



MARSHALL TRIMBLE  
1939

Honored as a Historymaker 2014  
Historian, Teacher, Author



The following is an oral history interview with Historymaker (**HM**) conducted by Pam Stevenson (**PS**) for Historical League, Inc. and video-graphed by Laurie-Sue Retts, (**LS**) on November 13, 2013.

*Transcripts for website edited by members of Historical League, Inc.  
Original tapes are in the collection of the Arizona Heritage Center Archives, an Historical Society Museum, Tempe, Arizona.*

**PS** I think we can go ahead. And, start.

**MT** Okay.

**PS** Um. I'm Pam Stevenson doing this oral history interview for the, uh, History Makers for 2014. And Laurie-Sue Rett is running the camera. And I'll let you introduce yourself. Why don't you give us your full name.

**MT** I'm Marshall Trimble. Shall I say Marshall Ira Trimble? Okay.

**PS** Tell me when and where you were born.

**MT** I was born in Mesa, Arizona, on January the 16<sup>th</sup>, 1939. But there is a little footnote to that.

We lived south of Tempe on a little ranch at Kyrene. And there was no hospital there, uh, in Tempe, at that time. So, the nearest hospital was Mesa. And my folks had no money, but Dr. Poley, the guy who delivered my brothers and I, had horses. So, he pastured his horses on our land, and that's how we were paid for. (laughing)

He remained my doctor until I graduated from ASU. (laughing)

**PS** Okay. And, how did you get the name Marshall?



**MT** Well, I often wondered about that cause everybody else I knew growing up had common names, and, uh, there I was...I stood out in a crowd.

And I, I learned just a few years ago that, uh, that was the last name of my, uh...maiden name I should say...of my, uh, great-grandmother. One of my great-grandmothers.

**PS** That seems to have worked for you as a western history...

**MT** I guess. I, I, I thought about changing it several times. Until one day, I was, I was at a book signing. And, a lady came up to me and she said, um, so what's your real name? And I said, it's Marshall. And she said, no, that's a writer's name. Marshall Trimble, that's a writer's name. Uh. What's your real name? And I...after that I, I thought, hey, maybe that's not a bad name after all. (laughs) So I, so I sort of reconciled myself to keep Marshall Trimble.

**PS** Okay. Well, let's talk a little bit about, uh, your growing up years. Uh. When did your family first come to Arizona?

**MT** They both came, my family both came to Arizona in 1918. Both of 'em.

My mother's family came from Arkansas, uh, because her mother had, uh, tuberculosis. And my father's family came from Del Rio, Texas because my grandmother on that side had asthma. And both were dis, uh, it was, they were thought to be terminal.

And my grandmother from Texas with asthma lived another 40 years here in Arizona. And my Irish grandmother from, uh, Arkansas, uh, died a, about two or three years after they arrived in Arizona. So, my mother had never really knew her mother. And, and, of course, I didn't.

**PS** And you say when you were born your family lived on a, a ranch or a farm in (MT – Yeah.) Tempe?

**MT** They, uh, had a little livestock place. Um. There's an interesting story about my, uh, my grandmother from Texas.

They got off the train in Tempe in 1918. And they had no, they only had the, pretty much, the clothes on their backs. And my grandmother had four, four young children. My dad was the oldest at 10.

And, uh, there was a man, there was a man standing there at the train station. He said, you folks look like you could use work. And, uh, she said yes. And he said, well, I'm hiring for the cotton fields out in Mesa. We have a cotton camp out there. There are tents out there, and, and you can



live in the, you can take your family and live in a tent and pick cotton. And so, that's what they did when they first arrived. They picked cotton.

**PS** Had they been fam, farmers or ranchers before they came?

**MT** No. My grandmother was a schoolteacher. (laughs) Before that. In Del Rio.

**PS** So, did she get back to teaching school here?

**MT** Actually she is a pretty amazing woman. She, uh, uh, she taught, uh, she spoke Spanish fluently as did, as did my grandfather. And so, he had a, he got a job supervising, uh, the, uh, the cotton pickers. And she picked cotton herself, and, and he supervised because he spoke Spanish and most of the workers were, were Mexican.

And, my grandmother, um, um, my grandmother did teach the Yaqui women out in Guadalupe. Uh. And she taught English as a second language, uh, to, to those, and to the children. So, she kind of was, remained a schoolteacher.

