

BOYKIN : One night we were switching at Buchanan and we had to drop it in there and had to give it a pretty good jerk, so it could start down hill, or we would stop, and we would have to have someone come pull the rear end of the train off of us. This kid was a little short kid and I was pulling Roy Blue (?) and Roy Blue he called on the phone, you know we had a phone and he asked that boy, he didn't want him to come up and help him move that car, and he said no. We dropped that car in there and I could see him climbing up the side, but it hit something back down there. We knew there were some cars in there, but we weren't able to get it out that far. We went out there, old [Indistinct], I appreciated him that night. Ordinarily I didn't like him because he was the head brakeman. I backed up you know, to get my train, I had left it down at [Indistinct] and he just cut that off and dropped that car. I went back there to get my train and he said, "Say, I don't see any light over there." I looked and I said, "I don't either." He said, "Let's run down there right quick and see what happened." I ran down there and I could see in the headlight a fellow's body laying there just all scrambled up.

BURROUGHS: Now, who was that, Bolly?

BOYKIN : His name was, what's his name?

BOYKIN(P): I don't know.

BOYKIN : Oh, yes you do.

BURROUGHS: He was a brakeman?

BOYKIN : He was a brakeman, yes he was a brakeman. I see his daddy every time I go to Clovis.

BURROUGHS: He was knocked off a car. . .

BOYKIN : [Indistinct] Parrish, it was his boy. I sure hated that. That was the only bad accident we ever had. Of course, I got fortyseven cars wrecked. But it never hurt anybody.

BURROUGHS: How did you do that?

BOYKIN : I got the journal burned off, no oil in it and it wouldn't smoke, it burned. She just dropped down and got fortyseven cars.

BURROUGHS: How did you get them up?

BOYKIN : I didn't. I just went on to Clovis. I had the railroad. We got phones everywhere and we just called and told them what happened. They said, "Well, have you to a hold of any cars?" I said, "Yes, we have hold about twenty." He said, "Bring them on in."

BOYKIN(P): Tell them about how many times you got fired.

BOYKIN : Oh, yes, I got fired three times.

BOYKIN(P): Tell them what for?

BURROUGHS: From the Santa Fe?

BOYKIN : Yes. Oh, I don't know what for.

BOYKIN(P): [Indistinct]

BOYKIN : Yes. [Indistinct] They never would have known it, if I hadn't have told them.

BURROUGHS: How long were you fired, were you on a period of probation or did you? . . .

BOYKIN : I stayed off about, how long did I stay off?

BOYKIN(P): [Indistinct]

BOYKIN : They called me and told me that three years was the limit and if I wanted to get back to the railroad, to come on back. I got back pretty quick.

BURROUGHS: You went back as an engineer then?

BOYKIN : Yes.

BURROUGHS: What year was that?

BOYKIN(P): About '48.

BOYKIN : Yes.

BURROUGHS: How many years in all did you work for the Santa Fe?

BOYKIN :

BURROUGHS: Forty-one. And you just retired last year?

BOYKIN : Yes, I just retired last year. I am enjoying this retirement, but I sure liked to run my engine.

BURROUGHS: You wish you had one to run around in Portales?

BOYKIN : Yes. (Laugh).

BOYKIN(P): He's getting kind of tired of this retirement, though. He still kind of wishes he was still working for the railroad.

BOYKIN : Yes, I do. It's the best work that you could ever do.

BURROUGHS: Not many people could say that, Bolly.

BOYKIN : It's real clean.

BOYKIN(P): He was real lucky. So many people were trying to make a living, and worked years and years [Indistinct].

BOYKIN : I was always tickled when I got called. Unless it was midnight or something.

BOYKIN(P): Very few people love the work that they are doing. I'd just like to know what percent there is.

BURROUGHS: There's something about a railroad and a fire engine that is pretty fascinating to most everybody.

BOYKIN : Umm humm, but not only that, it was so easy. And you had to be on your toes all the time.

