes on. As for me, I cannot work in the mine anymore.

Jó t'áá áadi éí Bilagáana ts'fdá t'áá nideiyídfkídkgo éí ashiiké. Haahodoolfíł díí kodóó dóó nńléf náásgóó, jó t'óó ahayóigo dah oojot nádleeh. Éf bíł adıldongo kót'éego nńtsxaazgo, haahodoolfíł náásgóó. Doo ádoonńfıda jını ní daanf áko. Jó áko nńt'ée' bíł nıdashnısh yęę táá dabfıgháá'.

Jó ei ha'át'éego lá doo át'éhé da ei leetso doo át'éhé da t'áá shıfı atah binaanish doo nısingo áko t'óó kóshlaah.

Ákohgo éi k'ad sheinıt'ı nınızın ya'?

Jó éi sheinıt'ı nısın. Jó kodi shıjéıgfıf éi leetso nıjéf bıtah hółqó lá shı'doo'niid, kojigo binııyé nıseyá nńléıgóó.

Jó lá azlıfı'go t'és yá'át'ééh aldó'. Áádęę' bık'é nıda'jıılé aldó'. Haashıfı néeląa'jı' shıfı bee nıdajılınısh leetsooıgfı. Doo t'ááláhági bee na'anısh da sha'shın. Da' áko t'áá nıl bohóńeedząą doo t'áá hanáada'agéedgo?

Jó binıdajılınısh áájı. Ha'át'ıfshıfı binııyé ádajoolııl. Áko shıfı t'áá bıńl'dıı nıda'anısh. Jó shıfı éf doo bıghah da sélıfıf áájı yęę.



Thomas Woolboy

Dennehotso, Arizona

Interview by Timothy Benally

Translation by Timothy Benally

Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison

Photograph by Doug Brugge

This is the way it is, perhaps they can continue to work on it [mine it], maybe it will be okay to mine some again. Well, they have learned about its effects, maybe they'll be afraid of it.

Jó t'áá aanfı ákót'ée, t'áá aanfı béé' deetąągo nńléf doo bıts'ąądóó ąah dahwiidoo'aal áko shıfı t'áá aanfı t'áá binınáá'ánıshgo yá'át'ééh. Jó bíł béédahoozın shıfı t'oolfılıı jó nıha'átchıfı. Yéédaaldzıd daats'ı hóla.

.... It was good! Work was available close to home. We thought we were blessed. Railroad jobs were available only far off like Denver But for mining, one could just walk to it in the canyon But we were not told, "later on this will affect you in this way.".... At the end of the shift, we just got out of the mines and went straight home. We were not told to wash or anything like that. It was even like that in Colorado - we were not told the ore might harm us. When some elements are dangerous to health, signs are usually posted announcing the hazards There were none of these at that time. Just work that made money. "Got a good job and may work for awhile," is what we thought....

Down in the mine where I worked, ore extended out in yellow rock formations. The ore looked like a huge snake. When you blasted a whole wall, you could see their heads, bodies and tails of big snakes. They may have been alive in the beginning of time. They were very yellow. We were told that this ore was high grade uranium. We were completely unafraid to handle it, because we did not know the danger from its radiation. We only worked for money to get food for our families....

I want to make a statement regarding attorneys. They do not need attorneys. 10% was just taken. This money is supposed to be a "compassionate" gift Families were in need and the attorneys really just took the miners' money. I was really opposed to this from the beginning. The legislation should have stated, "for miners who are diseased from lung cancer the \$100,000 compensation will be automatic."

Over here [at the mills] they've piled [the waste] in one place, so even if it spreads, it can be contained easily, and hidden or reclaimed. It's different in the remote areas where uranium was mined. Waste was dumped off the sides of the mountains; it can't be reclaimed and covered I revisited the places I worked. Some of the mines adjacent to where I worked have been closed, but not the mine I worked in. ... Mines that went straight down are all reclaimed, perhaps because they are easier to close than others, but the waste is still there in the open.

Many people [miners] died, and here I'm being interviewed; it gets emotional when you think about them, some were young, not yet turning forty and they died....

Ádin, ts' ídá t' áá óolyéego ádin. T' áá kodi yéedáá' shizhé' é atah nijilnish yéedáá' ndi "dúgí át' é" ha' ní doo jidíniid da. T' óó nízhoóní áhoot' é kóó naanish ághánigóó. Dooládó' níhi da ílj nahalin! áko doo níléf haadishíj' níléf béésh bitingóó kó' na' albaqásii bitingóó doo ákóó nídadíkaháa jó éf nízaadi t' éf dahóló. Denver dóó áájí dahonít' í' d'í da t' éiyá. Ákóó diné adahageehgo deiyilnish. Áko ndi díf tsé haayéédígg' éf kóó t' áá oodáál bíghah. Naaghát' bikooh góyaa goooládósh níhi da ílj áko. Dfídí kó' doolífí náasdi dóó kót' éego éf ba' á' t' é' ha' nínigíí éf éf ádin. Dúgí át' éego bich' í' ádaa' áháyá doo ha' ní da. Díf t' óó t' áá Dine nidaalnish níf' éé'. T' óó yah anáhájeeh doo ndi tá' ádadigis. Tá' ádadohgis ndi doo ha' ní da. Níhí ndi t' áá ákót' é, nidashiilnish yéedáá' t' áá níléidi Coloradoó biyi' di. Doo éf ha' át' éego da atínihidoolífí doo ha' ní da ádin. Jó ha' át' éegi da bááhádizidígígo da éf bee dah na' aztáa leh. Díf ndi éf ndi ádingo éf áádéé' hoolzhízh áko t' óó naanish. Béeso bee ál' íngíí jó éf át' éego áko naanish ya' át' éhígíí bik' í' níyá dóó t' áá haashíj' nízahgóó nídiishnish lá jó kót' ée leh. ákofidáá' éf ákódzaa.

... Shí nishishnish yéé góyaa éf ákót' é ts' ídá t' áá bízhání litsohgo daní' áago bí' nidashiilnish. Dúgí át' éego ha' át' í' shíj' í' iishtso naaztí nahalingo bik' ída' ayígééd níf' éé'. Bitsee' dóó níléf bitsiits' íinjí' t' áá íshjání Wall kwe' é báashíldóophgo, hááhgóóshjí da daní' íj' leh. Iyaan ha' át' í' dá shá' níf' éé' ha' nígo, T' iishtso níf' éé' gí' át' é, alk' ídáá' hádájú' shíj' hodeeyáádájú' daats' í. Áko t' óó bááhádizidígí át' éego daaltso áko, t' áá bíjání, high grade wolyé ha' nígo hááhgóóshjí. Ádin doo yíyá íljí da hááhgóóshjí t' óó díne deiyilnish, t' óó bik' é bich' í' nida' íilyéé dóó aadéé' níhíghangóó níhik' éf bitahgóó t' áadoo le' é ch' iyáán nídahiyeeh. Baa neikaigo nidashiilnish. ...

Áko ndi lahgo t' éf éf bee haadesdzih kwe' é nashidíkidígi: Dfídí agha' díit' aahígíí t' áágeégo da bíghah níf' éé'. 10% ha' nínigíí éf díne bits' áá' náhaasdláá nahalin t' áá íyisíí t' áadoo át' éégoó. Áko díf béeso noodahígíí éf bee aahojooba' ígg' át' é. Át' é ha' nígo áko nahdéé' agha' díit' aahíí t' áá íyisíí áájí' dah díjje' go áko éf t' áadoo níf' díf íleetso diné yits' áádóó ádaadiné t' óó áájí' jó bí da t' óó shíj' bááhádizidigo héél ádeiyíilaa. Éidíggí éf t' áaláhídi t' óó t' áá át' é doo níf' éé'. T' áadoo bits' áá' náhádláhi. 10% daha' nígo kóó háshíj' t' óó doo hazhó' óo diné bee binidajishnish da. T' óó biyaa hada' dziziká. jó



Interview by Timothy Benally
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison
Photograph by Doug Brugge

George Tutt
Oak Spring, Arizona

Well, this side of Sweetwater, behind [Carriso Mountain] they were working on uranium. Late Anglo — called Little John — operated the mine. So, there were no jack hammers for drilling, just steel rods. I held the steel rod and turned [spun] it. From here we used sledge hammers and hit it. This made holes in the rock. So, they said it was work on uranium. Navajos did not have what are called [papers used for employment], Social Security, perhaps just a few of us had it. They said only those who had Social Security numbers may work. That's how I began my job. I worked for a period of time, almost a year. So, we just used the steel rods but we produced enough for a dump truck or two to haul off the uranium.

Those men that I worked with there, they all vanished [died].... There are just two of us, we're still old men. Others I worked with are gone! "It [uranium] is dangerous," was never said to us at that time. "It is unsafe" was never said.

.... Near the uranium mines, uranium was scattered around the area. So the mothers and fathers while they were still young died off. Therefore it seems that they are experiencing hardship — that's how they live, now. Before that, the father and mother, maternal grandparents, and paternal grandparents had resources such as sheep, horses and cattle. Now there is none. Education is stressed, and all the kids go to school. Now, the work, now old ladies keep trying but they are getting older. This makes us think there will be no more sheep. We sympathize with how it will look then. It is almost at the point where we will leave this part of our culture, sheep raising and horses. So, we wonder, if he/she had lived, how old would they be? This is true, that is how it is.

Jó nlléí Tóhikan kojí dzil bine'déé' go ákwe'é leetso binida'anish lá. Bilagáana nít'ée' John yázhí wolyéego bá ha'agééd. Áko ei tsé bee baa ada'anilí ndi ádin. T'óó béesh t'éiyá, kót'éego yínishtá'go náhoolt'eelgo kodéé' bee atsidítóo bee nániilne'go ada'iinil. Áko leetso binida'anish ha'nígo. Éf akóó bik'eh na'anish wolyehígíí social security éf diné bee ádaadingo, t'áá dīkwiniil'éhé shjǫ daats'í nihee dahólóǫ lá áko. T'ah nít'ée' éf bee dahólónígíí t'éiyá, éf t'éf naanish bá hóló ha'nígo áko ákót'éego déshnish. Éf áádóó haashjǫ nízahgóó nishishnish. T'áá k'asdǫǫ' naahai. Áko t'óó béesh náhoolt'eelgo ada'ii'nilgo t'áá áko ndi t'áá chidíiso yfkánálwo', naaki da ná'ahin chéhego leetso anágééh.

Éf hastóí bil nidashishnish yéé éf t'áá át' é atso háájí shjǫ daazjǫ'. T'áá nidiniil'éhé daats'í t'éf t'ahdii hastóí midjǫ. Áádóó bil nidashishnish yéé éf ádin. Bááhádizid éf doo ha'níi da tídǫǫ'. Bits'ap hashit' doo ha'níi da.

Leetso hadaagééd nít'ée' t'ah t'áá akóó leetso yéé nidadeeztaád t'óó áko amá dóó azhé'é danilínee t'ah t'áá dahayoigo ádaadin. Áko t'áá iyisií bich'j' nidahwii'ná nahalin daa lahgóó kót'éego bil nahaz'á. Íidǫǫ' níwohdǫǫ' éf azhé'é dóó amá dóó achií da análí da t'áá yee ák'idooldzilii dahóló dibé da dahóló tǫj' da béégashii da. Áko díí k'ad ádin nahalin. T'áá t'óó ólta' t'éf ha'nígo álchíní t'óó ólta'góó ahikááh. Áko kodi naanish yéé k'ad éf sánii yagh hadaastih. T'áá áko ndi yéé jooba' ádajit'jǫ dóó yee'. T'ahádóó shjǫ dibé ádaadin doo t'óó íj. Haada shǫ' yit'ée doo t'óó íj. K'adéé bii' ha'ádcéh dibé. íjǫ' da. Áko ákwe'é t'éf k'ad da shǫ' t'ah naagháago dashǫ' hait'égo hastiin doo nít'ée'. Haada shǫ' yit'éego asdzáán doo nít'ée' daha'níi leh.



Interview by Timothy Benally
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Thomas Benally
Sweetwater, Arizona

Just my left ear. I think from the drill — it's like the jackhammer when I turn it on. Today, cold really bothers my ears, so my ears are examined by doctors and they say there is nothing wrong with them. Also, my heart, perhaps, my lungs, perhaps the spit inside my lungs [phlegm]. Perhaps there down in my lungs my saliva thickens to mucous and collects in my lungs. So perhaps it looks normal.... In the morning I wake up around 6:00 am and I can hear the wheezing sound, when lots [of spit] accumulated. If I drink a lot of coffee, I start to vomit and this starts my coughing. I cough out the stuff.

I tell the doctors and they tell me there is nothing wrong with my lungs, there is nothing wrong. Also, when I catch a cold, it harms me. I get examined and they tell me there is nothing wrong with me and nothing wrong with my ears. That's how I am. I wonder why I'm this way. It's finally getting to where I can't believe in myself. I've gotten to the point where I don't believe what [the doctors] say. If I was well, I would not be complaining. Who will find the cure, or the cause of my illness? I am now retired and I'm free, so somehow I will go find out.

The federal government works against the people. This I know, because I've worked for the federal government For everything they impose on you, you suffer. This is how it is now with [Radiation Exposure Compensation Act] compensation. Miners are told there is nothing wrong with them even though it is true. They are ill.

