

INTERVIEW WITH ENA MIDDLETON

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Born 1954 – started business 1988- Best Western Chieftain waitress – Harry Miller – Two Guns Miller – Indian Miller – Quentis and Gladys Miller parents – aunts and uncles – name “Ena” – 1971 Two Guns burned – cave in Yellow Horses – place in Two Guns – Apache curse – ruined photos – Gila monsters – “killed by Two Guns Miller” – defacing a grave – **Minyard’s** Garage – attacked by mountain lion – Aunt Mae impaled – Paul Taylor’s article – when Two Guns was built? – lost gold – Cortez – dispute – railroad canyon and robberies – Songs of the Seven Seas – Filipino grandmother – Igorot – Spanish-American war – self-proclaimed prophet – traffic in little towns – 66 bypassed – out of business motels – living in motel – **Minyard’s** garage – Balcom’s trading post – Navajos at trading post – Navajo reservation close – noise level/traffic change – fighting for exits- mixed school? Three new schools – Route 66 travelers – Japan business contacts – Navajo relocation – 1970 – more violence – gangs/graffiti – breaking down at gas stations and selling paintings, dishware – okies – takes a special kind of people to turn off the highway – why care about Route 66? Family – “Cheers” everybody knows everybody – people on Harleys – 99 percent local – drawing in foreign business – original diner/napkin holders – Mr. Burnham – neon sign – “too busy here” – population enlargement – old Navajo resentment – integrating communities – do people move on? – civic life – aunt’s curio shop that interstate went through – big family dinners – picnics in the cave- native dances to draw tourists- Yellow Horses – old ruins – interstate breaking families apart – Grandma telling about Philippines – children were “seen and not heard.”

DAVID DUNAWAY May I ask what year you were born in?

ENA MIDDLETON 1954.

DD 1954. Great. So, how long have you lived and worked on Route 66?

EM I've lived here all my life. I started my own business in 1988. But I've worked as a waitress and cashier ever since I was 13. I don't know what year that was, but ever since I was 13.

DD Always on Route 66?

EM Yes.

DD May I ask where you were?

EM At the Best Western Chieftain which is off of old 66, now it's I-40, but part of it used to be on 66.

DD So you probably can't remember the first time you traveled on Route 66?

EM No

DD Because it was just always there.

EM Right.

DD I guess we should start with your grandfather. What was his name?

EM Harry Miller.

DD Harry Miller. And he had a nickname?

EM He had two nicknames: "Two-Guns Miller" and "Indian Miller"

DD And how did he get those nicknames?

EM I really don't know. I know that "two guns" I believe is because he always carried two guns. And "Indian Miller" is because he always had the long braids and was part apache. So, I guess that's why they called him "Indian Miller."

DD And did you know him well?

EM I didn't know him at all. He died a year after I was born.

DD And tell me the names of your parents.

EM My dad is Quentis Miller and my mother was Gladys Miller.

DD And Quentis was his son?

EM Yes.

DD How many people were in your family?

EM Five. He had two brothers and sisters.

DD Could you tell me their names.

EM Let's see, there was Lou Miller, Mae Miller, and he had a brother Bender, and I guess there was only four of them, and himself.

DD And was your dad the youngest?

EM No. Mae Miller was the youngest.

DD "Ena" is an unusual name, isn't it?

EM Yes it is. It's Filipino for "mother." I was named after my grandmother. Her real name was real hard to pronounce, so they just called her "Ena."

DD I noticed that when I started looking into that unusual name. Do you remember your granddad's store, Two-Guns?

EM No. I just remember it as a child when it had caught on fire because they had come and got some pictures and

stuff from us and then right afterwards it caught on fire and it burned down.

DD That was 1971 I think.

EM I think it might have even been before then that they came and got the pictures, because I was a teenager in '71. And it seemed like I was still in grade school when they came and got the pictures.

DD So where did you grow up, in Holbrook?

EM No. Chambers.

DD That's a fairly long ways from Two-Guns.

EM Yes. In 1936, my dad and mom came out here to find Harry Miller and he had this cave up here, Yellow Horses. Were you aware of that, that that used to be a zoo for Harry Miller? After he left Two-Guns then he bought these caves up here at the state line. And actually he owned lots of property up there. He actually donated some to the state of New Mexico for a state park. Anyway, he opened up an amusement-type park up there for people. And that's where the old 66 goes right in front of those caves.