BURROUGHS: Yes, I'm sure you did. You felt very responsible.

and you were standing there and (?) [Indistinct] you were going like this." (Laughter).

BURROUGHS: Bolly, you certainly are an old timer; would you like to comment on the changes you've seen in Portales, in the life in general in the town?

BOYKIN : Well, they don't have any saloons here.

BURROUGHS: They used to.

BOYKIN : Yes, they used to have seven saloons and one grocery store.

BOYKIN(P): That's one for the record.

BOYKIN : That was Harris, Harris's grocery store. I was riding a burro by Joe Addington's saloon one day and I heard a pistol shot, and a man fell out that door. That mule was too slow for me. I got off of that mule, that burro.

BURROUGHS: (Laughs) You could run faster than the mule.

BOYKIN : I used to gather up whiskey bottles and take them down to the saloon to sell them.

BURROUGHS: Where did you gather the bottles?

BOYKIN : Oh, just off of the streets and around. I'd get a nickle apiece for them. That was a lot of money then. I went down there one windy day, and I just kind of opened the door and peeked in and it was plumb full.

BURROUGHS: In the saloon?

BOYKIN : Umm humm. I went home with my bottles, and I kept them.

BOYKIN(P): Why didn't you sell your bottles?

BOYKIN : The wind was blowing so hard they wouldn't take them.

BURROUGHS: You were afraid to go in, I'll bet.

BOYKIN : Oh, all the time I was going to high school. Except when I was playing football off at some other town, and he'd kind of sell the milk for me.

BURROUGHS: Well what happened to the saloons in Portales? When did they go out?

BOYKIN : I can't remember when they went out. . . . Back at the time the wagon yards did. We used to have four wagon yards here.

BURROUGHS: Where were they located?

BOYKIN : One of them was. . . it was two of them located on Main street. Let's see, Boucher had a wagon yard and Dowthett (sp.?) had a wagon yard and Walters had one; Walters' was right over there where the First National . . . Portales National Bank is now. And then the others were on Main Street, right across the street from each other--Dowthett's and Boucher's.

BURROUGHS: How big were they? How many wagons did they accommodate?

BOYKIN : Oh, big enough to accommodate this county. They had about . . . Oh, I guess they'd accommodate. . . . See they put the horses up in stalls. I guess altogether they'd accommodate fifty wagons.

BURROUGHS: They just parked the wagons and put the horses in the stalls during the day?

BOYKIN : Yes.

BURROUGHS: How much did that cost the farmers?

BOYKIN : Oh, about. . . . I imagine thirty cents a horse. Something like that. Feed was real cheap.

BURROUGHS: All day?

BOYKIN : Yes.

BURROUGHS: Well now, did they come to town just on trade days?

BOYKIN : I was afraid to go in.

BURROUGHS: How old were you?

BOYKIN : Oh, about seven or eight.

BURROUGHS: Well, how many bottles did you usually pick up at one time to trade in; what was your usual haul?

BOYKIN : Oh, around four or five at the most. They gave me a nickle ap ce for them. That was a lot of money.

BURROUGHS: It was a lot of money for a seven year old kid then.

BOYKIN : Yes. And I was always. . . when I was going to high school, I milked seventeen cows, night and morning and went to school-- and played football.

BURROUGHS: When. . . where were the cows? What dairy was that?

BOYKIN : Merrill's. You know right across the track over there, that old big house where Sledge's used to live?

BURROUGHS: Yes.

BOYKIN : Well, that was where it was then.

BURROUGHS: That was the dairy?

BOYKIN : Yes. One time, me and Lee and Mike and another boy or two was out there. See, he raised lots of cantaloups. They said--we said, "Well, let's go over there and steal some of those cantaloups." Just go over there and steal them. Everybody agreed, the whole gang. So we went over there, and we hadn't no more than got in that pasture till Mr. Merrill said "Bert," he said "I got plenty of those cantaloups up on the porch." Said "just go up there and help yourself." (Laughter). You know that didn't dare us?