Yes, I am in favor [of plugging up the abandoned mines]. Today, our health is in jeopardy. My children are like that. They are experiencing difficulties health wise and are suffering. So, something called tumors are affecting them. Where are these diseases coming from? Uranium is the only culprit. One [child of mine] had to have a piece of his skull removed and they used a radiation laser to burn it [the tumor]. That's how it works. Now they also found some tumors in their inner organs, both for my boys and daughters. Where is this coming from? There never used to be stories like this. Now, those of us who worked with uranium see our children beginning to be affected by it. In Shiprock, there was a big [stock] pile; [children] ran over there and rode their bikes on that waste, and now they are affected. And I bought a house next to the tailing pile. From there they went on their bikes to the tailings behind NECA to play. That's how it was.

Shijaa' t' éiyá, Nlélé ada' ashnilgo, jó jack hammer nahalingo ts'ídá t' óó báhádzigo diits'a'. t'óoyó booshk' iizhjígo kónisht' é nahalingo shj'í díf kojí t' óó yinahjí' yilwołgo kojígo kót' éego yínishtá' go, kojígo shijaa' áko díshj'ídi éiyá shijaa' doo chohoo' i'ígóó hak' az bijoolá. Áko díf shijaa' shá nídeinel' j'ih. Ts'ídá doo át' éhé da dashilní. Náána shj'íé d'ó'. shj'íé yilzólii daats' f aldó' nléf shichát' ish háadi shj'í biyi' shj'í nléidi, áadi éiyá éf t' óó shj'í áadi shj'í nídanilk' j'ih daats' f haashj'í ná' j'ih. Áko doo át' éhé da nahalin shj'í. Áko shí éiyá abínígo nléf hahgo da ch' énásdzi' nléf hastáđigo da. Áko shiyi' d'éé' diits'a' leh díf. Nléidi z'óóz yits'a' leh. Éf áadi l'á yileehgo shj'í úts'a' leh. Áko dihwéeh nléf l'á yishdl' j'ihgo, sh'áá' dihwéeh l'á jidlj'ihgo t' óoyó hoolkóoh da leh. Ákót' éego nléf t' óo' di t' óoyó shiikóoh leh. Éf shj'í loose áyil' j'ihgo aadóo adi' nískos. Shichát' ish da habhidiskis, habnihidiskos. Áadóo índa doo át' ée da leh. Ts'ídá azeé' iil' íni bíl nídashashn'ih. Doo át' éhé da dashilni, doo át' éhé da. Náána nléf t' óoyó shi'ih yik' asgo doo deeghánig' bíl nahalzhiishgo, ákót' éego shj'íéig' shich' j'í' nahwiilná. Áko ts'ídá náshidi' nél' j'ih. Doo áni' t' éhé da shi' di' ní. Nijaa' aldó' doo át' éhé da. Shi' di' ní, ákónisht' éego át' é áko. Haalá yit' éego át' ée lá nisin. T'óoyó doo ádooshdláđ da, hónáásdóó. Áko shá' díf t' óó bíl ákónisht' é díf. Hónáásdóó ch' ah naats' ođdi doo hózh'ó deesk' aazg'óó ch' ah naats' ođdi sh'áq' shilts' ođdog naasháa leh díf. T'óoyó doo shi' doodl'á da nisingo da. Haalá yit' éego háf lá íyisí'f ye' aniih lá nisingo da. Háadi lá éf át' ée lá? La' doo át' éhégoógo aldó' nisingo da. Doo ániht' éégóósh jó áko éf doo át' éhé da dooleel ní' ée' aldó' nisin. Héshj'í yik' fidoolkah sha' shin nisin. Díf azeé' iil' íni jó k' ad díf retired físhlaa dóó índa I am free. Ákohgo ts'ídá ha' át' éego da biniiyé éf tádiéeshaal nisin. Jó Wááshindoon joolyéi éf éf ts'ídá t' áá altsoni' bee ach' j'í' nahojíitnáago éf díné binijiln'ish, bíla' ashdlá' i'í. Díf Wááshindoon bá da' íni'ish g'óne' tádeeshn'ishgo éf shil bééhózin. Ts'ídá t' áá altsoni', t' áá altsoni' bee ach' j'í' nahwiilná t' éiyá aghá' ánihtsoh. Díf k' ad ákónááná' é. Doo áni' t' éhé da bi' di' ní, díné shj'í t' óó ahayó' ákóbi' di' ní, t' áá aaní' shj'í át' ée ndi.

Aoo' shí éf shil' bohóneedzá. Jó doo shil' yá' át' éeh da, jó dishní. Jó díshj'ídi doo chohoo' i'ígóó nihich' j'í' anáhóót' i' yileéig' díf shj'í sha' álchíni, t' óoyó ákódzaa. Ts'ídá bich' j'í' nídashwi' ná. Ákohgo ts'ídá



Interview by Timothy Benally
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison
Photograph by Doug Brugge

George Lapahe
Two Grey Hills, New Mexico

We worked upstairs and downstairs in a uranium mill. It [uranium ore] looked like corn pollen when it was refined [into yellowcake]. It was packed in barrels and then shipped out.

We were not warned about the harmful effects and had no safety training, just working. Acids were used to grind down the ore and they did not tell us the acid was deadly.

My back was injured. I was told to quit so I just left. I believe I worked over three years. I did not receive any compensation for my back injury. They told me my back had been injured before.

Well, if it's [mining] going to be repeated, if they know of an effective medicine that can cure, then they can mine again, but if no cure, then, no. It reduced much of the population; we learned from this experience, so it's better to just leave it alone, this is what I think also.

You see it is not good for my children, who came back from school to play in the piles. Whatever they brought home from the piles they used as toys. Corn pollen and uranium are the same color and they ate some uranium. This is true, they put them on their window sills [see below].

It is dangerous. Do not work with it. Today, I teach this to young people.

You are my children. You [referring to Timothy Benally] are working on this because you've experienced how it has reduced our young men. Their lives were shortened, the lives they would have enjoyed. This should never have taken place so haphazardly and without regard for our lives. Now I hope that they have become aware. So they should not do this to us again, I think.

Corn pollen is used by the Navajos in house blessing and other ceremonies. In the Blessingway ceremony, pollen is usually applied to the head, to the tongue and scattered before one in prayer [eds.]

Ao' t'áá hóne' bil haz'á. Downstairs áldó' bil haz'á. Ááldóó éf yíts'á yíiyéesgo ááldóó t'áá áájj' náłtsáahgo háálj. Táádífín nahalingo dibahgo éf tóshjeeh ayóf ádaníłtsohgo bíi' héél ádaalne'go ááldóó ahíyeeh.

Ádín héí, díf atí' doolíł kót'éeego adoodzih éf doo ha'níi da t'áá íyísí t'óó da'ínshí t'éiyá. Jó ha'át' íshjí ta' acid bil daak'áago báádahadzid doo daha'níi da. Táá' daats'í shinááhaigo t'óó bits'á níya T'áadoo da. Shíshgáán éf t'áá bąh dahnáhoot'aah. T'áá kóđijí' nínít'í' shí'doo' níidgo t'áá áko t'óó áahosít'íjđ. T'óó haníh shjí t'áá áájł ák'ínida'ayítyéego nideíłnsh ní'ée' ndí t'óó ákóđzaah.

Jó t'áá ákónáána' néehgo éf bídeéłní dooleelí háadida ąh danááhoot'a'go bídeéłní dooleelí hol béédahózingo jó ákohgo éf bał nínáada'jį'eeshgo éf bohóneéđzá. Ádingo t'áá ákohoot'éeego éf doo bíghah da. Jó díne' t'óó ahayóf yíidínil. Áko éf binahjí' éf béehoozł. Áko t'óó níchxó'jįgo t'éí yá'át'éeł nishin áldó'.

Haashjí yit'é jó álchíní éf doo áájł' éf doo bá hínaa da. Hooghandi nínáđajįjáhígí jó éf éf daané' é ayósiigo akóđ k'ad táđídín ha'níigoógi, ts'ídá t'áá ákót' é k'ad yildeelgo da éf yaa naaskat. Éí éf t'áadoo bééhózińigo éf ákóđaadzaa. Tsésq'góó dah naaznil.

Jó eídí bááhádzid lá. Jó dishnígo t'éí t'áá ha'át'éeđi k'ad ndí t'áá ákót'éeego na'nishtin. Ha'át'éeđida na'nishtingo t'áá kót'éeego beebich'į' yášhú' leh. Jó díf k'ad éf t'áá íyísí bohóneéđzągo éf níhinaanish ádeiyínósin sha'álchíní danoł. Níłahđi ąh hool'a'. Díne' haashjí néeláą' yidínilígí binahjí' éf bał ákonoozjí'. Haashjí nízahgól díne' ádeent' dooldjįł yéene' t'áadoo é'el'ínígí át'éeego bał na'asdee'. T'áá na'nle' díi doo níhąh hąghasingóó jó k'ad éf bał ákóđazhniizjí'go éf t'áadoo áđanihíjįł'ínigo éf yá'át'éeł, jó nishin.



Interview by Timothy Benally
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Taylor Dixon
Two Grey Hills, New Mexico

My late husband was called James Yazzie. He worked in uranium mines which affected his health and he died February 8, 1980. My older brother, my late uncle and my late father all worked in those mines. All are deceased. Dee Joe was my father.

Yes, that is how I think about it. We were considered to be not worthy people and we were harmed. In every way, uranium ruined the community. Fogging up the place, perhaps that's the way it is, and we're just living in it...It is true, some of us have been compensated, yes, but it was nothing! It [the money] did not last long. We have a lot of children. If they were counted individually it would have been good. This [compensation] was small it seemed. We just all shared it with our children, because we cherish our children. Yes that would have been a little better, but the lawyers took a portion of this from us.

We were mistreated very badly by the mine operators. Yes, it is true, work was provided and with it, we've met our needs, but the pay was very low, that too is an objection. So, I think they need to pay us more. We were under compensated. We are unemployable, us widows. Then too, our children are still in need, for that reason, some have not gotten a good education, just up to high school, then they went straight to work and today, they are just making ends meet. They really need to assist us is what I think. Put heating systems in our home for winter use.

Question: Who should do this?

The federal government and those companies who operated on our lands. They're gone, where are they? They just abandoned the mines without any cleaning up. Over here, miners suffered from what they left behind before they died. To this day, this is still like that.

[Added in English by Mrs. Yazzie in January, 1997] I've got a retarded son from that [uranium]. He gets seizures and takes pills for that. He is 33 years old and still in a rehabilitation center. He's just there and not learning. I'm still going back and forth to check on him. And on the holidays I bring him home. His name is Norman Yazzie. I'm having a hard time with him. And this compensation is not enough He should be compensated separately. All of our kids should be compensated.

Jó éf éf shihusband ní' éé', James Yazzie wolyéé ní' éé'. Éf mínu góne' naashnishgo éf éf baqah dahool' a'go éf yits' áádóó ádin, 1980 yéédáá'. Haa' i yizil yéédáá'? February 8, 1980. Áádóósh doo háf daásh éf t' áadoo, t' áa kodóó, t' áash nich' ooni t' éiyá? Éf t' éiyá aoo', áádóó shinaaf da t' éiyá aldó' dóó shiuncle da da ní' éé'. Éf aldó' t' áa éf yits' áádóó áadaadin. Shizhé' é aldó'. Éf éf haolyéé ní' éé'? Dee Joe wolyéé ní' éé'.

Aoo', ákót' éego baa nitséskees. T' áa fiyisí t' óo doo aniidííggóó-nahalingo atníhi' diilyaa. Áádóó t' áa altsoj' hoolchxø' ya'? T' áa altsoj' hoolchxø', aoo'. Díf shíí t' óo shíí t' áa át' é shíí nihil dah oojol shíjgo át' é, díf. Áko bii' neikai.

Jó éf t' áa aaní' la' nihich' i' nináda' iisya' nidi, aoo'. Ádin t' áadoo dááxih da , niha' álchíní' éf t' óo adahayóí. Áko éf t' áála' i nítínígo éf ákót' éego díf nihich' i' ninádahaahya' igíí ákóndanéit' c' go t' áála' i ní' ínggo da bich' i' ninádahaasya' go shíí t' áa yá' át' éeh doo ní' éé'. Díf éf t' íjhdígo nahalingo t' óo alts' áda' díit' á. T' óo-niha' álchíní' éf altso bitaadasii' níi', nihil badahojoobá' ígo biníinaa. Éf t' áála' i oodálíí t' áa át' é bich' i' nináda' iidoolyéé ní' éé' ya'? Aoo', ákót' éego éf t' áa yá' át' éeh doo ní' éé'. T' óo yíwehída lawyers la' nihits' áá' yideidiyiisnil, t' óo. Éf t' óo ahayóí bich' i' nidahaasya' níínizin ya'? Aoo'.

Jó éf t' áa fiyisí doodahígi ánihi' diilyaago át' éé' lá. T' áa la' auni' nida' azhnish dóó bee nihik' inida' asdzií nidi doo ílígóó-éf diné bich' i' nináda' alyééh ní' éé'. Áadi aldó' át' é. Áko t' áa la' nihich' i' ninádahizhdoodleel éf nisin. Doo bíghahgóó éf nihich' i' nináda' iisya'. Doo nideílnish da díf, sáanii niháqah ádahasjíí dóó niha' álchíní' aldó' tahdíí bich' i' anídahazt' i'. Biníinaa t' áadoo hazhó' ó da' ílta' la'. T' áa high schooljii' éf t' áa dá' ólta' ní' éé' éf t' óo naanishjii'. Éf dííííggóó éf t' óo aghadaaz' á t' éiyá bá nidajílnish. T' áa fiyisí nihká' anída' alwo' go éf nisin. Bee hoozdoo' da nihá nidaasnilgo, nihighan góne', haigo biníiyé.