DD Did you visit Two Guns when you were young?

EM No. I didn't. Because by then he had already moved up to this area.

DD So it was Harry who owned Yellow Horse?

EM Right. And then when he passed away, my dad and mom got it, and we sold it, or they sold it, to the Yellow Horses.

DD And do you know that place in Two-Guns, there's a lot of folklore about it. I've heard a lot of stories. Could you tell us some of the stories?

EM The only thing I've heard about is the curse, because the Apaches had raided the Navajos and run off with the horses and some of the women, and they caught them in those caves and they killed them there. They

burned them out and killed them. And that's all I've heard. Plus, anybody that has anything to do with that area is having bad luck. Like the last gentleman who came in here several years ago, he died of a heart attack. And apparently, the one before that had got stabbed to death. So, that's what I've heard about it.

DD Did you ever go out there as an adult?

EM No. We'd drive by it and stop by the side of the road to look, but I've never gone up through it. I had pictures of all that area, cause I had my grandfather's albums, but apparently I left them in a mobile home that had a leak, and a lot of 'em have gotten ruined.

DD Do you still have the books?

EM I have some of the albums, but you really can't see the pictures, because they're old pictures, and when it got wet, they just stuck together and they're just – Now, I did give Mr. Taylor some of my grandfather's pictures. And he did return them.

DD So you have them still?

EM Yes.

DD I think I might have them right here in this very issue.

EM Yes. That's some of them, yes. And my sister still has – she took better care of her pictures – anyway she still has some of my grandfather in the caves. Up here he had mountain lions, and bobcats, and Gila monsters. He was really impressed with Gila monsters because he had lots of pictures of him touching them, and everything.

DD What sort of a man was he supposed to be?

EM Well, I'd never met him, but I've heard stories that he was quite rowdy because his partner at Two-Guns – they had a gunfight – and he killed him. And then I think it was soon after that that he moved up here to Lupton. He didn't get in trouble for it because it was a legal gunfight. And so, that's –

DD This is the west, right?

EM Yes, it's apparently hard for me to believe that people were allowed to carry guns and shoot each other. But the only thing he did get in trouble for, because they had a legal gunfight, on the headstone it said "killed by two guns miller" and he went and painted it off, and that's defacing a grave, and that's what he got in trouble for.

DD And what happened to him?

EM He got out. I had some news articles. The Gallup newspaper had some. I went back to the archives. And I think he was fined, but he didn't have to do any prison time or anything like that. But that is what he got in trouble for.

DD And what did your parents do?

EM My mother worked at the restaurant over here at Chieftain. And my dad worked at **Vineyard's Garage**.

DD I saw that coming in.

EM Yes. On old 66.

DD I wanted to ask you about some of those stories around this Two Guns place, because we're trying to document it.

EM Now, see, I don't know that many. I really don't. Only about the cursed canyon, that's all I know.

DD Well supposedly, your granddad Harry was attacked by a lynx. Did you ever hear about that?

EM A mountain lion.

DD What's the story with that?

EM That's what I've heard, that he had butchered, and it was one of his pets, and just the scent of the blood was still on him, and so yeah, it attacked him when he went into the cage. But that's all I heard about it.

DD Okay. Did your mom have an accident? A car accident?

EM My aunt Mae. My dad's – Harry's youngest daughter. Up here on the old 66, on **Creno Canyon**. She ran off the canyon – and if you've ever been up there it's really deep – and she was impaled on a tree. But, it didn't kill her, because she was still alive, but that's what I – like I said I was just a little girl when all of this stuff was going on. But I heard stories of that.

DD Did people in your family think that was connected with the curse?

EM At that time, no, because the first time I heard of the curse was actually Mr. Taylor was talking about it and a gentleman that had purchased Two Guns and was going to reopen it, he came to see if I had any pictures and stuff. And he had said something about it and then he never did come back, and he had died of a heart attack. So –

DD I've been reading Paul Taylor's article here, and if you don't have it, maybe we should make a copy and send it to you.

EM I've got this one.