**PS** And, so how did they, uh, end up on the farm in Tempe? Did they own that?

**MT** No, that was, that was my parents then. When my dad, uh, they married, my mom and dad married in 1935. And he'd been a cowboy. In fact, he courted my mother on horseback. She said it was a, it was a, a, a dun horse. Uh. Came over.

And I think he was 10 years older than her, and I think he kind of swept her off her feet. And so, (laughing) uh, they, they never did really have that proverbial pot. Uh. And we lived, we lived pretty close to the bone.

We didn't own our own place. We just leased places. And Dad, Dad and my grandfather had some cows. And so, uh, they, uh, Dad took care of the, you know, took care of the cows cause my grandfather was too old.

And, we lived in, we lived in Kyrene, and then when I was about five, we moved to, uh, four, I guess, we moved to, uh, Lehigh. And we had another place out in Lehigh. And that's where I attended the first grade.

And when my grandfather died, it didn't take Dad long to sell the cows. And, uh, he hired out for the railroad. And, so, that's, uh, that's how he went from being a cowboy, stockman, to a railroader.



**PS** So he was still a stockman in Lehigh?

**MT** Yes. Hmm, hm.

**PS** And Lehigh is mostly Mormon, isn't it?

**MT** Yes, it was. In fact, I believe we might have been one of the, no, I, I don't, I think, I, I think there was some others out there, because they used to, I remember some wild Christmas parties when I was a little kid about five years old. And, and the farmers would all get together on Christmas and have a, have a party.

I remember there was a, there was a lot of beer drinking going on, so, uh, there, there must have been some, uh, uh, some non-Mormons out there, out there in the area.

But, I, uh, I actually went to the Mormon church, uh, there in Lehigh because I liked the singing. I thought, I, the singing was always, was always fun to listen to. And, old Mr. Boyle, who lived right next door, would come over and get me on Sunday and take me to church. And, and, I, I can still remember the songs they sang.

And I had a big crush on my first-grade teacher, a Miss Shumway. And, uh, an old Mormon family out there. And it was my first crush, uh, I guess on a girl. She was, uh, quite a bit older, of course. (laughs)

(**PS** and **MT** talking over each other at first) But I, I would figure out reasons to try to stay after school because I just, I just had this big crush on her.

**PS** And, was that a public school that you were going to?

**MT** Yes. Yeah, it was the Lehigh...it's now a museum out there. It's still there. The building's still there, but it's, it's the museum.

**PS** And then that was also close to the Salt River-Pima Maricopa Indian community. Did you get to know any of the Native Americans?

**MT** No. But I remember when we came into Mesa, uh, they were, they were still coming in in their wagons. Um. They, they'd pull in their wagons and just sit there on the streets and, and, uh, on the weekends.

And, I also remember the German prisoner of wars, uh, uh, prisoners of war. Uh. They, they cleaned out the irrigation ditches along the way, uh, right, right along in front of our house. I



remember them out there.

My mother used that as a culture frightener. She would say, Marshall, and my brothers and I, we pretty rambunctious.

And she'd say, you boys don't straighten out I'm going to give you to the Germans. (laughs)  
And, uh, and, uh, we, uh, always knew, all we knew about the Germans was the, the newsreels we saw on Hitler. And we just thought, boy, I don't want to go, I don't want to, don't want to go there. (laughs)

**PS** Yeah. You weren't too old back during that, during those war years.

**MT** No. I was only four or five years old. (laughs)

**PS** So, uh, now we always hear about you growing up in the northern area. When did your family move up there?

**MT** We moved, uh, to Ashfork when I was, when I was eight. Uh. In October of 1947.

My father had hired out for the railroad, but he had no seniority and so, he was gone. I was farmed out with relatives, um, and I lived with relatives, I was, for the second and third grade. And, uh, we lived way out in the West Valley. I attended Alhambra School. And actually, attended Wilson School in South Phoenix. It's not there anymore. And, uh, I forget how many schools I attended during that time.

And finally, uh, I like to say we caught up with Dad. We found Dad, uh, working in Ashfork. That was the north end of the Peavine, and he worked the, the Santa Fe, it was the Santa Fe-Prescott-Phoenix, uh, uh, Railroad Line. And, that's where he was. And we wound up living there for the next eight years.

So, I was 16 years old when we moved back to Phoenix. And I was a senior in high school.

**PS** So that was a good part of your growing up years.

**MT** I think, I think that was really the formative years.

The town was a bustling little town. And Route 66 went right through it. The Santa Fe Railroad passenger trains came through during the Korean War. Troop trains would come through. And, and, uh, they had the Harvey House, it was thriving there.