Interview by Phil Harrison
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Lydia Fasthorse-Begay
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Julia Yazzie
Cove, Arizona



Dan N. Benally

Red Valley, Arizona

Interview by Phil Harrison

Translation by Timothy Benally

Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison

Photograph by Doug Brugge

Well, the mines are still open, I wonder if radiation is going all over the communities among the residents. Waste was dumped outside the mines, the rain and snow thaws wash the ore into the washes and the people blame this for contaminating their animals from the watering places. It is true that waste was dumped off the hill sides and the water carried it into the main washes. Meat from these animals is consumed, and contamination continues to affect humans. Forty-three of the people I worked with have died now. Some time ago, I counted this. There are just a few of us still around.

Jó níléí da'a'áángóó ya'? Jó éí éí doo dánída'deeshdléech da éí daats'í bits'áádóó kóǫ́ Díné bitahgóó ts'ídá t'áá át'é daats'í nishigizh. Jó áádóó éí waste ch'ídahageehgóó ya'? Tó ch'íníllíí éí díbé yíł da'adłá sha'shin daanígo éí dó' yik'ídaha'ááh níléí tanída'nilka'íggí, jó éí t'áá aaníí éí níléí táyí' góyaa yah da'iigeeh aadóó níléí góyaa tó bíł daníł éí leetso bitoo' yęę, éí dó' éí Díné yik'ídaha'ááh. Áko t'áá náána éí diné t'óó deiyáá dóó t'áá éí bits'áádóó, jó bíł nishishnishíggí t'óó ahayóí ádin, djzdiin dóó bí'aan táá' daashin daneeznáá lá. Hááá' lá éí kwe'é yíłta'. Áko t'áá díkwíhí niilt'éego t'áá kóǫ́ nideikai.

Paul Nakaidenae

Red Valley, Arizona

Interview by Phil Harrison

Translation by Timothy Benally

Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison

Photograph by Doug Brugge

All should be compensated, I think. We really suffered, so why is it that miners file claims and get no compensation? They have children who are all in need. Looking at people, that's how it is, some of my co-workers are like that. I wonder why they are not compensated. I did not work with just a few, there were many, all the way from Aneth and around. They ask for compensation, they go over there, sometimes go to meetings in Shiprock, at that place. They ask why they are not getting compensation. They are told it's because of cigarette smoking. So they say they smoked only one cigarette [many Navajos smoke only rarely — eds].

Shí t'áá át'é bich'í' nináda' diyooleel nisingo baa nitséskees. lo' t'áá iyisí' bik'ee ti' dahwisi'nií', haalá yit'éego diné ch'ééh ádaaní' lá nisin. Áádóó' índa ba' álchíní' ndí shí'í' áldó' baa dahojooobá'í' t'áá ahtso. T'óó' níléí'góó' diné nesh'í'jigo t'óó' ákót'ée loh' t'óó'. Bih' nidashishnish yéé' la' ákódaat'éego nidaakai áko. Hoolá yit'éego doo bich'í' nináda'íilée da nisin. Doo álch'í'jídí' diné bih' nidashishnish da, t'óó' ahayó'í' diné bih' nidashishnish. Anethdégé' dóó' níléí' t'áá át'é ahéé'hoool' áago. Áko ch'ééh' da' dóyced shináál' níláhdí' nidaakahgo, níléí' álah alee'go da áadi' nidaakah. Ha' át'í' da' Toohdi' níléí' ha' át'í' da' góne' níléí' álah néidlee'ch' nít'ée'. Nít'ée' ákódaani' la' t'áádoo' shich'í' niná'ílyée' da daan'ígo ná' át'ohígí' bih'niina dabidi' ní'go áko. T'áá aaní' t'áá'á'í' da' nínádaasht'oh' nít'ée' daani.



Anna Aloysious

Cove, Arizona

Interview by Phil Harrison

Translation by Timothy Benally

Transcription by

Photograph by Doug Brugge

Yes, I think so, it seems like part of you is gone [amputated limbs]. We are mothers. We have no one to help us with the chores we do, even though we have sons. They have their own families to care for now. It's like that for me sometimes in the evenings. I bring in fire wood when they come home late from school. Everything, I do it myself, I haul wood from the mountains, I do that myself.

Well, now that I think about it, they have ruined our land. There is spring water and they put holes in our mountains and left them unsafe. To this day low radiation is spreading its disease among us. They had piled up uranium ore beside the road which they never took care of completely when they left. They really did nothing in that way. They thought of us Navajos as nothing. That's how I think about it and it really hurts my heart and mind.

Aoo' nisin aoo'. Hats' fisisgii lahdoo' adin nahalingo k'ad dugi at'eeego k'oo' ama' daniidli. Nihika' adoolwoli' ee' adin. Azha' niha' alchfn' ashiike' daboloo' ndi ee' t'aa' bi' family yaa' adahalya'ago like for me k'ad akot'ee'. E'e' aahgo chizh da yah ahishjaa' leh. T'aa' shi' late' go ninadahakahgo da' olta' gii' aadoo' t'aa' altsoji', ts' idaa' t'aa' altsoji' ts' idaa' shi' t'ee' binaashnish. Ashiike' ndi nilee' winter alceligo' chizh da ch'eh'eeh'igii' t'aa' shi' t'oo' sha' nideiyiich' iizhgo' doo' t'aa' adli' sha' heel' adeile' go' t'aa' shi' ch'eh'eshyeeh. T'aa' shi' binaashnish.

baa nitseskeesgo' eiyaa' t'aa' aanf' nihikéyah bikaa' goo' kot' eeego' nihits' aa' dahojilchxop' nisin. Doo' to' da hadaazli' doo' nlee' a' aan' da' t'aa' doo' ndi hash' eedajiidlaa' da' ako' diijidi' t'ahdii' t'aa' laháadi' at' eeego' eiyaa' bits' aadoo' aah' dahaz' anigii' nihitahgoo' naanfshoogish' nisingo' haa' nitseskees' leh. Aadoo' inda' akop' da' t'aa' atin' b'ahgo' yaa' daa' aago' adajilaah. T'aa' doo' hash' ee' dajiidlaa' da'. Adin. T'aa' oolyeego' adin. T'aa' doo' niidli' da' nahalingo' nihaa' nitsahakees' diné' Navajo' niidli'niil. Jo' akot' eeego' ee' baa' nitseskees' leh. Shijee' yineesgai



It was not like in the coal mine where there are layers that extend out Uranium is round and bulky, and layers of it are extending out, as though it has roots. Or it does not extend out. Then sometimes it is in one big chunk to be mined out. Some is blue and other parts are black and gray. This is the way it is. At night, when one is working in the mine, you shine a mine lamp on the ore, then turn it off, you can still see it glow, just like you would see a wrist watch glow in the dark [radium, found in uranium ore, was once used to paint watch dials — eds.].

Some are smelly and they smell. The smell of the stuff that was a very powdery smoke-like substance used to bother me. It was very bad. When this was in the air and you entered the mine, it gave you a strong headache. The blasting happened only in late afternoon, when everyone was ready to go home. Then from the top of the mine, some was blown to the entrance and was usually lying around there. The smoke and dust usually moved to the back of the mine and the blower was usually turned on, so that it blew out the smoke. By morning, the workers entered the mine again. When the blower stopped [malfunctioned], then the smoke stayed in the mine. One could tell when the smoke stayed in the mine, that it was not blown out. It was very noticeable. One could easily smell the smoke and you would get a headache from it, or a nose bleed. That is what happened. The holes in the mine were long and deep.

Once, in one of the tunnels where some men were working, the air back there got too thin, and we were told that the men all fell down from lack of air. I was not in the mine. That side of the mine was closed suddenly. They closed the mine temporarily. The workers who worked in that tunnel were questioned. They were all sent outside; I think they were ok. The surveyors entered that mine; for almost two days they worked on it. They knew the problems. From the top down into the mine, they made a trail. A six inch bore-pipe was put in place. On the pipe a blower was installed. The air was sent from the top down into the mine through the pipe. The blower blew the smoke out and the mine was back in business.

The Navajos who have talked about these mining operations,

Jó a'áan éiyá éf doo níléf doo leejin nahalingo nit'i' da. Jó leejin éiyá t'áálá'í nit'i', éf t'áálá'í nit'i'. Dii éiyá kót'éego nímazgo naaznil lá. Áádóó áłts'íísigo bits'ánáádadeezt'i', éf kofí bitl'óól nahalingo łahda kónánán'té leh. Éf doodago ádin leh lá, ádin t'áálá'í haageed(gíff t'óó kót'éego si'ąa leh lá níléf. Lahgóó dadoot'izh dóó áádóó daalzhin. Daalbaa da. Ákót'éé leh lá. Áko níléf t't'éé'go níléf jó, mine lamp'ígí bizht'inłdłfingo hodinaahgo áko áádoo jiniłtsisigo áko t'áa dıłtli' nahullin leh, níléf. Haalá wolyéé leh, sháą' ná'oolkılı da kót'éego dabıkáá' leh, arrowda, aoo', ákót'éé leh níléf. Ákót'éé leh lá. Lahgóó dahalchin. T'áa dahalchin. Dahalchin ákondi, ha'át'fi da éf t'áa íiyisíí yéego shijooláá nít'ée', eidií, haalá wolyé, powder smoke yígíí. Doo chohoo'íj da nít'ée', t'áa íiyisíí, jó t'áa dah oojolgo ákone' yah ajigháahgo, doo chohoo'íjgóó-hatsiits'iin yidilnih lá. Áko níléf hiilch'jįhgo t'éiyá nı'diıldooh, nida'iniıshgo. Áko áádóó éiyá níléf wók'ąáđéé', la' t'áa ch'é'étiingóó naaznil. Níléf blower, start aná'łjłł, éf níléf wónıidi nini'ą, níléf wónıidi nini'ąago áádéé', áádéé' nıt'ée' lidígíí t'áa át'é push out anáyil'įh. Áko by morning, áko ákone' dınd aná'nil. Lahda niilłtł'go áko lidígíí t'áa ákone' é leh. Ákondi t'áa bééhózinı yee', doo hózhó doo éiyá, doo alłso ch'íısoolgóó, jó áko ákót'éé leh. T'áa bééhózinı yee'. Kót'éego t'áa íshjání halchin dóó hatsiits'iin da yiniłłgah. Éf doodago ádó' hané'édıł da yiılłal. Ákót'įh. Áko níléf, áko a'áan éf nızaadgóó dahazłį'go áko lahgo nıt'ée' dıne nidaalnishđéé' łahgo ahoodzą, níléf áadi éf nıch'i shıj'ıhąh ásdjıd. T'ah nıt'ée' dıne naa'ahinıdeéh ha'nıgo hóone'. Shı éf ııđ'ąđ' doo ákone' naasháągóó t'ah nıt'ée'. Áko áąjį ahoodzánée éf éi nı' kólyaa. Áłtsé t'ah ha'nıgo. Áádóó t'áa nahgóó dıne shıj' nideıdóékıd, ákone' nidaalnishígíí. Nıt'ée' shıj' t'áa daats'ıđgo, ákondi t'áa át'é t'óó'góó kólyaağı át'é. Naaskáa'go ında ákwe' é ında surveyor ee'nil. K'asdąą' daats'ı'naakıjį azłjį'. Jó doo bééhózin da níléf. Áko ında bééhózin níléf wók'ąáđı bééhoozin, ts'ıdá ákone'. Áko hók'ąáđéé' nıłł' yaago, yaago trail ályaa níléf ahoodzánéejı'. Áko áádéé' níléf ahoodzánéejı' áádéé' pipe eetsih, dikwıf shıj', six inch bore ályaa. Áádéé' pipe eetsigo áádóó bıkáá' dóó blower dah yist'ą. Áádóó ında ákóyaa nıch'ıfgıı bıdoochxid. Áko ında hanáalwod.

Jó ákódaat'éhıgóó dıf k'ad éf dıne nıgháıdée' nıdahalinı yóé éf



Interview by Phil Harrison
Translation by Martha Austin-Garrison
Transcription by Lydia Fasthorse-Begay
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Tom James
Cove, Arizona

The [compensation] was tied up with red tape. Unless your lungs are affected it says. Uranium does not just affect lungs, it can affect a person; sores on the skin, sore moving around, itching - ear, eye, these it affects! So while we were working, we breathed it in, and when we go home from the mine, we talked to our children and our wives with uranium. This is how it went on during those years, since we did not know about it. So, from the white man's point of view, if that person is affected with a dangerous element don't go near him, they say. They ask you to put on a respirator to see the sick. They never told us about it.

Today, it seems like we poisoned others ourselves. There are many kinds of tools used, some produce smoke [toxin], batteries and diesel. The miners breathed these into their lungs. Now, they blame us for smoking. I think about the dangers. If a cable breaks, it can do tremendous injury, even gouge your eyes. So as miners, we risked our lives for the U.S. Government. Uranium won the wars across the oceans. Atomic Bombs. Space. We really participated in many areas of the nuclear age. I respect these men and women, for their part of this development. I think of them having served as did the soldiers who served on the front lines in war. Now they are old and some have died from this.