DD Oh you've got that one, okay. It said that the Armstrongs - Harry Armstrong and his wife Marilyn - bought the property from your folks? Is that right?

EM No.

DD So, if I could trace the ownership: it was your dad's... your granddad sold it when he moved to Lupton? Or did he... was it the family's?

EM No, it was sold. Because the only property we ended up with is the actual Lupton lot. So that must be who he had sold it to.

DD And you wouldn't know when the place was constructed originally, would you? I'm trying to track that down and somebody said 1934.

EM You mean Two Guns? No. I don't know. I'm trying to think if anyone in my family would know. Because I know that when Dad and Mom moved out here in 1936, it was my understanding that Harry had already had this one at Lupton. So, I don't know.

DD Did you ever hear the stories about the treasure?

EM Yes. The lost gold? Well. I'll tell you what I have heard. But I don't know if they're true. Anyway, he has books in the museum in Flagstaff, my grandfather does. And it's all about the treasure. Something about lost gold. But my mom and dad had said that he had went and gathered these things from somewhere else and made some runs. But I don't know what's true. Because he is published in the museum, and he actually donated some of the gold pieces and some of the Spanish stuff and it's in the museum.

DD The idea is that your granddad found the treasure?

EM Yes. That he had found these – I don't know what it's called – the Spanish money and some of the Spanish stuff closer to the Lupton and Zuni area and so he was fighting with the – I have some of the articles in Gallup so you can come out and check this out but – Cortez traveled closer to this area than south. And I guess it was a dispute. I've seen the letters. A dispute going on back and forth, back and forth. But they never did come out and investigate.

DD Paul Taylor in the Route 66 Magazine piece says there were some robberies back in the days of the old trains route being built. And the payroll was taken. And then a train was robbed. Down by what they call "the Railroad Canyon," "the canyon Diablo." Twenty-five hundred silver dollars were missing.

EM I hadn't heard that one from my family. But I know my grandfather was a colorful character. On the Songs of the Seven Seas, is the one about the Spanish money and artifacts he had found. So I hadn't heard about the one you're talking about.

DD What was your parents' attitude towards your grandfather?

EM They didn't really talk about him that much, other than that he was an entrepreneur and he knew how to bring in the public, and he was a showman. And other than that they didn't say anything else.

DD I was just wondering... Did he build this place, do you know? Or did he pick it up already built?

EM No. I think they built it. From my understanding, they did build it.

DD Do you remember your grandmother at all?

EM Oh, yes. My grandmother didn't pass away until like '72 or '73. Like I said I was named after her. She couldn't speak English. She was from the Philippine Islands. She could just speak a little bit of English and Spanish and Filipino altogether.

DD How'd she come to marry your grandfather?

EM He was over there during the war. He was in the Spanish-American war, and I do have the information on what unit and which ships. There were three of them sent over there. I have that information. Anyway, he met her. She's an Igorot. Or was an Igorot. And he was made mayor of their community in 1918 something. Anyway, there's articles on it. But that's when he became a self-proclaimed prophet. And that's when he started writing these books, because he was seeing visions. And that's what a lot of these books are about, the visions that he had.

DD And he published them under the name "Harry Miller."

EM Yes.

DD Okay. I can check that.

EM I have some of the original ones, and I have the original one that is wrapped in a handkerchief, in his handwriting. So I still have that.

DD You must value the legacy?

EM I do. Except I really didn't know the gentleman. But, from all my understanding he was quite a character, and so stories come up about him. I don't know if they're true or not. Because I've heard he does strange things sometimes.

DD You've pretty much lived your life on Route 66. And I was curious if you could give us a sense for how things have changed in terms of traffic. You must remember it before there was any interstate.

EM Yes. I do. But as a little girl it just seems like it was a slower time of course, because actually people had to slow down to come through these little towns. And like now, being a business owner, only the adventurous people turn off for a small town like this. I was raised here. A lot of the people are still here that had the businesses along 66, and they're just down-home folks. Just "everybody knows everybody."

DD Do you remember when 66 was bypassed? The day or the week?

EM No. I believe it was in 1961 or 1962 or something like that because I remember the traffic used to all come in front of our house. And then I remember all the army equipment that was going through. I don't know where it was going at that time... probably Vietnam... and then all of a sudden there was no more traffic on our street, which is the old frontage road between here and Chambers.