Oh, it was a, it was a, uh, ideal place for a youngster. Especially, uh, up to about your high school years. And, uh, it was, it was a great place to be a kid.

And, it formulated a whole lot of my story-telling because, uh, it's given me a big advantage, uh, here in Arizona to be able to tell stories. Wherever I go around the state, and I always let them know right away, I grew up in Ashfork. And everybody seems to, uh, you know, relate to you. They, they don't think of you as, as somebody from Phoenix (**PS** says something) (laughter), yeah. Or, or, yeah, or the Valley, you know. And, so I...

It, it really opens a lot of doors for me, but mostly it gives me stories to tell. And whenever I, uh, find an interesting story, it might have took place in Bisbee, or it might have took place in Globe, or somewhere like that, but (laughs) I move these guys to Ashfork a lot of times in this stories. And, and, uh, they'll take on...course we did... We had an abundance of characters coming. It was a transient town.

It had railroad (can't understand word), cowboys, uh, just people working in the, in the town. Miners, rock quarry guys. The rock doodlers, we called them. Uh. They weren't underground miners. They were, they quarried the flagstone, the famous flagstone. Comes from Ashfork.

And, uh, boy, on Saturday night it was, it was pretty wild. It got pretty western in those bars. And, uh, we just had one main street in the town.

**PS** Did you live just in town or were you still out on a ranch or a farm?

**MT** No, we, we had a, we had a little two room trailer house. That...had a 36 Ford, a 1936 Ford, (laughs) uh, that my uncle gave to us. Uh. And, uh, we, uh, hitched it up, uh, there in October of 1947 when we were moving to, uh, Ashfork. And, and we could not pull Yarnell Hill. It, that, that took 36 Ford wouldn't even pull it by itself, much less with a trailer house.

So, we, um, we took off with ev, all of our belongings. We were in that little two-room trailer house. And it took us about nine days. Black Canyon Highway was a dirt road from New River on. And we kept breaking down along the way.

And, uh, we lived in Bumblebee for a couple or three days. Lived in Cordes. Not Cordes Junction, but the stagecoach station of Cordes. We lived there for about two or three days. And, and finally we made it to Ashfork.

And, uh, we just pitched it up under a juniper tree. And, and, we all, we always, my brothers and I all slept in the same bed. And, and, uh, which was the kitchen nook that made (can't understand).



And, uh, my mom and dad slept on the couch that folded down at night. Well, we were living pretty close to the bone.

The pa, the trailer had no plumbing, so, with an outdoor, and outdoor privy. And the water was all hauled in by bucket.

And laundry day was really something because we heated, uh, and this was the winter of 1948 and 49. And 47 and 48. And, boy, we had a, it was a brutal winter in Arizona. Northern Arizona especially.

We heated water, uh, to do the laundry. That was a bad day of the week on, on, I guess it was Monday when we did the laundry. Or Sunday I guess it was.

And, uh, we heated water in that barrel, and washed, did the wash in that old Maytag out there, uh, in the outdoors. And, uh, I remember the clothes would freeze on the line before we could even get (laughing), before they'd ever dry, they'd be frozen solid. Uh. So, uh, but we, we were cramped in that little...

Finally, we got a little lean-to. I have a photo of the trailer with the lean-to on it, buried in snow. My mother used to say that was the only time that trailer house looked good was when it had a foot of snow on it.

**PS** And so, of course, you went to school up there. What was that like? Was it different than the Valley?

**MT** I, I, I, I, I had a good time. I really enjoyed the school. The classes, uh, there were two classes together. The grade school was, was fairly small. The high school was, too.

So, I was in the, um, the second, uh, uh, the third and fourth grade were together, then the fourth and the fifth were together. Then the fifth and sixth together, and then the sixth and seventh. So, we always had two classes combined.

Poor teachers had to deal with, you know, uh, the different grades. And they'd give one class some, one thing to do and then they'd go off and work with the other class (laughing), and back and forth.

But, uh, I was not a very good student. I just didn't, uh, uh, I, I know I didn't, I was not a good student at all.



I guess I wasn't very bright. I was, I'd never lived in town before, you know. We'd always lived out on a farm. I, uh, I was lacking in social skills, too, I'm sure. So, uh, (laughs)

**PS** I think you were very bright. (laughter)

**MT** Well, maybe. You know what, you, you, that's an interesting point.

Because I remember stuff. I'd go back to reunions, and I'd remember little details about the history of the town. And people. And, uh, the ones who, who continued to live there and everything, Marshall, how do you remember that stuff? With your life, how do you remember?