They [the US Department of Justice], the white man, should not pressure the miners; they should just hand the miners the money. The Anglo society does not call for 25 cents or even a dollar. One million, two millions, and then a billion, and a trillion. We are asking for just a few thousand. We suffered, yet we get just a piddly amount for all our efforts. I think the \$100,000 is not worth our life. The Department of Justice is using the legislation, but to me it is still wrong; not right! So just compensate the miners. There is money available, I think!

T'áadoo ádajinínígo yá'át'éch sha'shin, bilagáana dajilíníí. Jó nihí éí ayóó-áhoot'éégóó góyaa éí nidasiikai dóó t'áá hó hodine'é bilagáana aldó' la' ákóyaa nidaaskai. Ákohgo éí t'áadooádajiníní, bini'dii diné t'áá haa'í shíí, béeso yígíí bílák'edajinínígo éí yá'át'éch dooleel la' nisin. Dóó díí hójigo, bilagáana jilíníí díí naakiyáligíí, 25 cents da, éí doo dajózhí da, one dollar da. Éí níléidi, one million, two million. Áádóó-billion da daba'ní, trillion da, hááshíí néeláá'. Áko nihí éí díí t'íjhdígo éiyá nihich'í, diné bich'í' anídaheeshch'áá la' kót'éego baa nitséskees, shí. Bíla' ashda'íi jó ayóó áhoot'éegi tádíyá, doo la' hózhó bááhlíí da. Doo la' ákót'éé da. Jó nidi nílédéé' bee haz'áanii yil nidadées'eez. Áko nidi doo shil ákót'éé da. T'áadoo áhá'nini t'óó diné bich'í' nináda'iilyéego, jó béeso shíí éí ts'ídá t'óó ahayóí.

[Part of the Navajo transcript was unavailable for this interview eds.]

Edison Tyler

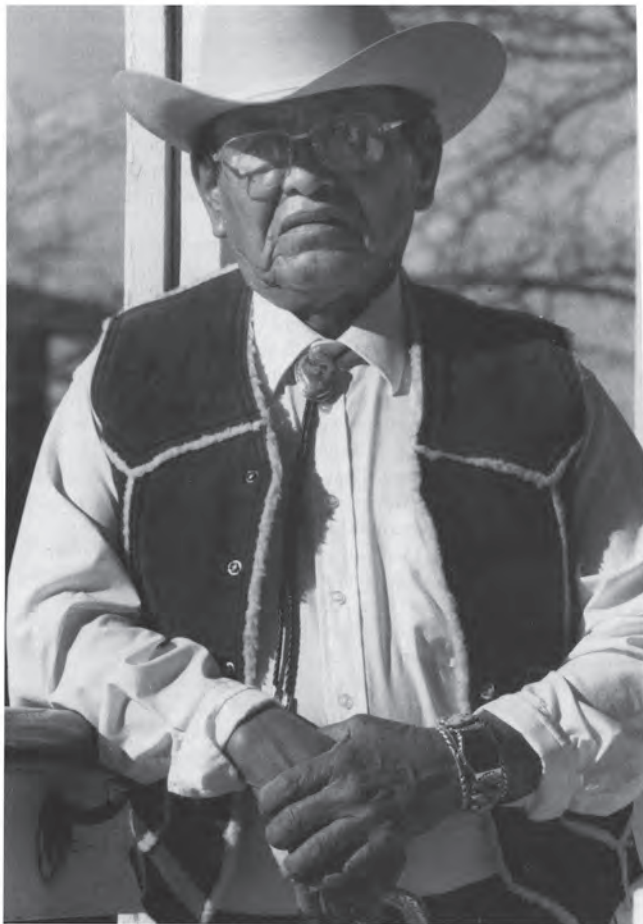
Sanostee, New Mexico

Interview by Timothy Benally

Translation by Timothy Benally

Transcription by Lydia Fasthorse-Begay

Photograph by Doug Brugge



For that, his [her husband's] story was that there was a lot of smoke and dust, soon after blasting. So we asked him not to work there. Jimmie Gould was the foreman. Gould told them, "you're not gonna live forever." He used to come home with a headache and vomit, that's how it was. "Those pools of water in the mines were good," he said, "so we drank that and we ate our lunch there," he said. Then, too, they passed out in the mines, and got carried out, and as soon as they recovered, they were sent back in. "We work haphazardly," he used to tell us.

Yes, I think we were exposed to it. My son, the last born, he had problems with his legs, from his waist down he was paralyzed. He was born at the time when his father was affected [injured]. To this day, he is handicapped, no work, just school.

Another child of mine was born with her belly button open. She was born that way and spent some time over at Gallup in the hospital. I'm telling this going backwards. This one for some reason had a hole in her belly button. She sometimes wonders she's still that way. Why is it not growing back together, I wonder. We were exposed, and really contaminated with it [uranium]. I am also sick from it. Then, those uranium widows, they all say that they're affected to some extent too.

.... We want [Washington] to count them the same as veterans. Like flags, give us flags, I said, I always said, and think. They should consider the miner like they do soldiers. They really suffered before they died; they withered, and their breath smelled rotten. Those are what we are very concerned about, and saddened about the most. They asked for help, but none was provided.

.... uranium is dangerous, this is what we think, we think about it everyday. So, making life with a man, you make a strong bond to make a good life, even if he did not work. This — my situation — is really harsh. It's this way; to have someone make something for you and no one around. Sometimes chopping wood makes you cry -- I think all these widows are probably like that So, we are saddened about it. My husband, friends, relatives; many are like that.

.... Sometimes some workers come and ask questions about our concerns. We appreciate that.

Éf yaa halne'go éiyá t'óó báhádzidigi át'éego hóne'é tid ní, dóó leezh ní. Adiidóqohgo t'áadoo nahgóó altsó t'áadoo le'é, nífch'í nidi ádingo, áko dooda t'áa ch'éeh dabitidí niid. Éf éiyá Jimmy Gould wolyéego éf bá nidajilnishgo. Áko t'áadoo hanii dadítsaal da nihitníf nít'éé' níigo yaa halne' leh nít'éé'. T'óó báhádzoo bitsiits'íiin neezgaigo nináhádááh nít'éé'. Dóó nidíkoh. Éf kót'éé nít'éé'. T'áa ákóne' tó naazyínigíí danizhóní yee' ní. Áko t'áa éf deidiláá nít'éé' ní dóó t'áa ákóne' da'iidáá nít'éé' níigo yaa halne' leh nít'éé'. Dóó nílél' a'áán góne' aldó' haashíí jii'í jh jini. Doo hol éehooziíh da jini, t'óó ch'ího'diltééh jini. T'óó yee' k'asdáá' hol éehooziíhgo yah anináájilwo' jini, níigo yaa halne' nít'éé'. T'áa na'nile'dii nahalingo nideiilnish níigo da yaa halne' leh nít'éé'. Kót'éego dígi át'é ní.

Aoo', béésiikai nisin. Yéego béésiikai. Shiyáázh la' akée'di bee ní' nífch'íigo bíjádáa daashíí yit'é. Biní' dóó doo naha'náa da nít'éé', bizhé'é t'áa baadahoo'a' dóó hazl'íí. Éf díj'íidi bich'í' anáhóót'í'. Ádin doo nidi naalnish da. T'óó ólta'. Dóó náána' la' éiyá akéédéé' naaghá, kóne' naagháhígíí jó éf ha'át'éego shíí bik'e'i' baa dahoo'a'. Áko t'áa ákót'éego shéltch'íigo nílél' Gallupdi aze'e'ál'íidi sidáa nít'éé'. Náána' ákóne' la' nináánádá, díf nílél' akée'di dóó t'ááji' hashne', éidígíí éf ha'át'éego shíí hats'éé' binikáhoodz'á nít'éé'. T'áa íiyisíí binikáhoodz'á. Áko t'óóyó daats'í t'ahdii t'áa daats'í ákót'é níí leh. Áko ha'át'éego lá doo ahidínfíise da lá nisin leh. Béésiikai nisin. Shí aldó' k'ad shaa dahaz'á, dífid. Yéego béésiikai nisingo baa nitséskees. Dóó nílél'ígóó sáanii bāh ákódahoodz'aa yéé' t'áa altsó baa dah nahaz'áago ádaa dahalne'. Nísh t'óóyá nich'í' nahwiilnánásh? Shich'í' nahwiilná, aoo'. Nílél' hospitalgóó éf alnánáshdáh.

Wááshindoon jílnígíí éiyá, jó t'áa hó t'éiyá diné nidanohitin, eii bááhádzid, kót'éego bil holne', doo ílta'íi, doo díniid da. Ádin t'áadoo ha'át'éego da nihá hajoodz'í' da, áádéé'. Jó kót'éego éf nílél' kodi bikéédéé' índa hazhó'ó nihil béédahoozin, ákódaníh'í diilyaa índa. T'áa daats'í ákódbidí' níí nít'éé' nidi áko nidi shíshígíí éf doo ákót'éego yaa halne' da nít'éé'. Dóó shínaaf dóó shitsil'í aldó' doo yaa hoolne' da. T'áa íidáá' nihá nazhneezt'á'go, dóó nida'nohtin aadi, dazhdíniidgo shíí daats'í t'ahdii la' nidaakai nít'éé'. Yéego éf bāh nihíni'go baa nitsideikees. Shí ákónísh't'é, shich'ooní baa shíni', shínaaf, shitsil'í.



Interview by Phil Harrison
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Lydia Fasthorse-Begay
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Mae John
Cove, Arizona

I was very young when my father died so I never discussed things such as his employment at the uranium mines. Anyway, my mother told me about my father's employment with the uranium mines. She recalls my father coming home from the mines with wet stained clothes, unaware of the danger, and how he told her of the bad conditions during and after blasting. I understand my father worked as a laborer. Being a laborer was such a harsh and dirty job.

Question: What do you think about the companies that operated these mines, like Kerr McGee and John Good and Trimax and so forth?

Well, um, they got what they wanted (uranium), of course. They were plain greedy and not honest people. For them, they had to hire workers to extract uranium from underground. The real sad thing about it was that they were never straight about what the hell this radiation was or would do to the health of these innocent people. White men (U.S. Government and mining companies) are not honest people.

Question: Okay

(Crying) I believe that's the white man's way of becoming wealthy.

Question: What about the US government and [?] in relation, the US government was the one that needed the uranium?

In the treaty of 1868 it mentioned that the Federal Government would protect the health of the Navajo people. Yet they didn't do so You would think that the government is honest, but what happened, again, they were not honest. To this day they have not realized what they have done to many of us (families of deceased miners). Their so called (RECA) compassionate payment is not justice. Not in our thoughts and deep inside our hearts.

Helen Johnson

Shiprock, New Mexico

Interview by Timothy Benally

Original in English

Transcription by Shelly Wiener

Photograph by Doug Brugge

Helen Johnson is the daughter of Mary Louise Johnson (page 48-49), she edited the original interview in February, 1997.



Joe Ray Harvey

Cove, Arizona

Interview by Phil Harrison

Translation by Timothy Benally

Transcription by Martha Austin Garrison

Photograph by Doug Brugge

When I first began to work, I worked for Kerr McGee. Yes, it was like that, no air [ventilation]; there was a lack of air when we worked. There was just lots of smoke and a powder smell after the blasting. That's how it was. The ventilation tubes did not go into the areas where we worked; they tended to end about a hundred feet short, or farther, so there was a lack of ventilation and a lack of safety.

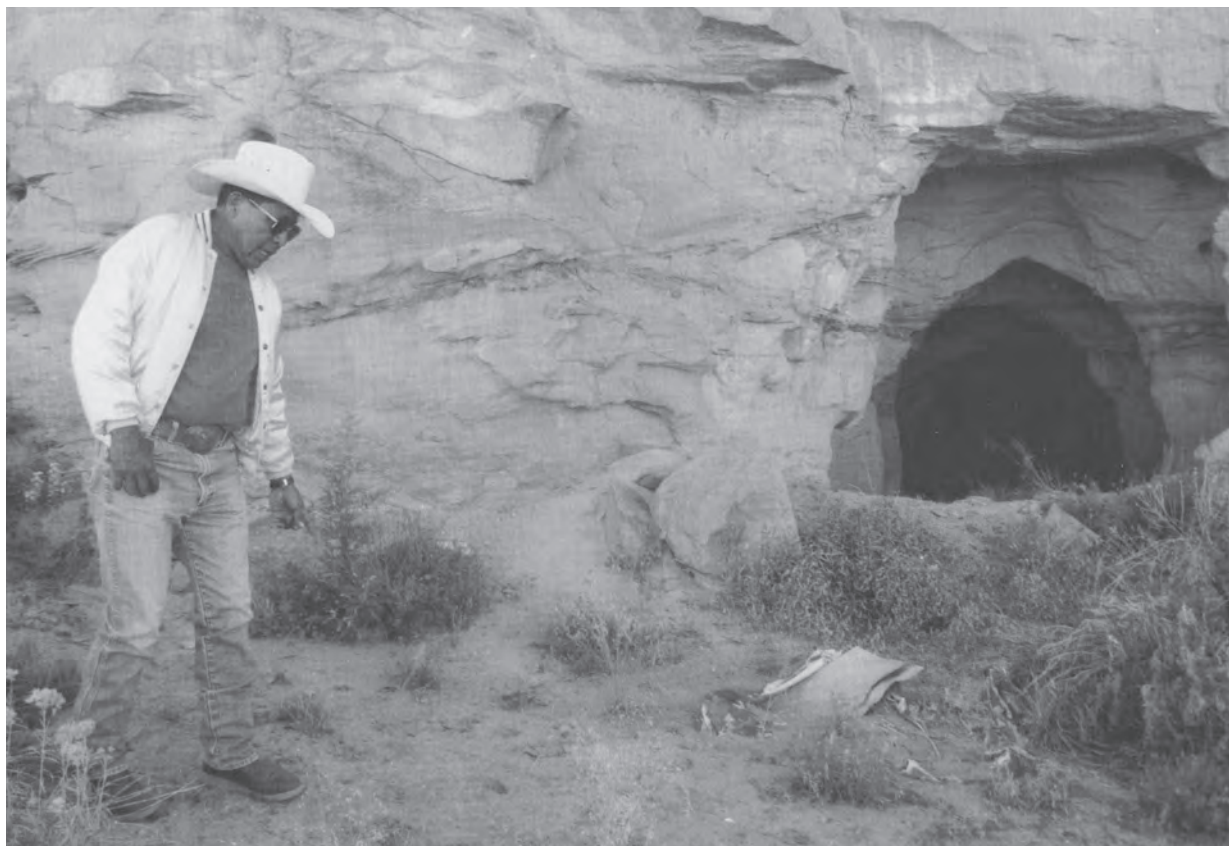
The workers did not work according to their desires then, they were forced to work. They [the companies] told the worker only once if he was doing something wrong. If caught repeating the mistake, he got fired, that's how people worked. For that reason, they did not speak up on their own behalf, or did not say what their concerns were. The air hose going to the drillers, sometimes we used those to get some fresh air at our work areas, but they did not allow this, because there was not enough air for the driller.