DD It definitely must have affected the garage?

EM Yes. That's one reason it went out of business. And the same thing as the motels and stuff that were down in that area.

DD Could you describe those motels? Do you remember the names of any?

EM You know, I don't. Eventually we bought one and lived in it. But I don't remember the name of the motel. It was pink.

DD Where was it?

EM In Chambers. And it has been torn down and a house built there. But for a long time when we were little kids, my sister and I lived in the motel. We all had showers and bathrooms in our room, because they were motel rooms. But I don't know the name of it.

DD Did the motels along 66 – like the one you were living in – did they go down all at once, or was this sort of a slow process?

EM I think there was only that one. And it went down quick. Because then we were living in a bus behind **Minyard's Garage**. And then all of a sudden it was closed down and it came up for sale, and that's when my mom and dad bought it. But **Minyard's Garage** stayed open for – I was a teenager – probably until 1975. So it hung on that long. But then the owner moved away. But it has just really hurt the business around here. And it still is hurting the business around here, because nobody wants to get off the interstate.

DD What were the old 66 businesses along in that area – between Chambers and Sanders – do you remember them?

EM I'm afraid a lot of them were bars. There were three bars. Grocery stores. There was a couple grocery stores. And then a trading post. And that was closer to Chambers. And that's the only business I remember.

DD What was the trading post thing, do you remember?

EM Balcom's.

DD And who brought the materials that they were selling?

EM You know, I don't know. I know that the Native Americans would go in there and trade. But I assume they came from Gallup and would go and get the – because we still get all of our supplies from Gallup.

DD And were these Navajo, or were they Apache?

EM They were Navajos.

DD So really this area is pretty much now – or then – back in the ‘70s – Navajo?

EM Yes. You’re only about five miles from the Navajo reservation, going north from here, and then going back toward Gallup, you cross the Navajo reservation.

DD And it must have made a big difference in the noise level in front of your house when they shut – when those big trucks stopped coming. Is that right?

EM Oh, yes. It was actually more peaceful of course. Our house was right on the street because it used to be a business. To me, as a kid, it was a lot nicer not to have all that traffic and actually be able to go out and play without being really afraid of people running over you, because we’d ride bicycles out there. But now that I’m older and I own my business, I know that it had to be a really hard time for those people.

DD Was there opposition to their building the highway?

EM I don’t... I’m sure the business owners did. But as a kid, I didn’t pay any attention. But there was a fight – I don’t know if you know the Best Western Chieftain up here, which is no longer a Best Western. They fought with **Minyard’s Garage**. Well they fought for exits of course. Everybody was fighting for exits. And they’re the ones that won out. And so **Minyard’s** didn’t get an exit at theirs. But of course it goes back to whoever has the most money to fight for it.

DD And where did you go to high school?

EM Here at Sanders.

DD Is it a mixed school, or is it mainly Navajo?

EM It’s a public school, but no, there’s more Navajos than there are white people.

DD So what was it like growing up around – being a minority group.

EM I didn't consider it minority, because I was raised here and at that time everyone was family. And still today, there are more Navajos than there are white people in this area. But, you don't think of yourself as a minority when you're raised here.

DD But it's somewhat unusual education experience – I think – to go through school with a lot of Navajos.

EM You know, I wouldn't know, because that's all I've ever done. I don't know. When we went to school it was such a small school. Now we have three. Back in the olden days, all the kids went to one school. And now we have the gradeschool, midschool, and high school. I didn't see anything different in it. Of course I didn't have anything to compare it with, because I'd never gone to school anywhere else.

DD Could you describe the school?

EM As far as –

DD What it looked like, how it was organized...

EM It was just an old brick building that seemed to stretch everywhere, and the grade school was on the west side, the mid school was in the middle and the high school was on the east side.

DD Would this be along 66?

EM Yes. It was right there.

DD And did that school remain open, or did it get closed when the others open?

EM It did remain open until two years ago when they tore it down. And they built another one. It's on the other side of the interstate – right through here – where that administration office is – the whole school was there. First came the new high school, which is behind us, and they still had the mid school there. They tore it

down – I believe it was two years ago – when they did the new one.