BURROUGHS: Why yes. You didn't have to steal them after all.

BOYKIN : No.

BURROUGHS: How many years did you milk cows?

- BOYKIN : Oh, all the time I was going to high school. Except when I was playing football off at some other town, and he'd kind of sell the milk for me.
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- BURROUGHS: They just parked the wagons and put the horses in the stalls during the day?
- BOYKIN : Yes.
- BURROUGHS: How much did that cost the farmers?
- BOYKIN : Oh, about. . . I imagine thirty cents a horse. Something like that. Feed was real cheap.
- BURROUGHS: All day?
- BOYKIN : Yes.
- BURROUGHS: Well now, did they come to town just on trade days?
- BOYKIN : Most of the time. But there used to be a lot of people traveling through here going out to locate on a claim out in eastern New Mexico, western New Mexico, and they did pretty good.

BURROUGHS: Did the homesteaders come and live in their wagons while they were stopped here? I meant, were they covered wagons, or just freight wagons?

BOYKIN : Most of them were covered wagons. See, when we . . . my mother filed on a claim over across the Pecos River and we went from here over there in a wagon. It was fifteen days before we got where we were wanting to go. Of course, I was real young then and I didn't. . . I was about eight or nine, I guess, then. But every summer I used to go over there with those buffalos, you know, with Bill Dunlap. I'd go over to Urton Lake, and we'd hold them over there all summer and bring them back here, in time for school to start.

BURROUGHS: Buffalo?

BOYKIN : Umm humm.

BURROUGHS: Well, then what do you mean by. . .

BOYKIN : Buffalo Jones had forty-eight buffalo, and he left them with W.O. Dunlap to take care of. And so Bill. . . It fell to Bill and me to take care of the Buffalo. So we'd drive them over there in the summer. We had a lot of close calls, but we had some horses that knew what they were doing.

BURROUGHS: You would just herd them?

BOYKIN : They were as scared of those Buffalos, as scared as we were. (Laughter).

BURROUGHS: Well were they hard to herd? Were they. . .

BOYKIN : You bet. If it should come a rain over there ten miles, and they would smell that rain, they'd throw their heads up and their tails up and they wouldn't stop till they got there. And all we did was fix fence. They'd run right over a fence.

BURROUGHS: The homesteader's fences?

BOYKIN : Yes, and the ranchers' too. 'Course those homesteaders' didn't amount to nothing, but those ranchers' (fences) did. They didn't like it.

BURROUGHS: Well why did the man keep buffalos. . .

BOYKIN : He wanted to preserve them. He didn't want them to all disappear, you know. He went to Africa one time, he and Dallas MacDaniel and Mr. and Mrs. Loveless (Sp). They went over there and roped a lion and all kind of things.

BURROUGHS: And who was this man?

BOYKIN : Buffalo Jones. . .

BURROUGHS: What was his real name?

BOYKIN : I never did hear it.

BURROUGHS: Just Buffalo Jones.

BOYKIN : Just Buffalo Jones. He could walk right around in that herd; but there wasn't anybody else could. They were afraid of him, and I don't know why. We kept one here one time; it was crippled or something and it got well, and got to where it would run over all the fences and everything, and we couldn't hold him in. So we got old Big Johnson to come over there on that big old bay horse of his and got him to rope that buffalo and pull him in there in the lot and tie him up to that snubbing post in there. And we put some side liners on her. We had one go to this foot and one go to this front foot and this hind foot, see. He quit jumping fences. (Laughter)

BURROUGHS: Poor buffalo! How long did you keep him there?

BOYKIN : Oh, we could have turned him loose and let him go. He could walk on it.

BURROUGHS: He could walk but he couldn't jump fences?

BOYKIN : He couldn't jump fences. He kicked old Big Johnson right then. . . [Indistinct] and I don't know what happened or what kept him from killing him. He was reaching down like that, you know. And he kicked him there, and I thought he had about killed him [Indistinct].

BURROUGHS: Well tell me some more about Big Johnson. . . getting his loan at the bank.