For the younger generation to be aware [of the hazards of uranium]; it has to be taught to them and shown, so they can learn about it. Then they themselves will talk and teach each other, in the future. Today, the younger generation is learning various studies, and they will learn about it and get to understand them. So teaching and talking to them about it, they may understand it and then remember.

Áłtsé déshnishgo éí nigháí Kerr McGee bá déshnish. Éí ááji ákót' é, t'áá aaníí éí nřch' i éí áđín. T'áá yéego éí nřch' i t'áá áđín nahalingo nidashiilnish. Lidígíí éí t'óó ahayóí dóó nř' diildóqohgo áldó' be'eldóqoh biko'ígíí t'áá át'égo biyi' go éí ákót' éego éiyá éí nidashiilnish áko. Áko vent bagígíí niléídečč' éí nřch' i il' inígíí, éí doo áhánídečč' nidaazt' i' da, t'áá nřléí about a hundred feetgi áńfzáádéčč' daats' i niníí' i'. Nřwohdéčč' daats' i nidahaazt' i'. Áko t'áá řiyisíí ventilationígíí áđingo nidashiilnish. Ááddóó safety áldó' baqah áđín. Ááddóó diné áldó' t'áá bí nřzinígíí át'égo naalnish da nř' éé', řídáá'.

T'óóyó bíbidi' nilkadgo, t'áálahá da éiyá éí t'áadoo le' é bee hol hanñh. Ááddóó next time, t'áá ákót' éego nááho' diiltséčhgo éí t'áá áko éí layoff. Kót' éego diné nidaashnish. Áko éí biníinaa éiyá diné áđín doo ák' iyálti' da nř' éé', doo kót' é nř da. Kót' éego nidashiilnish. T'áá řiyisíí t'áá nřch' i áđingo t'áá nřléí bee ada' a' nřlígíí, pipe nidaaz' áhígíí t'áá éí hose bigháqah dadř' i' go, éí t'áá áyídidi éiyá air yígíí éí hose ninádeilyéehgo áádečč' háach' igo éí t'áá éí bee naazyolgo, kót' éego da áńideil' jñh, éí da nihich' i' baa hóchj', ákót' éego. Nřláhji' ada' anilígíí air yígíí bits' áá' bí' oh nihi' dř' nřgo, kót' éego biníinaa t'óó áđín leh nř' éé'.

Áłchíní nooséłí nilínígíí shj' éí éí shj' bee nanítingo dóó bee bich' i' yáti' go, ááddóó bee bíł hane' go shj'. Éí yik' idi' dootřł dóó ááddóó-yinahji' shj' t'áá bí ááji nooséłí nilínígíí yee ahil hane' doo dóó yee na' ahinitin dooleel, háadı shj'. Éí ákót' éego shj' éí t'áá yénálnñh dooleel. Ááddóó dřřshj'idi éí éí nooséłí đanilínígíí t'óó ahayóí al' áá át'égo t'áadoo le' é yaa da' ótta' áko. Ááddóó-yidahoof' aah dóó yinahji' bíł beéđahózin. Áko bee nanitñ dóó bee bíł hane' go shj' t'áá ákót' éego éí náásgóó éí t'áá yaa ákonizñ dooleel dóó nilhá yik' idi' dootřł dóó-yínálnñh dooleel.



Kathlene Tsosie-Blackie

Huefarno, New Mexico

Interview by Chenoa Bah Stilwell

Original in English

Transcription by Shelly Weiner

Photograph by Doug Brugge

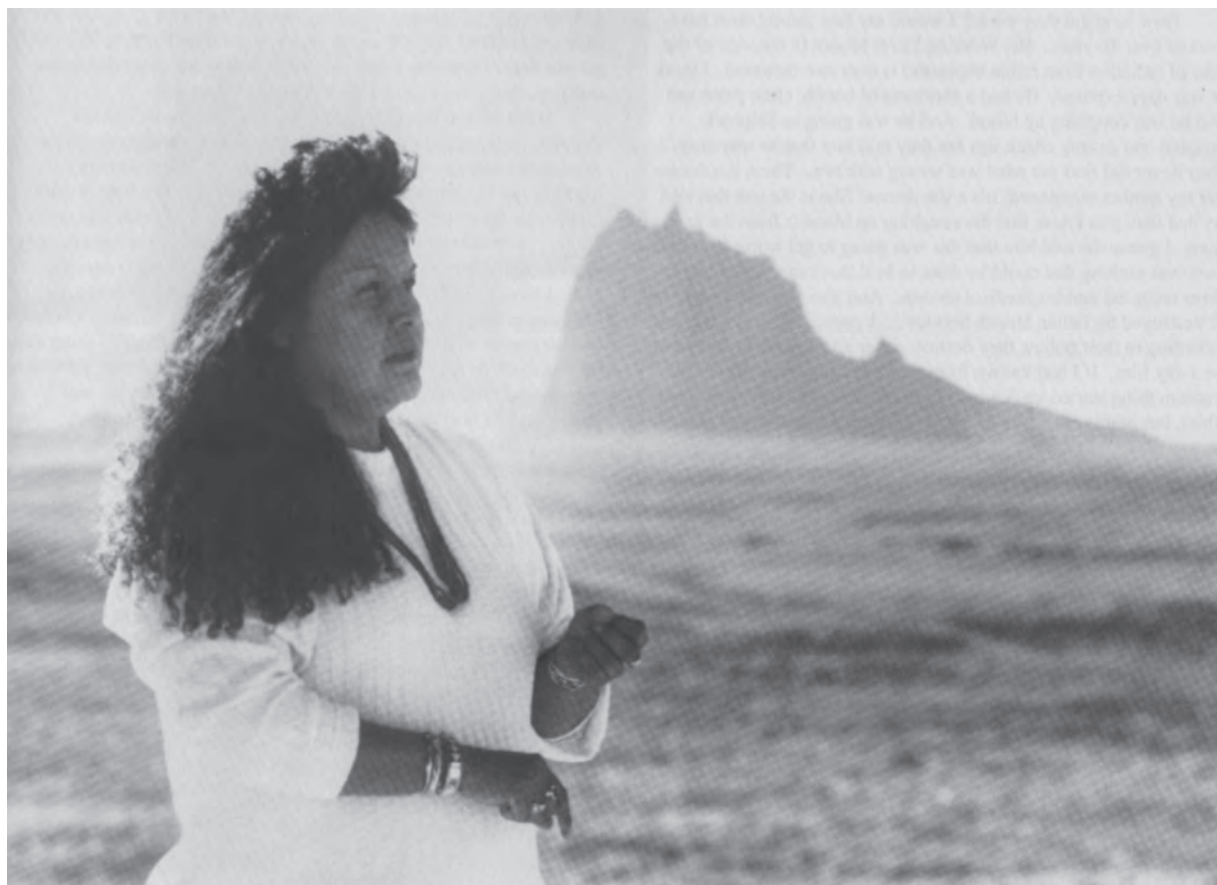
...counseling helped me to express a lot of my feelings, a lot of the grief that I was going through, and that is one of the reasons why I stress that a lot of counseling is needed in these areas.... the victims, I and others, are suffering out there. I know they are grieving, it's all inside and they don't know how to express that. And, being a young person and knowing what's out there, the help that can be there, that's why I always express that they should have counseling for the victims, the survivors, the grandparents, the parents, the brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts and this way we could talk about our feelings. This is another way of having and taking a positive step into the future and dealing with all the grief that we have been through, the trauma of the death of our relatives

.... And dollar amounts should be earmarked specifically for counseling, because a lot of them, as the Navajo people, you really don't express a lot of these things unless, you know, somebody brings it up. And there are a lot of widows who live alone, and their kids are all grown up. They are by themselves and when I go out in my community out at Cove, I always say kinship and I know how that makes me feel because when you say, "k'é" that we have relatives and that's your support by saying "k'é." My relatives and I even offered to help to do part of the counseling too because in my field when I do

there are a lot of people that know me by helping the youth, the adults. There is a lot of spiritual healing that needs to be done and a lot of the grieving.

And, like for me, it was really hard to do this interview because you go back in time and then, you know, our elders always say "go ahead" and that's how I was brought up by my grandparents, my father, my uncles; they always encouraged me to "go ahead." And as I speak I always say now, as I speak, I am my grandfather, my grandparents, my fathers, my uncles, my aunts and my mother, as I speak, I am them I say my relatives have gone on to the spirit world, they come in the wind, the rain, the four seasons and I will always say that in my prayer and they guide us in the right direction.

And the only thing we have is our prayers [crying] and as a relative and person that is concerned about this, you know, I really appreciate the people that are willing to help and their concerns because they don't know how much we hurt and yet people think it's, you know, the people that did this, they think, "hey, deal with it, it's done and it's gone." It's not, it's not done and it's still there and that's why I say we really need a lot of counseling in our areas even though it's a remote area, no matter where you go there has to be some type of counseling support group. [crying] Thank you.



How long did they work? I would say [my father] must have worked over 10 years. His Working Level Month [a measure of the dose of radiation from radon exposure] is over two thousand. I think he was over exposed. He had a shortness of breath, chest pains and also he was coughing up blood. And he was going to Shiprock Hospital and getting check-ups but they told him that he was okay. They never did find out what was wrong with him. There is a doctor that my mother mentioned, it's a she doctor. She is the one that told my dad that, you know, that the coughing up blood is from the uranium. I guess she told him that this was going to get worse later on and there was nothing that could be done to heal that cancer. But this was never recorded into his medical records. And also his own x-rays were all destroyed by Indian Health Service I guess that's what they do, according to their policy, they destroy either all their medical records or the x-ray film. If I had known from the beginning when the whole uranium thing started up, I would have requested his x-ray and (inaudible), but in this case, I never knew what the regulation was going to be.

So he died in December, 1977, in Albuquerque, in St. Joseph Hospital. I forget now what they diagnosed him with over there, but anyway, he's no longer with us. And my family was also exposed to the uranium. We are all having respiratory problems my mom is having a heart problem, or a chest pain. She's complaining that maybe it's from the uranium mining because she worked there with my dad. She cooked for him, she washed clothes for him and with all these (inaudible) in Colorado.

Do you think the US government has treated Navajo uranium [workers] fairly? No! I would say there are just, I think they are rude. I would say this because according to the regulation, you have to be exposed to 200 working level months and that's for a non-smoker. Also, the working level month requirement for a smoker is 500. And

you have to be diagnosed with lung cancer. And a lot of my clients have only maybe like 200 and they're non-smokers but they [the US government] are telling them, that they assume that these miners are smokers. So, I don't think they're treating them right.

What do you think should be done to compensate Navajo uranium workers and their families? I think they should change the regulation. Not just say that you have to be exposed to so many working levels, or that you have to be diagnosed with a lung disease I think that what they should do is just pay everybody that was underground, no matter how many years or months they put in because they actually did go underground and suffered. They are suffering right now. I have a clan grandfather that died last Friday. I know he died of lung cancer because the reading [of his X-ray] came back positive and he also passed a ABG [arterial blood gas] test. And the only thing that he was stuck on was the working level months. He had only 87 which they denied his claim and now this grandfather of mine died and yesterday was his funeral....

Do you have any other final comments? I remember my dad working at the mine when I was a little girl in Colorado. One day we were playing outside and one of his workers brought him back. He was all bloody.... [crying] he could hardly see. I guess they were blasting to get to a place underground and he injured his eyes. He just got cleaned up and then they took him down to the hospital When he came back his eyes were all patched up. He came back and I don't know what took place, I don't remember. We either moved back or he stayed there to heal. But I know my dad was injured in the mine and we never knew about the compensation either [inaudible]. If I had known then I would have filed against the company, but we never knew. My dad and mom, they are uneducated persons, so nobody up there told them anything about, you know, white man comp [workers compensation]. So after he got healed he just went back to work just to support us.