DD You've seen a lot of Route 66 travelers coming through here. As a matter of fact, you're very nicely written up in this book. You probably know that you're listed in here –

EM I know that we're in several of them.

DD I'll show you this one after you're done. It makes it sound like you can't drive by Sanders without coming here.

EM Well, good. [chuckles]

DD Do you get foreign travelers?

EM Oh, yes. Not recently because I've had some health problems, and I was away, and I'm just tired, and so I don't go out and actually advertise anymore. But we're actually published in Japan. There's a gentleman that comes over – well he did a few years in a row and come visit us – and he did articles on us. And then there was a Japanese clothes-maker – some kind of jeans – they came in and did their photo shoot in the diner.

DD Is it any different running, say, a café here, than it would be running it in a little town, say, outside of Phoenix?

EM I don't know because I haven't done that. But everyone here I have gone to school with them, gone to school with their children, you know, and so everybody knows everyone. We are getting larger, because there was the Navajo relocation. I don't know if you're aware of it... Where they took the Navajos off the Hopi... But they relocated them down here. So there are a whole bunch of new people. But, still, there are quite a few that were raised here and will always be here.

DD When did that relocation bring people here?

EM It started in – probably – 1970. But it finally came through seven or eight years ago when they started finally moving people out here. The government bought up all the big ranches around here and then the Navajo people came and could choose which area they wanted to live in. And so they started moving out – I’d say about five or six years ago – they started slowly moving people out here.

DD Has it changed the town at all?

EM It’s changed it... yes. As a matter of fact. Yes. It’s not for the better. Along with having more people around, there’s more violence and more – if you notice the signs – the gang members are starting to graffiti stuff – and tag stuff. It just brought in a whole bunch of people and there’s no jobs available. And so I guess people get restless and they go out and get in trouble.

DD The main people who used to come through here, I guess, were the people going east and particularly west, out to California. Do you remember any stories about any of these travelers coming through town?

EM Long time ago? Well, actually no, I don’t. The only thing I remember was when I was a child and we lived on 66. At that gas station there was a garage. And people were always breaking down and never have enough money, so they would come sell stuff to my mom and dad to give them enough money to get gas and get their cars fixed.

DD What kind of people were they?

EM You know, I don’t remember. If I had to stick a name on it, it would probably be – which is mean – Okies. People that were moving out west.

DD What did they have to sell?

EM Paintings, dishes. I’m trying to think what else it was. Mainly that. Because that’s what my mother bought. I still have some paintings. And some – I believe they’re probably antique – dishware and stuff like that.

DD I guess the people that come here now, are not that kind of person, but maybe they're tourists who want to drive 66?

EM Yes. The ones that actually come to our diner? Yes. It takes a special kind of people to show up over here, because we are hard to find and we're not the fanciest thing in the world. They usually get us out of books, or they have seen – I used to have two billboards but now I only have one – they seen our billboard on the road. But they're nice. They're special people.

DD Those are the Route 66 travelers who are here for that experience?

EM Right. We had some last week and they were coming through and they were from Las Vegas, Nevada. And they stopped in because they had seen our article. And they were headed east, and they're supposed to stop back on their way back.

DD Why do you figure they care so much about Route 66?

EM Because of all the tales, I suppose. When I think about 66, I think of family. And when you go down old 66, and you go to the old businesses where people had them forever – they are friendly. And they make you a part of their family. And you're not a number. So I think that's a lot of it.

DD I was talking last night with the people that own Rod's Steakhouse in Williams: Stella and Lawrence Sanchez. And they were saying the attractions of a place like this – or Rod's Steakhouse – is precisely that it isn't the Golden Arches. Do people say that to you?

EM The people that come here, yes. Well the most comments I get is because we're family. I've owned this for going on twenty years. And, yes. I hope to meet someone who's a stranger. And if they want to be part of our lives and our family – because usually there's other people in the community – and if there's discussions, everybody's in it. It reminds me of that old "Cheers," that movie "Cheers" and how everybody knows everybody in there. That's how this is. You

know? Anyway, that's the comments that we get, that "it's really nice to be here" and it's "like being home."

DD

That's very nice. Are most of your customers today those Route 66 tourists, or the local Navajo?