I was so focused, I, I must have been just zeroed in on it. Didn't know it, uh, at the time. But it was not, it was not about math and sci...(laughs). It wasn't about math and science. It was, it was, uh, it was just, um, I, I must have, it must have been in me that I was going to be an historian. I was going to be remembering things.

There's that book "She Who Remembers." Well, I, I should be "He Who Remembers." (laughs)  
I

**PS** 15:15 Well, I bet you were a good reader.

**MT** 15:17 I loved to read, yeah. And, of course, we couldn't get radio and television was...didn't even know about television yet. (swallows) And, uh, all the years I was there, they wouldn't, they wouldn't even have television. We'd have to come to Phoenix if we wanted to see television. But it was, uh, and radio, you couldn't really get much at night. And, uh. So, we...

But I loved to read. I just really loved reading.

**PS** And what did you like to read as a boy?

**MT** World War Two stories. Uh, history. I knew all of the heroes of World War Two.

I liked western, you know, western stories. The West. And, I didn't know it, but my, my dad used to talk about the Texas border. Growing up on the Texas border during the Mexican Revolution. And things like that.

And my grandmother, when she'd come, uh, she'd tell stories about life along the, the border. On the Rio Grande. And, I loved those stories. And, I, and she just ingrained me with Texas history.

I knew more Texas history when I was an adult than I did Arizona history when I first started.



**PS** So you read more history things than novels, or Zane Grey. (laughs)

**MT** Yeah, I didn't get into, didn't really get into Zane Grey or anything. Uh. Oh, I liked the baseball stories, too.

I was fascinated by the stories of, um, the 1930s major league baseball. And the 20s. And Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. And I'd read their biographies. And I dreamed of one day, you know, being a baseball player.

And I tell people. I wanted to be a baseball player in the worst way. And that's what I became. (laughs) A baseball player in the worst way. I, I never weighed over 135 pounds all through high school.

**PS** But did you play sports?

**MT** Oh, yeah. I was, I, they made me captain of my, uh, baseball team, the high school baseball team, my sophomore year or so. Uh. I was, uh, I was a catcher. And I loved to be in charge. And at the catcher, I, I was in charge. In basketball I was point guard. And, uh, I just loved to think I was in charge.

**PS** So, so what made you come back to Phoenix?

**MT** The railroad bypassed Ashfork, uh, about...uh...and, the writing was on the wall. The Santa Fe was leaving Ashfork. All of the (can't understand) closed, and they eventually demolished the (can't understand). Classic building it was, too. It was, it was the most beautiful one from, from Kansas City to LA, I swear. I've got pictures to prove it. (laughter)

They tore it down. And, uh, and Route 66, uh, they, they, they were...it was going to bypass the town. Um. And, every, everything seemed to be...the town just...the stores were closing. And it, it was like, it was like one of those sad movies of the, of the Depression. The Depression hit, and, you know, it was...um.

And speaking of the Depression, I remembered, uh...

I worked in a gas station there at, uh, on the east side of town, uh, in, through high school. Worked on Saturday night. Friday night and Saturday night usually. All night. Uh. At sixty cents an hour. (laughs)

And, uh, I, I saw the last remnants of the Depression coming through, I guess, from Oklahoma.



Cars would come through. And, this was in the early 50s, and they were still coming through. And these hungry looking kids in the back seat of an old car with, you know, chairs on the top and stuff like that. And mattresses on the top. And, they were headed to the Promised Land. Bakersfield, I guess. (laughs)

And, uh, I, it, that left a deep impression on me to, to, uh, just seeing that, that piece of history. It was something right out of John Steinbeck.

But anyway, we, that's why we moved. We had to leave.

So, in the spring of 1955, uh, we, we left Ashfork. And, uh, I, I really, I loved that town. To this day I, I still go back and I still try to help them, uh, you know, whenever I can, whatever I can do. Because it did, it formed, it formulated...it formed my... It made me...it's who I, (laughs) it's who I am.

**PS** So, when you came back to Phoenix, where did you live? Or...

**MT** We moved to Maryvale. Uh. I like to say we raised the I.Q. in both places when we moved to Maryvale. (laughs) I stole that line from Will Rogers. He said that about when he moved from Oklahoma to California. But...(laughs) I like, I like the line.