Dorothy Zohnnie

Mitten Rock, New Mexico

Self administered interview

Original in English

Transcription by Shelly Weiner

Photograph by Doug Brugge

Lorraine: Our children were born there. As a pregnant mother I used to go there. So the babies were born; from there to now they grew and they played there, just as I did. Ore that was dangerous was piled up and they played on it didn't know it was dangerous. So we exposed them all [children], just as we were exposed before....

Lorraine: One area I'm concerned about, like when you purchase a prescription, warnings are written on the drugs, warnings about keeping it out of the reach of children — this they make clear. Why not, in the beginning, keep only the men, and not let the children near the mines?

Leroy: Well, when the mining was in progress, we were not concerned. At this time many men [miners] were harmed, that's how I think about this. So I realized it is dangerous, I think. So when you talk to those who worked, this is what they say, "We mined dangerous stuff. We didn't know!" It is not good I think.

Lorraine: Well, I spoke on this just a while back They should have told the miners Children were exposed to it and it contaminated their food and water. "Do not drink water from the mine. Only from over there." By saying this and having good water available for them might have been good.

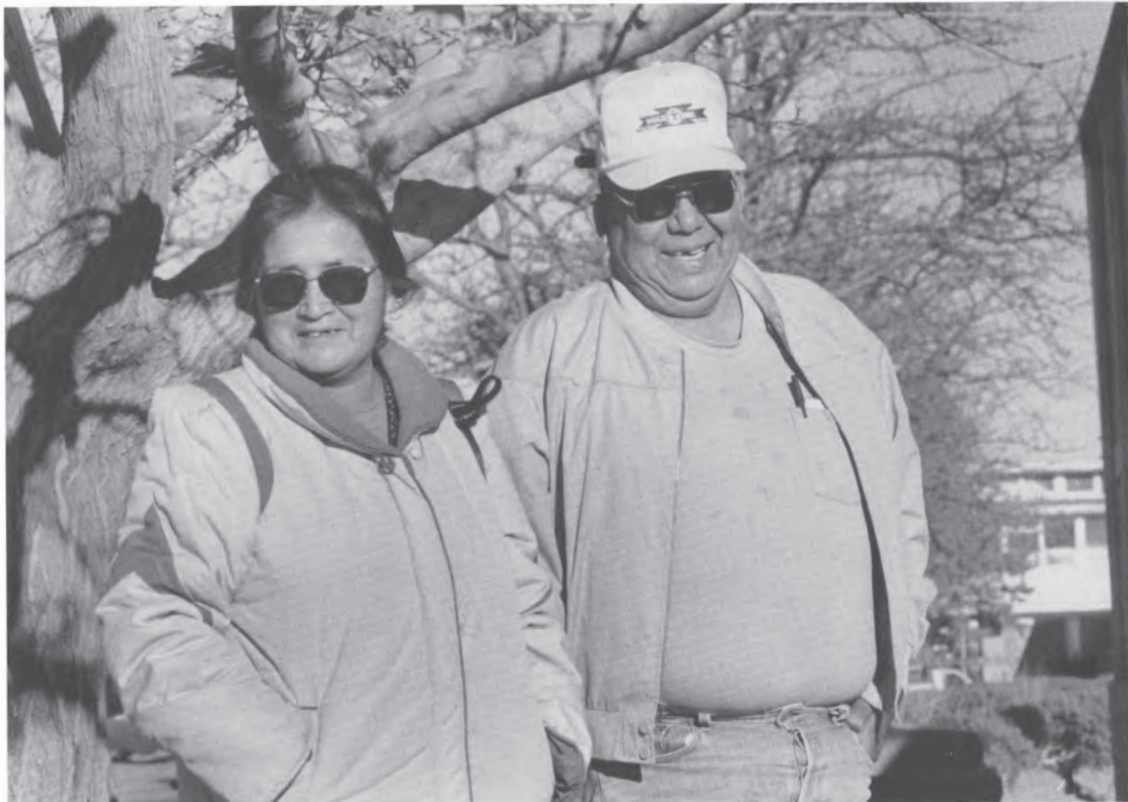
In the summer when it was hot the men brought water out from the mine, saying, "this water is cool," and they drank that. In the hot summer months, when there was no clean water available, every family relied on the cool water from the mine.

Leroy: Yes, the residences were near the mines, a short distance from the mines, only yards away. One should never live near the mines, that's true. When there is blasting in the mines, the smoke comes out in a big swirl like this and spreads over the residences. Nobody should be allowed near those places.

Lorraine: Áádóó as a pregnant mother, t'áá ákót' éego áadi da naasháa leh. Áko dahazlǐǐ', áádóó awéeyázhí daazlǐǐ' dóó wóshdǎǎ' dadínéesǎ dóó ákǒǒ nidaanée leh. Just like I did, níléí tsé báadahadzid shǐǐ nít'ée'go dah daask'idgo naazhjaa'go ákǒǒ nidaanée leh. Nihí aldó' níléidǎǎ' ákódeiidzaa. Aldó' ákót' éego nideiinée leh, báhádzid shǐǐ léí'. Áko k'ad díí aldó' t'áá ákónáádaadzaa. Altseé bínínáásii' níl nahalin.

Lorraine: Jó lahgo éí t'óoyó yéego baa shíni' nahalin. Jó níléí k'ad azeé' da nijíitniihgo báhádzid níigo bik'e'eshchǐǐ'leh, dóó áłchíni bits'aa níléí wódahdí dah sinilgo ál'j kót'éego nidanol'in ha'níí leh. Áko doo hanií aldó' t'áá íídǎǎ' bínii'dii hastóí áłchíniígíí t'áadoo áajǐ' nidaakaaf, níléí naanish haz'áǎǎi campgóó, áadi áłchíni t'áadoo nidaah'eeshí. Jó hastóíígíí éí nínádazhdeez'á nahalingo kodi dabijini.

Lorraine: Jó t'áá ániidgo bee haaszǐi'. Jó t'áá íídǎǎ' hazhó'ó t'áá níléí haashǐǐ nízáadi da danihighango da danihízhdooiiil nít'ée'aldó'. Eii éí t'áá nahgóó ahoodzáago ákǒǒ diné dabighan nít'ée'. Éí shǐǐ, áádóó báhádzidii éí á'éego éí shǐǐ doo haa'áháyá wolyée da. Áłchíni yázhí altso yínákah dóó-hach'liya' bǎǎh daazlǐǐ'go, tó da dajidlánígíí. Tó a'áandǎǎ'ígíí éí t'áadoo daahdláni, kojǐǐgíí ha'níigo da, jó a lot of times water ádin leh, níléidi. Áko nizhóníígíí da dah yooyéelgo ádajósingo da shǐǐ nizhóní nít'ée'. Eii tó ádingo t'áá níléí leeyi'dǎǎ'ígíí shǐǐgo deesoigo áádǎǎ'ígíí sík'az ha'níigo áádǎǎ'ígíí diné adayiyeesh. T'áá éí dajidlǎǎ leh.



Interview by Timothy Benally
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Lydia Fasthorse-Begay
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Leroy & Lorraine Jack

Cudei, New Mexico

They did not say it was harmful, they probably kept it a secret from us. Anglos kept that secret — with this I think. I am very concerned because I was left alone. Shouldn't have, I think [crying] yes he [her husband] really suffered before he died. The doctor kept telling me that it was a minor case. With that they led us on, but inside he had uranium — that's what happened. We had a real hardship at that time, including my children, my grandchildren. This morning they were crying again! *Cheii, Shinali*, [maternal grandfather, paternal grandfather] they say — that's how we are! So the boys who are older say, "if he didn't work in uranium mines our father would be here." We are still suffering. There are many of us in this situation now. I can not do the job as a mother and father by myself

The wage was very low that they worked for. My man, he started at \$0.75 per hour, so it was not really worth it We do not want this kind of wages for our people. That's what I think, because they are human and needy. They think Navajos are not aware of lots of things and have no education that we do not realize we were being cheated through this work.

We are into our second generation of grandchildren. I've already mentioned this to them, that uranium is dangerous, that it should not be on our land. In the future, if they want to mine uranium again, it should not be approved. No, beware its effects As long as there is uranium, deaths will continue. The smaller ones still remember that day. Children remember well, they say, "That time my grandfather died!" They will remember all these things in the future. If there is a proposal to mine uranium again, they'll probably say no. I had already told them that uranium is dangerous, even though it provided our economic needs. This is what its end result is, I told them.

K'ash diné yéego biyi' di, leetsoh yiyáá' go át' éé léi'. Ákódzaa áko. T'áá yiyisíí nihich'j' nidahwiisnáá, sha' álchíní t'áá bit. Shináííké dóó shítsóóké abínídqá' ákót' éego náadaacha. Cheii ha' níígo, shináíí ha' níígo, bahajoobá' ígi ádaaní áko. Ákóniit' éego éf át' éé áko. Áko ashííké níneeZ daazlíí', t'áá hóyáanii daazlíí'. Éf ádaaníígo éiyá leetsoh dóo yinaashnishgóó éf shizhé' é hólqó dooleel ní' éé' daani. Yíníí biíh níídee', yéego. T'óó ahoniigóí ákóniit' é. Yéego éf hóyéé', yíwehída dadeesk' aaz léi'. T'áá sáhi t'áadoo le' é áshlééh dóo bíneeesh' ága da, amá dóó azhé' é nishíígo doo bíghahgóó baa nítséskees áko. Áko ákót' éego éf ánisht' é.

Hastiin éf t'óó haalnish yéédqá' hastááyaál (\$.75) ahéé' ílkeedgo haalnish. Áko éf éf t'áá yiyisíí doo bááhlíí da. T'áá ídqá', ákót' éego éiyá naanish t'áá' f' sindáa da bínáádeit' aah ha' níígo hóf ayóó ádaat' é. Jó k' ad éf yéé éf doo bááhlíí da lá, doo líí da lá. Ákót' éego éiyá diné nidaashnish áko. Ákót' éego nihindine' é bee baa nínáádajit' f, díf kót' éego nihindine' é bich'j' na' íilyéego doo daniidzin da, shí ákót' éego baa nítséskees.

Díííídi éf hada' asgeed yéégoó haansha' yit' éego nahaz' á. Áádóó nígháí da' dooyíí'. Leetsoh bágh nidahal' eelgo bíl nahaz' áá ní' éé', leetsoh ahanídahageehgo. Áko ákqó lahgóó' éf t'áadoo hazhó' ó hasht' éédaalyaa' t'óó bits' áá' anida' iisná. Éf ákwe' égi díí níhí nihikéyah bikáá' góó, Bits'j' Yishítizhii níidííníígi nihikéyah bikáá' góó ákót' éego nahaz' áníígi hazhó' ó hasht' éédaalyaago daats' í éf níl bóhónéedzq'.

Éf shíí t'áá aaníí shíí hasht' éédazhdoodníí nidi, jó adajíisiyí. Áádéé' níináhageehgo éf dooda. Háni' díí t'áá níláahdí háf shíí leetsoh jínízin shíí-áadi hóf yanáa' áa dooleel, nihikéyah bikáá' gi éf dooda. Hááá' ákót' éego níhí nihikéyah hóníghá'digo daha' áán, t'áadoo hasht' éédaalyaa da. Áko shíídqá' éf áadi chidí nidaakai ní'. Ádin t'áadoo altsó hasht' edajíilaa da. Éf ákót' é, báhádzidgoósh áají' náádajíígeeh dóo? Áádóó daznín aldo', bilagáana dajííníígi. Áko níláhgóó Wááshíndoón, jó éf bich'j' ajíí' á. Áko éf biniinaa éf bini' díí t'áá áadi hóf yááni' á. Jó kofí éf bik' eekadeitkai. Éf biniinaa éf shí séz'jídóó éf doo íinisín da.



Interview by Timothy Benally
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Mary Frank
Red Valley/Oak Springs/Shiprock



Interview by Timothy Benally
Translation by Timothy Benally
Transcription by Lydia Fasthorse-Begay
Photograph by Doug Brugge

Minnie Tsosie
Cove, Arizona

Pearl Nakai

Red Valley, Arizona

Interview by Phil Harrison

Translation by Timothy Benally

Transcription by Martha Austin-Garrison

Photograph by Doug Brugge

At that time jobs were scarce. Then it was not like today's availability of work and mining was the only kind of work available. For that reason he [her husband] began working as soon as he returned from military service.