EM

They're the locals. Like I said, it takes special people to actually venture off the highway and come out here. Now, I tell you – this is mean again – who pulls up here but doesn't come in – people riding Harleys. And I understand nowadays, yes, a lot of the Harley riders are attorneys... and so they'll just come and look, and then drive off. But they had a Harley rally last year. Actually a lot of families, daughters, grandpas, granddaughters, they were all riding through, and it was just really nice because they did stop in and they were really nice people. But most of them, well, just drive off.

DD

What percentage of the people here – your clients – are local?

EM

I'd say that 99 percent are local and only 1 percent are tourist.

DD

And how do you reach out to that one percent?

EM

I used to send off ads and stuff, to advertise in magazines, and in travel tours, we used to get quite a few tours, especially from Japan. But I got cancer, and so I was away for a year. That's one reason I have it up for sale. And I wish somebody could buy it that is enthusiastic as I used to be, because if you advertised and put it in the right papers, you could draw in businesses, or business. It's just too much for me.

DD

What do you think's going to happen?

EM

To the diner? Hopefully, it will sell. And hopefully somebody will fall in love with it like – when I started out – I only got the original diner – and I saw it sitting along the street – and I looked in the window and it has those round napkin holders, in the original, and for some reason I fell in love with those – because they reminded me of bullets or something. And that's where it all started. I had to go borrow – I found a

friend who would let me borrow money – and we bought it and we fought with the county to open it up, because we had to grandfather a lot of it in, because I'd just started it with that original diner. Anyway, it's been a long process.

The 10 by – I can't remember the size of it – the Valentine Diner – that's the one I originally started with. And I used to be over by Burnham's trading post. And then I was so busy that I needed to enlarge it. So that's when we moved over here. Mr. Burnham let me put it on his property and he couldn't afford to give up anymore space. So then I moved it over here. But originally it was in Holbrook, Arizona, was where it was. And then some people bought it and moved it to St. Johns and that's where I saw it. But they never dared to open it, because they were inside the city limits and they wouldn't grandfather it. But we're not inside the city limits, so we got grandfathered.

- DD If you had to do it all over again, what would you do different?
- EM Actually nothing, because I think I've always tried my best. But knowing now, I would try to come up with money for advertisement because I know that's what brings the business in. Neon. I've looked into having neon put on there, but it's just so expensive. But that's what I would try to do, is get the neon back on it.
- DD Is Burnham still in business?
- EM Yes.
- DD And is it run by the same family?
- EM Yes.
- DD I guess I wonder, what's this town like?
- EM Well, it's quiet. The only thing we have here, of course, is the diner, the gas station, the three schools, the post office... that's about it. And the fire department. But, I like it. Right now it's too busy for me. There's too many people. So, eventually we – my husband and I, we have 40 acres out in the boonies – that once we sell this – we'll move out there. But my

son just graduated and he didn't want to leave school, or move way out where there's no TV or anything. But, it's just, actually, enlarged. Sanders has enlarged quite a bit.

DD And that enlargement, when did that start?

EM Since relocation. Yes. I'm trying to think, most of the families that were here are still here: the original ones. But I can't remember how many people they have relocated to this area. But, it's quite a few.

DD It must be hard – those people don't have local ties.

EM No, they don't.

DD Did the other Navajos accept them? The ones you grew up with, did they accept them?

EM Most of the time, but they are resentful because it was part of the deal for the relocation that they get new homes, paved road, water, electricity, and where the other Navajos have been here forever, have to fight for it. Some of them still do not have electricity or water, and have dirt roads. And so, yes, there's a little bit of a hardship there.

DD Are they integrating, or is the sort of a distance between the new arrivals and the –

EM No, I think they're integrating – to me. The two - the people that work for me are relocated here and the other two were raised here and they have no problem.

DD Has the Navajo community here changed at all? Besides the relocation, or do they live pretty much the way they did when you were growing up?

EM Yes, they do. It's the same. It's a laid-back community.

DD And do people move on, or are they pretty much still here?

EM Most people are still here. Some of them have moved on for awhile, but it seems like most of them almost always end up coming back.

DD Well, you must be very proud to live in this community for such a long time.

EM Well, I am. I like this community.