But we moved to Maryvale. John F. Long was building these great houses out there. And, and, uh, we could afford it. It was, uh, I think it was a seven-thousand dollar...seventy-three hundred dollars. And the monthly payments were 55-dollars.

And my dad was wringing his hands. He'd never owned a house before, and he was almost, well, let's see. I guess he was getting close to 50.

And he'd never, we'd never owned a home. And it was a nice three-bedroom house. And, uh, but he was afraid he'd never be able to make those 55-dollar (laughing) a month payment.

I think Mom read him the riot act. She said, I'm going to kill you if you don't buy me a house before we get old.

So, uh, we lived, we lived in Maryvale. No air conditioning. No television or anything. But, uh, neighbors all had TVs, and so, we'd go and watch *Wyatt Earp* with Hugh O'Brien and, and that sort of thing. But, uh, and *Gunsmoke* which was my favorite. And, uh, but that was, that, uh, that was Maryvale.

And enrolled in West High. There were none of those high schools out on the West Valley at that time. And I enrolled in West High at, uh, three thousand students.



It had kind of helped me because I'd gone to Arizona Boys State, um, from Ashfork. Uh. The year, uh, just before leaving. I, they knew I was leaving, but they told me to go anyway.

So, I went. And I met a, a lot of kids from the Valley schools. North High and West High and Phoenix Union and so forth. So, I kind of...

And I played American Legion baseball down in Phoenix, too. I came down here and did that that summer. So., I got to know a few kids.

But it was culture shock, uh, to go to school. And, uh, they assigned you a number. You had a matriculation number of some kind.

I, I, I really, at first, really didn't like the experience. It was just dreadful to go to school that big. And, and it, it seemed so impersonal.

By the time I, by the time, the end of my senior year, I'd made, I'd made a lot of friends and it was, it was, uh...

I was in awe of the girls. But I thought they were light-years ahead of me. And they were. (laughs) So I didn't date.

Every time I tried to date, somebody would fix me up, I'd just, I'd just panicked. I had a panic attack. And I was so afraid I'd do something wrong. And, and, uh, so, um, finally I just said, you know, I think, uh, I think I'll just stay at home. (laughs) It was, it was safer. And I didn't, I didn't have all the anxiety of trying to think of how to talk to a girl. Uh. So, it was...

But, I, you know, it, it was, uh, uh...

I look back on it, uh, the year at West High. It was, overall it was a good transition because I, I was going to be living around people. I might as well get used to the idea of, uh, being around larger groups.

Then I went to Phoenix College. And, um. I even ran for office at Phoenix College. And, and, uh, so...student body office of some kind. And, and, uh, got named to the Men's Honor Board over there by Dean Johnny Riggs. And, I, I just, um...

But I wasn't ready for college. Uh. I, really... I, I just wasn't, I was still not a good student. And I didn't do well in, I wasn't mature. I was barely, barely, uh, 17 when I graduated.



And I screwed it up, um, pretty much. And, and, uh, about December, uh, no, about November of 1956, uh, I just went down one day and, and enlisted in the Marine Corps. (laughs)

Four years I was going to go in the Marine Corps. And, uh, I was going to leave in February, I guess. And a Marine Corps Reserve Officer caught up with me. And, uh, he lived, he was a neighbor. He came over and he said, Marshall, he said, uh, I think you ought to just, uh, join the Marine Reserves. And they have a program for college kids that's six months active duty. And then you can come back and go to college.

And he said, and if you, if you want to stay in, you can. But if you want to go back, if, if you decided you want to go to college after all (laughs). Uh. And, uh, he, he must have known me a whole lot better than I thought, than, than I knew myself, because, um, I, I, I said, okay. So, I changed it from four years to six months, and I went off to boot camp.

And I ate it up. I just loved it. And, uh, (swallows) the, the drill instructors were...it was tough. They were, they were...it was, it was fourteen weeks of, of, it was...we were busy. (laughs)

**PS** Where was boot camp?

**MT** San Diego.

And, uh, and then I got out and I thought, uh, uh, I'm going...if, if they'd have asked me then I would have signed over.

But, uh, we went through all of the other up at, at Pendleton.

And, as I got to thinking, there was nothing going on. There was...Korea was behind us and Vietnam nobody had even heard of yet.

And I thought, I think I, I think I want to go to college, and then I want to get a commission. I wanted to be an officer.