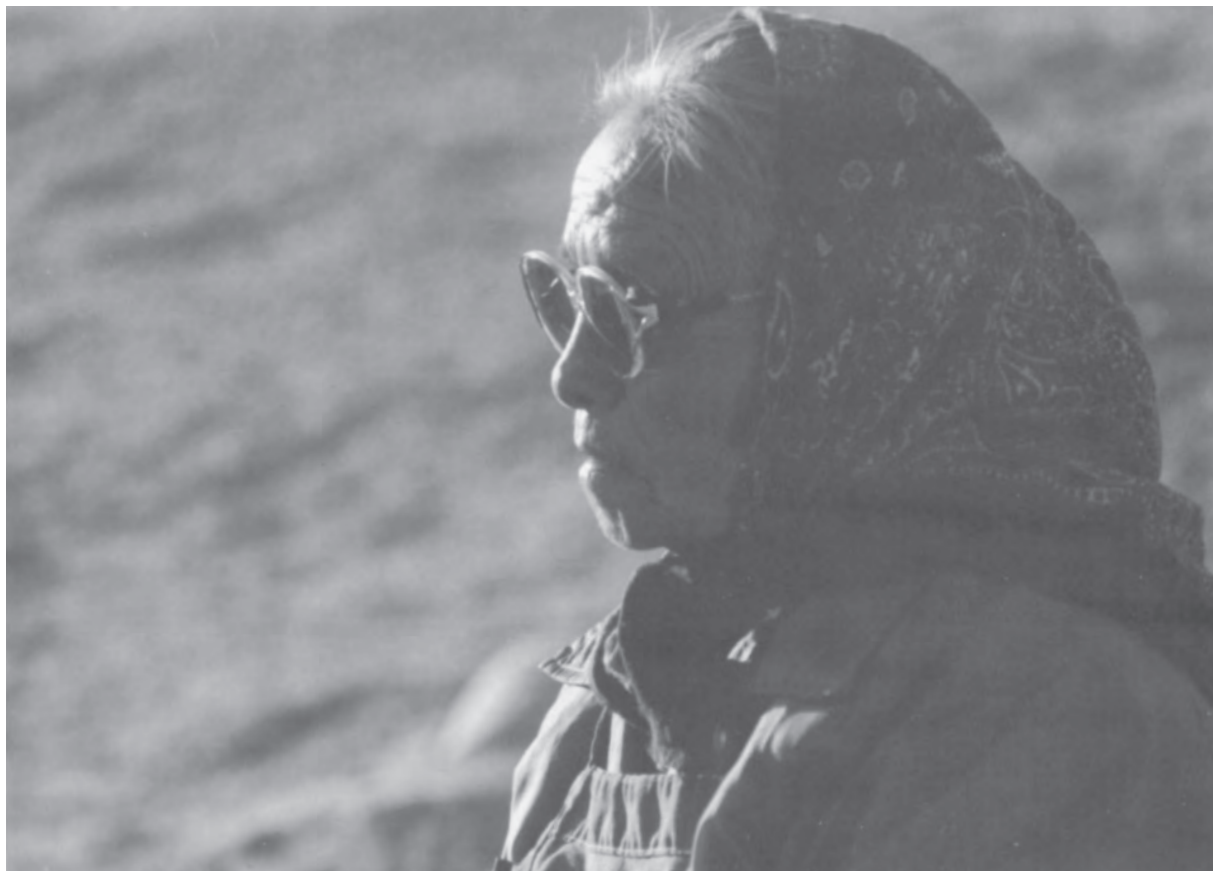
Yes, he talked about the mine conditions. They used to carry their lunch into the mine with them and eat in the mine at noon time. They got cool water from the mine and drank that with their meals.

.... They were never told about the side effects or how to protect themselves from uranium. He never mentioned these things, therefore he came home in muddy, wet clothes. We just hung them up to dry in our home and then he put them back on the next day. We were not aware. Not at all! We were not told, "that can affect your health in this manner."

Jó ítdáá' éí naanish ádin, bídin dahóyčé'. Doo naanish k'ad dīi kóó da'íníshígíí doo ákót'égo nida'anish da. Áko ts'ídá t'áá éí t'éiyá leetso haagédjī t'áá éí t'éiyá naanishgo biniinaa áajī' níjlnishgo ahoolzhíizh. T'áá siláotahdęę' níjdzáhi áko áajī ch'íjlnish.

Aoo' Jó t'áá ákóne'é éiyá hast'e' anidajī' ááh, t'áá ákone' hwe'atn' nida'a'áahgo t'áá ákone'í éí nida'jidjīh ní' éé' lá. Áádoo tó da ayóo daazk'azgo jinígo t'áá ákóne' éí shíí bíl nída'jidjīhgo hoolzhíizh doó t'áá éí hato'go.

T'áadoo díígi át' é jini leetso, kót' égo bina'anish doó ında kót' égo éiyá biniyé hasht'e' ízhdólzingo ál'í, t'áadoo dabi'doo'niid da lá. T'áadoo bee níhil dahóone' da, t'áadoo díígi át' é jini leetso. Kót' égo bina'anish doó ında biniyé hasht'e' ázhdólzingo ál'í, t'áadoo dabi'doo'niid da lá, iyąą doo yaa halne' da. Éí shíí biniinaa t'áá ákót' égo ha' éé', ha' éé' dó' t'áá át' é t'áá tó da daabaąą doó hasht'ish da daabaąą ninádajūkáahgo dahoolzhíizh.



There is a general sickness today, with all people. There are no elderly men in Cove, because they were mostly miners and have died, but there are many widows. No men! People are still suffering today, especially the widows. We are the spokespeople for them. But the tribe does not understand our dilemma. We need support in all these areas of our concerns, but there is none. This is the way things are today. Its effect, uranium, on water, plants, animals and people, is a vicious cycle.

Cove gónc', diné ádin. There are a lot of widows. Ádin, there's no men. T'áá át'é uranium miners yéé altso, altso anáhaaskaí. Áko yéego éí diné bich'í' nahwii'náago éí át'é. Sáanii éí bich'í' nahwii'náago éí át'é. Sáanii éí bich'í' nahwii'ná. Áko éí bá yéilti'go áko doo chohoo'ígóó éí bidziil áko. Áko baa nitsiikeesgo, nidi diné éí doo nihá yik'í' diit'í'j' da doo doo nihá lahdoó yeiní' iní da. Kwe'é éí t'áá íyisíí bee nich'í' anáhóót'í'. Kót'éego éiyá át'é. Áko díí tó da, leezh doó áádóó nítch'í' da, áádóó dibé, t'áá háf shíí béégashii da, t'áá altso baah. Kót'éego éí át'é áko. Ákót'éego bii' yiikah áko. T'áá ákót'éego deidlá, dibé, íj'í', béégashii doo t'áá ákót'éego náanéiidá. Áádóó náánalahj'í' baa ninááháníihgo da, ááji baahgo da, éí lahj'í' éí diné yeiníííj'igo, ááji baah dooleel. Ááji diné yidi'doolnah, diné doo át'éhí yéé. Jó kóó éiyá bá baa yéilti' doo bá baa nitsiikees.

Joe Ray Harvey
Resident of Cove, Arizona

The Christian Church Cove, Arizona

Photograph by Mary Elsner





Phil Harrison

Mitten Rock, Arizona

Photograph by Doug Brugge



Photograph by Doug Brugge

Timothy & Karen Benally

Red Valley, Arizona

Logan Pete

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No. I am thinking back about all the votes I have made in Aztec for 18 years. Everytime an Indian person does something wrong the Whites will speak against all Indians (one Indian person does something wrong, then every Indian will be blamed for that wrongdoing). This is the reason why I spoke/voted against the Whites, such as patrols so that they do not hold their jobs. Just thinking about these things makes me feel that they are prejudiced for that reason our young people are gone (died). They think of the Indians like they thought of the Black slaves. Does the president of US think of us (Navajos) as though we are slaves too? We have suffered in the holes (mines). On top of that our language was used to win a war. Is that worthless too? I served in the war too. I was drafted. I was injured and there was no room for me to stay (in a hospital) so I was sent back home.

When one is in need of something, one wishes to be better. I would like to have this and that. How shall I get something a little bit more, one usually thinks/wishes for, even when one gets too old to do something for oneself. I usually think that way for myself. And you

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t'óoyó t'óó haashfí yit'é nilf' áldó'. Doo yínfídzil da nahalin. Ákwe'égi áldó' ákót'é áko. Áádóó áldó' shidifígfí' éí díf' hódahgo na'alkidgo biniinaa díf' two-go shaaná' nil' áko. Nidifígfí' t'áá íyisif' tsxjíggo yilwol' shí'di'ní' áko. Dóó díf' kwe'é' níkááz doo hazhó'ó nidaalnish da t'éf' shi'di'ní'. (thyroid?) Aoo'. Éí bich'í' anáhóót'í' ya'? Aoo' Áádóó shináá' áldó' díf' k'ad' éí shináá' shich'í' nááhodiisnáá' díf'. Níléf' shiidáqá'díi naaltsos da nesh'íjgo áko shiná'áqá niléf' t'óó t'áadoo le'é' t'óó noodóqós nádlee, t'óó altah'án' doolníf' nahalin áko niléí nfaadgóó doo eesh'íj da áko.

13. Nidaga' ádin. Jó k'ad' ákót'é niléí baa nitséskees niléí kin niteeldi aná'át'ahídí tseebíts'áadah shinááhaigo áko atah aná'ásh'a'go áádéqé' nináhshdáahgo áko ts'ídá' Indían da háida ádqah dahool'aahgo t'áá'át'é Bilagáana nihik'íj' yálti' biniinaa díf'wí' shíj' Bilagáana

think of something valueable that one has; will my children carry that forward with them, is what one wonders usually.

They will observe how you care for your livestock, cows, horses, your work, skills, and from these they learn to do as you did, and one wonders how long they can do the same. I usually think of these things. My father also taught me some songs, I still have those songs in me. These are the Blessing Way and Shootingway songs. My grandfather taught me these things and told me to think this way.

"You try harder, the good ones begin right here" as he would stretch his arms. "You remember these things in your future." What he said is true to this day. "There is the very good thing that exists just beyond my reach (as he extends his arms). You remember that as time goes on, you think about that and before you know it will happen." That is true today. "Just beyond your reach is where the good stuff exists. These you will be aware of and walk in a holy way. There is one life that one lives. No one lives two lives." This is what Hastiin Tseta' taught me. I remember what he taught me.

hak'íj' yáshtí'go díf'wí' shíj' ayóf' ádjat'é patrol da ats'ááhoyéltíífíd, binahjí' baa nitséskeesgo t'áá aníí' t'áá awólf'bee nihidei'ádeiznízin nahalingo áko éf' daats'í' biniinaa tsíkéí' ádeisdíj'd nisingo baa nitséskees. T'áá daats'í' át'ée' ní't'ée' niléí Naakáii' tizhinii' daats'í' nahalingo naaltéj'k'ehgo daats'í' nihaa nitsidajikees nisingo t'óó dahwínish'ní' Biniinaa daats'í' Wáashindoon jílínfígfí' daats'í' t'áá áájí' daats'í' nihá nitsj'ikees biniinaa ha'át'ída niháqah jí'í nisingo baa nitséskees. Na'nfle'díi tí'dahosíi' níid' a'áán' góne'. Áádóó t'áá bíláahjí' nihizaad' bee ak'ehodeesdíí' ha'ní' áldó'. Éí daats'í' áldó' doo líj' da nisin? Áldó' t'áá háláahgo tádíyá' shí' díf' síláogóó. T'áá draft áshí'diilyaa. Áadishíí' doo shá haz'áqgóó biniinaa sháqah dahoo'a'go t'óó nánísdzá' shí. Shí' ákót'éego baa nitséskees áldó'

May John

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Shizhé' é éf yínf búsxǎ. Áko éi yéé t'áa át'é ákqó ahaah niná' nifgo dóó índída kwa'ásínf t'óó ahayóí ahánfígóó bíl kééhwiit' inéé t'áa altsogo álchíní t'éiyá hook'ee nidaháazǎ. Díí lǎq, díí baǎh danihíni'. Shí éf baǎh shíni'. Biniinaa da lahda ch'ééh' físhháash leh.

Logan Pete

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T'áadoo le' é bí' oh' jineel' áago t'óó laanaa jinízingo ha'át' éegida kónfsh't'ée dooleel. Kót'éego t'áadoo le' é shee hodooleel jinízin leh.

Ha'át' éego lá t'ah bitísigo t'áadoo le' é choídeesh't'eel lá jó jinízin leh.

Azhǎ hajitih nidi doo shǎj bíǎghah nǎdi. Shí éf ákót' éego nitséskees. Dóó sha'álchíní daats'í t'áa ákót' éego ha'át' físhǎj naashléehshǎj náús náadeiyílee doo jinízingo da jinél' jǎ leh. Halǎj' léi' dóó habéégashiida hǎj' da nijiléhgíí dóó bee na' anishída, dóó hana' ach' idí' deimél' jǎgo binahǎj' bíl béédahózingo t'áa daats'í shqoh t'áa ákót' éego náadeiyílee doo jinízin leh. Shí éf kót' éego baa nitséskees leh. Jó shichei yéé ákót' éego níléf yínashineestǎq' éf binahǎj' éf ákót' éego baa nitséskees. "Wolsee áni' j' shichei, ts' idá díf kodóó yá'át' éhgíí hólq'" shil nígo ch' éédilchi' ní' éé' kót' éego. "Eidí béénilniih hool' áágóó baa nitsínikees, níik' ehéé t'áa aanǎ t'áa ní nil bééhodoozǎjǎ shil nígo. Éf díǎjǎdi t'áa aanǎ ákót' é. Áádóó iyísíí yá'át' éhgíí hólq' shil nígo ts' idá k' éédilchxi' ní' éé' kót' éego. Eidí béénilniih hool' áágóó t'áa ní baa nitsínikees níik' ehéé t'áa ní nil bééhodoozǎjǎ. Éf díǎjǎdi t'áa aanǎ ákót' é. Áádóó iyísíí yá'át' éhgíí hólq' kót' éego k' ídílchi' dóó níléf ts' idá bí' oshneel' áádóó índá yá'át' éhgíí hólq'. Índá kwe' é dó' baa ákozhnín doo nijǎgháagi áldó' ádáahozhdílyin, t'áa hó nijǎghá. T'ááálá' íiin ná'. Doo éf naakidi ná' iináanii, doo éi át' ée da ní. Kót' éego yee yínashiníltin ní' éé' Hastiin Tséeta' wolyéé ní' éé'. Éf éf bee bēnēshniih leh áko.