DD Are you active in the civic life at all?

EM I used to be, but no, not anymore.

DD What did you used to do?

EM We used to belong to the Lions Club and the church groups and stuff like that. But, anymore, the business takes a lot of my time. And, I just don't get out and do the – Well there's not a whole bunch of stuff, other than the churches and the fire department that have events going on, and we always donate to them, but we don't actually participate in a lot of their stuff.

DD Maybe we could finish up by talking a little bit about Lupton and your family's presence there. Do you remember about when they came – I think you said the mid '30s.

EM 1936 is when my mom and dad moved out to this area. From all of my stories that I can remember, Harry was already living up in Lupton, at that time, and that's why they settled in this area. And then my aunt Lou and her husband and children lived down at Houck and they had a curio shop and sold rugs and stuff. But when the interstate came through, it went right through their store. So they bought them out and then they moved to east Texas.

DD So it's kind of hard to keep a family together when these kinds of things –

EM Oh, yes. I remember as a child, the property down there at Houck, we'd all end up down there and have great big dinners. It was me and all my cousins. Everybody lived really close. Grownups would play pea-knuckle. We would play baseball and whatever.

But then, when the interstate went through, it just scattered the family because there was no more money-making because they didn't have an exit off the interstate. It went right through the business. So, they had no way of continuing on with their businesses.

DD Did Lupton recover?

EM No. My grandfather for a long time – when'd he pass away, in '53? Or '55? '55 I think – anyway, it had been closed down after that because nobody ran it. We'd just have our family picnics and stuff because inside that cave, even when it's raining, no water gets in there. So we'd have our picnics and stuff in there. But then it went to my mom and dad, well it went to the siblings. My dad had got cancer and so they signed it over to him and he sold it to the Yellow Horses to pay off his doctor bills.

DD The Yellow Horses, is that a tribe?

EM No. They're Navajo people. Their one brother – he used to be called "Chief Yellow Horse" and he used to dress up like a chief and they did the native dances and stuff to draw in the tourists – but, anymore, once you go up to Lupton, have you been up there?

DD I've never stopped.

EM Exactly. [chuckles] Anyway, they don't get any – every once in awhile a tourist will stop in – or they were selling some cigarettes and so the truck drivers would go up there, but they're just hurt just like the rest of us when the interstate went through.

DD And is it still in your family? Or they sold it?

EM Yes, we sold it. Mom and Dad did.

DD Why did they sell it?

EM Because my dad had the cancer and we had to pay for the doctor bills. But some of the – I don't know if they tore down the hogans. There used to be three hogans up there and some cages were built into the side. But I

think the Yellow Horses have actually cleaned that up. And the ruins were still there. The ruins I was telling you about that were on one side of the cave... My grandfather claims that he found them there. And then, part of my family says, "no, he made them there." So, I don't know what's true.

DD And did anybody ever come study those ruins?

EM Someone out of Gallup came and looked at it, but I never did find the results, because I know I've seen the letters of bickering back and forth about "no, it's real" "no, it's not real" back and forth and back and forth.

DD It seems like Route 66 was keeping the communities and families together but the interstate had the opposite effect.

EM Yes. It did. Especially for families that were all in business together, once the businesses went under, then of course the families have to scatter to make a living. And I think that's probably what the saddest part is, is that that's what happened.

DD So, you must remember the time before the interstate, maybe a little farther?

EM I do because I was a child. And I didn't – the finances and stuff didn't bother me – but there was always – oh yes. I bet there would be about ten of us, all the cousins together, it was just a happy time. And we certainly weren't rich because my grandmother Ena lived in a little shack with a dirt floor, but my cousin and I were her favorite grandchildren and we'd always go stay the night with her and she would tell us about the Philippine Islands and everything about what was going on. Anyway, it was just a good time.

DD Well, thank you very much for talking with us, and sharing all of this information. And what we didn't find from you, we may be lucky to find from someone else.

EM Oh, I hope so. It's just that I was so young, especially when Two Guns... And all I've heard is tales of it. I'm

afraid that our parents didn't really talk much about that. Back in those days children were to be "seen and not heard" type thing. So we weren't part of their stories. We just happened to hear them.

DD

Thank you very much.