BOYKIN : Oh. Well old Big 'Un went in the barber shop one morning and he got a shave and everything. They said "What are you getting a shave for this early in the morning?" "Well," he said, "I got eight thousand head of steers out here and I gotta have

some cake to feed them. Kinda dry here." Said, "I went on over to the bank, tried to get a loan." Mr. Priddy and Mr. Neer ran the bank, you know. He came back after awhile, and they said "You get that loan, Big 'Un?" Said, "Priddy Near." (Laughter). Priddy Near.

BURROUGHS: Banks in those days didn't always give you every thing you asked for, either.

BOYKIN : No. (Laughter) You know old Arthur (Jones) has been awful good to me.

BURROUGHS: That's Mr. Arthur Jones?

BOYKIN : Umm hmm. He sure has been good to me.

BURROUGHS: Would you like to comment about life in general in Portales and Roosevelt County and the changes that you've seen all these years?

BOYKIN : Well, all the changes I've seen have been for the good. I like it real well here, and I don't see how you can improve on it unless you just work at it all the time. And we got to play a little. (Laughter)

BURROUGHS: I believe you do. Do you think the young people now have more advantages that you did?

BOYKIN : Oh, sure they do. They've got lots more advantages than we had. We had to walk every where we went. And there weren't but about three cars in the whole town.

BURROUGHS: But now do you really consider that the quality of young people and the character that we have in children now--is it very much improved over what you knew as a child?

BOYKIN : No, I don't think it is at all. I think we had good morals and most of our kids do. They have good morals.

BURROUGHS: So you have good faith in the young people of today. . .

BOYKIN : I do. I sure do. And I think they're doing all right, according to what's shoved down their throats. Everybody gives them everything, you know, that they want. Seems if I'd had that I'd be wanting the moon.

BURROUGHS: Do you think that the more they've had, the more they want?

BOYKIN : Well, it's all according to the disposition of the child. You can see a lot of people that are greedy, you know? And these kids, if they get greedy, why they want everything they can get too.

BURROUGHS: You think, if you had had these advantages when you were growing up, that you would be any different from what you are now?

BOYKIN : I don't think so.

BURROUGHS: You don't regret the hardships and denials?

BOYKIN : No, I don't.

BURROUGHS: Didn't you have fun?

BOYKIN : Yes, yes we had fun. When we got off, we really had fun.
(Laughter)

BURROUGHS: Got off from work, you mean?

BOYKIN : We worked hard. Yes, we had to work hard. When we got off duty, why we really had fun. I enjoyed it.

BOYKIN(P): Talk about the hardships, living on the plains was just about as hard as you can get, but we still say we wouldn't take (anything) for our experiences.

BOYKIN : I wouldn't. I wouldn't take for it. . .

BOYKIN(P): We really enjoyed life. We hated to sell out, hated to leave there when he got called back to the railroad. And we sold it and moved to the west from there. We didn't want to leave. And I thought when we went out there, I was going to the ends of the earth.

BOYKIN : You know, if I had had that many cows for that claim today, well they'd have been worth something. They were worth something then. They were worth \$4,000. And that was pretty good wages to make during the depression, wasn't it?

BURROUGHS: Yes it was, it certainly was.

BOYKIN : Yes sir!

BURROUGHS: Well Bolly, it's really been interesting to have your stories and your opinion of early day life. I certainly think you're qualified to talk about old timers right up to modern times. Thank you so much. Do either you or Pauline place any restrictions on the information you've given on this tape?

BOYKIN : I can't think of any.

BOYKIN(P): Can't think of any.

BURROUGHS: This will be part of the oral history program for Eastern New Mexico library.

BOYKIN : It will?

BURROUGHS: It will. And your names will be known--as long as the tape lasts. And this conversation. Thank you.

BOYKIN : I'll be darned! I didn't know that.

BURROUGHS: You're going to be part of local history now. Nobody will ever forget you.

BOYKIN : Umm humm.