Because I, I...that's where I originally had joined the Marines. And I, flunked the eye test. They told me I, you know, didn't have good eyes. Uh. One good eye. And I, I said, well, I've got one really good eye. Cause I, I was a baseball player. I have one good eye. And they said, well, what happens if your good eye gets shot out? (laughs) I said, I said, well, I think I'm going to be out of commission if I... But they said, sorry, the Marines are only taking, um, twenty-twenty vision in both eyes.

And I said, uh, uh, and the two guys I joined with, uh, uh, passed and went on and became



officers. One was killed in Vietnam, and the other one remains, remained friends right up until he died.

But I, I, I was, I was the odd man out because of my eye. That was another reason why I was, I was mad. I went down and just signed up for four years.

And then, uh, I figured, well, maybe if I get a college degree I can come back and be an officer.

So, I, I did. Uh. I came back and went to college. And wound up at ASU. I was, I was, I had matured. And, and, uh, I was still not a very good student, but at least I'd grown up. The Marines, the Marines did a lot for me.

And when I graduated, um, I landed a good job coaching. And I found out I still, the Marines still weren't taking anybody but twenty-twenty. And I, the Army wanted me though because I'd had the Marine training. And I, uh, was all set to do that, and I landed a coaching job in Mesa and I...which was pretty coveted. (laughs) Mesa was a great place to, uh, yeah.

**PS** Coaching what?

**MT** Coaching, uh, football and baseball and stuff like that.

**PS** At the high school?

**MT** No. Freshman, just freshman level. And so, I was, uh, but it was, it was, jobs like that were hard to find. And I thought, well, do I want to, do I want to go ahead and pursue this?

I wish now I'd pursued the officer thing though because I had plenty of years to do the other thing. But, uh, I, I stayed, I stayed in that job for a few years, and then I, I just, um, it just, it just didn't, I guess after a few years, it didn't float my boat anymore.

And I decided to, uh, uh, give up on it. I'd, I'd hooked up a job as a folksinger. Uh. Because I, you couldn't make a living teaching school then. At least, you know, it was pretty hard. I was living from paycheck to paycheck.

So, I walked into a bar one night, and, uh, this was 1963. And there were a couple of guys in there singing. And...folk songs. And I thought, boy, I've always wanted to be on stage. I would, I would have loved to, to have worked behind the microphone. And overcome shyness and everything else. (laughs) And, and it seemed like it was so much fun.

And I'd learned to play the guitar as a...uh. My experience in the Marine Corps. Uh. I got



hooked on a guitar because there was a guy in the, our outfit from Tupelo, Mississippi, that did Elvis Presley imitations. And everywhere we'd go, uh, you know, the coast of California, the girls would just flock around, uh, to hear this guy sing, uh, "Don't Be Cruel." (laughs) And I thought, that's what I want.

So, I, uh, picked up the guitar and, and, uh, I walked in there at night, uh, uh, I got a conversa, got in a conversation with 'em. And, they, uh, uh, I said, I, I, I can do a song. And said, uh, what do you do? And I said, "Scotch and Soda."

So, I got up on stage and, and just sang "Scotch and Soda." First time I'd ever appeared in public, uh, doing anything like that. And, and, it was a real rush. And afterwards, um, they, uh, they said, let's make a trio out of this duo. And, and we did. And, uh, that...

So, I spent my summers traveling around, uh, Southern Colorado and the Sierra Nevada, doing all that. So. And I, that's when I began to take an interest in history.

Because we'd go to all these old historic mining areas. Mining towns and places like that. And I thought, this is, this is fascinating. Why didn't we learn this in school? I would have been fascinated by history if we'd of...

The people. The stories about the people.

So, um, anyway, I, um, I just, uh, did that for a while. And then, then Viet, Vietnam came along and one of the guys got drafted and the other one got married. (laughs) It's like a song.

And, uh, I kind of drifted for a while.

And, uh, my brother was going to vet school up at Fort Collins, Colorado. And he invited me to come up and, uh, in the summer, and work on the ranch in Montana.

So, I did that. And, uh, that was when I made up my mind.

We stopped at Custer's Battlefield on a, a cold day when there was nobody around. And I walked out on that battlefield. I was all by myself. He, he went off some other direction. And I was all by myself.

And I looked around, and I thought, wow. There's something, it's like there are voices out here. I thought I heard voices.