George Tutt

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kót' éego nesh' j. Éf ákódaadzaafǎí. Hóla t'áa iyísíí daats'í bídahízhdíghǎq.

Jó éish dó' kodi neheeedigo éf t'ááláhídi yáádaa'. Éf nízhónigo éf la' haníídee' go éf t'áadoo hodina' í aghanidoodzil dóó nídidool' jǎ. Nídadees' jǎ lahgoó. Tailing daolyé ákqó dadeeskíid yéé éf. Éf t'áa yá'át' ééh shǎj. Díí níléidi honoojítahdi ha' oogeedgo éf doo deeghání góyaa la' adah adahazhóoshgo nahaz' á. Ákogo ts' idá t'áa ní' át' éegi t'áa át' é nídidool' jǎ doo bíǎghah da. T'áa ákóyaa níléf adah dahaazhoozh yéé góyaa dó' bitát' ah da' níitini ádaalyaago haa' ída dabíkoohgóó dóó deiyíldzisgóó nídadees' jǎ go shǎj t'éiyá, ákogo t' éf yá'át' ééh bina' azhnish doo. Díí t'áa dzǎgaigi ha' ooyeedgo éf éf doo nanit' ah da éf. Éf t'ááláhígi nahálin. Níléf dzil binánií góyaa da adah dahzhóosh yéé éf ádin doo altso nídidool' jǎ da. Éf shǎj t' éf baahasti' dóo nanit' ah. Kót' é. Dóó naaghéí díkwíí shǎj náahaidí daats'í t'óóyó haashǎj' nízhǎjǎ' la' yidzaa doo. Níléf hada' ségeed yéé góó lahgoó t'áa adahasdzǎ. Naaghéí tádíyá dishnígo Naturita nahás' a' ákqó éf shí ha' ígeed yéé góó éf t'áa dahalzhin, ádin. Náaná t'áa bíǎghahgóó t'óó ahayóí hada' asgeed yéé éf alch' j' ánídaalyaa lá. T'áa ahtah át' é. T'áa át' é t'áa alháǎghah bitah hoolzhishigo shǎj daats'í yá'át' ééh ní' éé'. Éf haashǎj' daat' éé shǎj t'óó ákódaalyaa lá. Lahgoó yada' níilt' ógo adáada' alch' af ní' éé'. Éf éiyá t'ááláhídíí gíí éf shǎj doo nanit' ah da daats'í. Ako ndí t'óó' góó ch' éheesyf néé éf t'áa át' é dadeesk' id doo ndí baa hwiini' jǎ da.

Díí ná' ídíkídíí baa hodoonih dóó baa níyáti' dooleelǎgíí t'óó ahayóigo shǎj át' é Tóó ahayóí díné ásdjíd. Dóó kqódí nashídíkídigo t'óóyó ná' ílná. Bitah tsínízhdíkosgo da díné bíl nídájilnishgo lá' ániid nídaakaigo T'áa al' aǎ át' éego honǎ á áko Díí baǎ' ílnǎgíí éf éf ádin. Doo shil bíǎghah da shí. Níwohdigo shǎj éf t'áa díné bíni' dabíǎghah doo Niha' álchíní, níhich' ooní shǎj la' dó' yits' áádóó haada daat' éego bí áldó' la' bích' j' síláago shǎj yá'át' ééh, t'áa sahǎj Bíyol dóó háshǎj' bits' íís t'áa baǎh dah nahás' áago át' é áko.

Tom James

have spoken the truth, they were not just talking. The company and the foremen who were in charge were equally bad. They treated the Navajo miners as though they were slaves. The reason I say this is because I know for a fact that the Navajo miners had to walk on foot from that Red Point (Lichíí' Deez' áhígíí) to another point, to the cove of a canyon. The Navajo miners went around on foot. They did not have any cabins with running water for showers, like they do in Colorado.

Kerr McGee is the company that we worked for. I am talking about a job that took a long time to finish. They did not think of safety and the hardship our men went through to get the job done. The Anglo workers such as the surveyors and the mechanics were given room and board, a mess hall to eat in, showers and other conveniences. The Anglos had nice living quarters. The Anglos did not work in the pit mine. They went in real briefly and they did not stay very long in there. For all the Navajo miners, they had their tents set up among the oak bushes, ate their own food and went to work on foot. We worked like that for about three years straight. This is the way we worked.

George Lapahe

ákódaadzaa díí. Ha' át'íí shíí' óolyé tumor wolyéego baqah naalniih silíí'. Háádéé' shá' yit'ih? Ts'ídá akóne' leetso góne' t'éiyá t'óoyó ada'iilkaah silíí'. T'óoyó-leetso góne' ada'iilkaah silíí'. Bitsiits'iin t'áa íyisíí bá bina'azhnish. Kwe'é bighách'iizhgo áko níléí bitsiijhąą' áko éí radiation bee bá dadoodlidgo ákót'é. Lá' bitsįąąi da bá baqah deiltsį. She'ashiikéhígíí dóó at'ééke sáanii daazl'įgíí ákót'é. Ts'ídá shą' háádéé' yit'ih? Jó ákót'éhígíí doo bídahane' da níléidi áko díí k'ad

ts'ídá t'áa aaníí dahalne'. Jó jó ts'ídá t'áa íyisíí díí company wolyéhígíí t'áa íyisíí ahíílt'ée lá, há na'anishígíí. Naalt'é nahalingo á'jiiílaa. Biniinaa ádíshnínígíí éiyá díí nighái kwe'é Lichíí' Deez'áhígíí dóó níléí Nástl'ah, kojí dzil náádeez'áhígíí dóó kojí', hoodzo nahalingo ínísin. Áko áádéé' dinéhígíí kodéé' ígíí, t'áa ní' háádaakah nít'ée'. Ts'ídá t'áa ní' háádaakah nít'ée' níléidi. T'áadoo éiyá yii' dóó naalnishígíí jó, cabin da naaznil, lahgóó yik'énídaalnish nít'ée', lahgóó ákódaat'ée nít'ée', níléí kojigo, Coloradojigo. Cabin da nidaaznil dóó áádóó they have, t'áadoo le'é, shower da bá dahóló. Ákót'ée nít'ée'. Áko éí, éí ádin nít'ée'.

Kerr McGee nijishnishjii, jó éí nízaadgóó há na'azhnish. Éiidígíí, díidígíí éí biniinaa ádíshnín. Díí nízaadgóó há na'azhnishígíí t'áadoo díne bá áldiin hoolt'e' ájiiílaa da, ádin. T'áa hazhó'ó bilagáana t'éiyá surveyor da, surveyor da danilínígíí, mechanic da danilínígíí, éí t'éiyá éí shower da bá dahóló. Dóó they got a, a mess hall da bá dahóló, more like room and board. Cabin bá sinil. Díí níhí éí ádin nít'ée', t'áa t'óó bóhólníhgoó chééh'iltahgo ákóq nihinibaal yadaa'áa leh nít'ée'. Jó ákót'éego k'ad, ts'ídá táa' daats'í náahai. Bilagáana t'éiyá ákót'ée nít'ée', aoo'. Níléí a'áan góne' éí doo hózhó nidaakai da aldó' bilagáana. T'óó láhí da yah anídaalwo', t'áa áko. Ákót'éego ban na'asdee' áko.

leetso tádadiilnishígíí t'óoyó kodí niha'áchéhíí bich'į' naat'í' silíí'. Ákohgo ei'foohgi ts'ídá t'óó báhádzidígíí át'éego yfłk'id nít'ée' kwiih. Jó ákóq anánájah shíí jó áadi nihighango. Eidí kojįgo hooghan sinilįį hooghan t'óó ní' níl yéedąą' t'áa áadi la' nahálni'. Éí áádóó tádeeshnish. áko shíí ei' anánájah eidí haalá éí hoolyé NECA daashin hoolyé bine'į' yfłk'id, ei bike bíł anánájah. Daané'é yaa naakai, áko dífshįjdi éí ákót'é silíí'.

Floyde Frank

bits'áádóó, jó kóó da nitsáhákees. T'áá aaníí tó da éí bits'áádóó t'óó baa'ih daazlǫ́. T'óó ahayóíidéé' tó ahidadiilǫ́go, ahidahodíinéehgo, jó áádéé' nida'azhnish. Áko nléí ahidadiidǫ́jǫ́' t'óó ahayóí shǫ́ ahidahodíí'éél. Kóó da éí nihíǫ́' nidaakai nít'éé'. Lǫ́'í shǫ́ daabaahgo át'ée nidi t'ahdoo hazhó'ó hadíí'jǫ́ da. Kóó da éí baa nitsáhákees. Áko jó ániid háánoot'ánígíí éí bá hajooba' áhwiinidzin. Doo ákót'éego yee tí'dahwíidoonih da ilǫ́. Áko niláhdéé' éí, azee'ál'j bit haz'ánidéé' éí, Wááshindoon bil haz'ánidéé' t'áá íyisíí áníí'éego t'éiyá, t'áadoo aaníidígíí loóó doo nádzihií bits'áádóó nidoolna', nijéí yilzólíí bidoolna'go t'éiyá nihí'dí'nígo hoolzhíizh. T'áá haa'í da naah hááyáago da, nijéí yilzólíí da bits'áádóó da haa'í da naah hááyáago, loóó doo nádzihií'gíí, éí dooda éí doo ilǫ́ da nihí'dí'nígo dahoolzhíizh. Áko nidi doo ákót'ée da nisin. Kóó shik'is nít'éé' ákót'éego naaki dílt'éego t'áá íyisíí yik'ee tí'hooníhgo yiniinaa nahoniní'áadgo nésh'jǫ́go éí t'áá bohólníhgoó bǫ́ah hadaakai daazlǫ́. T'áá haa'í da bǫ́ah hááyáago éí . . .

A word from the director...

This book represents the culmination of the work of a large number of people and organizations over the course of more than two years. It is, however, by no means the end of the project, nor, unfortunately, is the story of the Navajo uranium miners completed.

The Navajo uranium miner struggle is ongoing. [As I wrote in 1997, there are a number of issues that are pressing. At the top of the list was reforming the Radiation Exposure Compensation Act to make it fairer and easier for Navajo miners and their families to receive just compensation. Legislation passed the US Congress in 2000 that amended RECA to address many of these problems. DB, November, 2000] Beyond that there are the many concerns raised on the pages of this book far more eloquently and heartfelt than I could express. Hopefully the words of the people we interviewed will help spur action on these issues.

This book is one part of the larger project. In addition to the book, we have produced an exhibit that we plan to take on a national tour. We are also in the process of editing a 10 minute video tape which will accompany exhibitions. We will place archives of the complete sets of interview audio tapes and visual images with both the Navajo Tribe and the Center for Southwest Research at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque in hopes that others will find them of use.

I wish to express my most sincere thank you to everyone who has helped with the project thus far. I think I speak for all involved when I say that we have encountered a tremendous reservoir of support in the course of our work. People have donated their time, their money and their incredible range of skills. Some have been hired by the project to take on tasks in addition to their full time jobs and family responsibilities. I am deeply grateful to all.

I can not name everyone who helped us here as they are credited elsewhere in the book, but I would be remiss if I did not single out four individuals without whom this book would simply not exist. The interviews were entirely the product of the work of Timothy Benally and Phil Harrison. Their close ties to the population of affected Navajos and their strong interviewing skills are responsible for

the moving, revealing words herein.

It is equally important to single out for acknowledgement the fine work that Timothy Benally, Martha Austin-Garrison and Lydia Fasthorse-Begay did in translating and transcribing the interviews. There are few people who have the bilingual and written Navajo skills necessary for this task, let alone who are willing to devote the long hours required.

We have all strived to conduct the project in a way that is consistent with a fundamental respect for the Navajo miners and their family members. For my part, I have tried to provide direction to the project with this as the guiding principle. The nature of the project has helped, since it was designed to be inherently respectful of the views of the people. I have also attempted to photograph the people that we interviewed in a way that honors not only their pain and anger, but also their incredible strength.

In the process of developing this project it occurred to me that there were few examples of using the combination of oral history and photography to address environmental problems at the community and grassroots level. And fewer still that were bilingual. It remains to be seen whether the approach that we followed will be broadly applicable, but my experience has left me convinced that there are good reasons to include oral history and photography in the tool chest of environmental justice activists.

On a personal note this project has meant a great deal to me. Through it I have been able to reconnect with the Navajo people, with whom I grew up in the 1960's and early 1970's. It has also been an opportunity to work closely with my father, whose work for the Navajo Tribe was the reason that I lived as a child in Window Rock and Ganado, in the Navajo Nation.

In conclusion, I wish to extend my warmest thank you to the people that we interviewed. In most cases we showed up on their doorstep unexpected. They were willing to invite us into their homes and share deeply personal experiences and feelings. In return, I sincerely desire that this book will benefit them in their quest for fairness, justice and health.

Doug Brugge, Somerville, Massachusetts, January 25, 1997

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