And, I've heard since that people say when they visit Civil War battlefields, they get the same feeling, you know. Sharpsburg, Antietam. Or, uh, or Gettysburg. Uh. Or, uh, Shiloh. Places like that, uh, that they, they think, they think, get the same feeling. Maybe you have to be a receiver. (laughs) I was a receiver, maybe.

But, uh, I received something that day. And we were driving back to Sheridan, down, down to Sheridan. I told my brother, I woke him up, I was driving the truck. And I woke him up, and I said, I'm going to, uh, I'm going to go back to school again and I want to, uh, I want to earn a degree in history. And I want to teach.

And, um, I just want to teach American History, or western history, to kids and show them what the history of this country really is. Not about that stuff that those teachers write on the board and make you memorize. (laughs)

And he said, go for it. So, I found myself. I guess you could say I found myself.

I came back, um, (swallows) I enrolled at ASU and took an Arizona history class and I was hooked for life. (laughs)

That passion has never diminished. In fact, it just gets bigger all the time.

**PS** So your first degree from ASU, what was that in?

**MT** Physical education. That was the only thing I knew I could pass. (laughs) I, I'm not making that up. That's, that's true.

I, uh, well, you know, in Ashfork you had, we had 30 students in the whole high school. There were only 10 in, in, would have been in my senior class had I stayed.

And, nobody went to college. The, the prep was, you know, everything was just, uh, come to school and play sports. And, and, uh, it, it's unfortunate, but I didn't, I didn't know anything about science. I didn't know any math. Uh. I just got the minimum stuff.

I somehow just plowed my way through.

But when I came back, uh, with history on my mind, I just made, made nothing but As. Uh. But I was 27, 28 years old then. So, I threw away some years, but, ah, you know, that's, uh, it, uh...some people never find themselves.

**PS** So when did you finally get your history degree?



**MT** I, I never really did. I, I ran out of, uh, well, I had a minor in it. Uh, a minor in it. But I...

They only had one class at ASU that, uh, that was about the West. And that was Arizona history.

So, I started taking reading and conference classes, uh, from professors over there I got to be friends with.

Like, I'd take a whole semester, and I'd say my major was mining. And they'd give me a whole lot of books to read on mining. Eight or nine books to read that semester on mining. And, uh, then the next semester I would take, um, the cattle industry. Uh. Politics. Uh, political, uh... I just took every, every semester, uh, I would take, I would take, uh, something until I had, I had equivalent of a degree, I guess, in several majors in thereof, of fields that were just in the field of western history. So, really, I...

But where I really learned it, I think where I really learned it is I started driving around the state and I just started going to all these little places that were in the history books, the Arizona history books, and learning firsthand.

I talked to people there. I'd go to these, uh, historic sites, talk to the rangers. And, um, the museum people. And I'd just hang out with... And I got such an education, uh, from that. The kind of thing you couldn't get at Harvard or Yale, I don't think.

**PS** How were you supporting yourself during that time?

**MT** I was working, um, I worked at Motorola for a while. And then I got lucky.

I walked into, uh, Coronado High School one day. And, uh, um, I said, uh, this was 1969, the fall of 1969. Just before school started.

And I was wearing boots and jeans. (laughs) Western shirt. And I said, uh, you guys need an American history teacher here? See, nobody taught western history. So, you guys need an American history teacher here?

And, uh, they, uh, they said, you must be psychic. Uh. We just, uh, we just had a teacher, American, one of our American history teachers resigned just yesterday. And, uh, they said, do you know anything about football? And I said, I'm your man. (laughs) I'll be your huckleberry. (laughs)

I really didn't, but, uh, but I figured I'd, uh, I could make it. You know, I'd coached a little freshman football. So, they made me Assistant Varsity, uh, football. But, my, my, my whole



thing was history. And, uh, I, uh....

**PS** So, even without a teaching degree or anything they hired you?

**MT** Well, I'd been a teacher. I had a certificate and everything for PE. And, uh, I'd taken these classes, so they, they hired me. Yeah.

Probably wouldn't do that today. I don't know. This was 1969.

And, um, I just, I was passionate in the classes.

But it was Vietnam era. And kids were, it was pretty anti-American, anti-American stuff.

Here I was, this former Marine and, and gung ho. And, and thought America was the greatest place in the world to be. And still do. And, uh, and the kids were kind of cynical.

And I, my, I think it was my first year, I thought, I think, I think maybe I made a mistake. And, I, I, I don't know if I can deal with this. These kids are not, they just don't, they just don't care. And, uh,

So, one day, uh, it was about October or November, there was a holiday coming up. And I, I just thought, I'm just going to bring my guitar in today. So, I brought my guitar in. Sat on a stool in front of the class the first hour. And I whipped out, I whipped into a Bob Dylan song. And, uh, I think "Don't Think Twice, That's All Right." Or something. And, uh, or "Blowing in the Wind." I'm not sure. But, uh, I did all those songs from my folk singing days.

And, uh, then I did a Johnny Cash song.

And, I could feel it in the class. I thought, I've got 'em. They're mine. (laughs) They're mine! (laughs) And, uh, and sure enough, those kids just...

So, the next hour, uh, I had five classes. The next hour I did the same thing, same thing, same thing. All five classes. The word spread around the school. And, uh, it also spread around the faculty, too, you know.

Those kids were, uh, pretty soon they were having me, there was some, uh, rivalry going on between the cowboy kids at Coronado and the so-called hippies.

And so, the, the hippies all thought I was a guru for Bob Dylan. (laughs) you know. And, uh, and, and the, the cowboys all thought I was, uh, with Johnny Cash. They, so, so both groups.



And I, and I liked that. I thought, hey, I can get along with, I've lived in both of those circles all my life. Or all my ca, you know, all my, my adult life ever since college. I said, I can get along with the hippies. Uh, I, I, I've been a folksinger. I went out to save the world. (laughs)

And also, I had that cattle, the cowboy stuff. And so, anyway.

Then the next year, uh, they, they said, Marshall, we're going to try to...we're going to have some one semester electives. We're going to introduce these, and we would like to have, offer a course in Southwest History. And we would like for you to teach it. You have to create the class. You have to write the curriculum and do all that. But we'd like for you to do it. If you can get 35 kids to sign up.

I said...I had juniors. And, uh, that's when they take American History.

And so, I announced to the class, I said, I'm going to be...if you guys haven't had enough of me, uh, you'd like another semester...uh...as your senior year and you're looking for an elective, I'm going to be teaching a class on, uh, Southwest history next year if enough sign.

Something like 350 kids signed up for one class.

And they called in me in and they said, you're not teaching American History anymore. You've got 10 sections of Southwest history. (laughs)

So, I, uh, for the next five, six years, until I came over here to Scottsdale Community College, um, I taught Southwest History. And they even had to add another teacher to take the overload. So, you can't tell me that kids don't like history. American history or western history, or history if it's taught in a way.

And I had some influence from a guy named Ba, Bob Finkmeyer (sp?) over at Arcadia High School, who I learned a lot about how to, uh, to bring stories in about people. Uh. And, uh, so, that's, that's how he made his reputation.

And his was more Civil War. He was into that. But mine was western, so I just kind of, (swallows) I just kind of went on with it. The western history. And brought out the colorful characters. The colorful women. The outlaws, the lawmen. Uh. Mountain men. Uh. All of that stuff. And, um, and I was getting, I was, I was learning it myself inside and out teaching it five times a day. (laughs) Twice a year. That stuff is still inside my head.

Oh, and then about a year after I started doing that, they opened Scottsdale Community College,



and they asked me to come up here and create an Arizona History class. And so, I jumped at the chance to do that. And, uh, I had adults mostly.

And so, I, I wrote the curriculum. I started...

My first class had twelve people in it. And I thought, well, the, uh, the Dean of Instruction said, uh, no, we're going to let this go, uh, because I want this class, you know, in our college.

So, the next semester I had 30; the next semester I had 60; and the next semester I had 90. And we broke it up into two classes. And, uh, and, that was the, then...and I went on doing it, uh, actually in all total I taught it for 40 years here at Scottsdale Community College.

So that's my story and I'm sticking to it.

**PS** That's a long career.

**MT** Oh, there's one other thing I should add.

About the third, second or, second semester here, um, a woman was sitting in the front row and she said, Marshall, you ought to write a book. And, um, I said, I didn't, I can't even write a good term paper. And I was being honest. I wasn't being modest, I was being honest.

I said, I can't even write a good term paper. And she said, um, tell your stories, and just tell them like you're telling them to us. And besides, she said, this textbook we're using is really bad. (laughs)

I said, well, I had no choice. That's the only one out there.

And so, uh, I, I, I came back the next week and I said, okay, I have an announcement to make to you guys. I am going to write a book. And, but you guys are going to have to buy it. And, uh, I'll, I'll, I'll get even with you. (laughs)

And so, I started writing. And people, everywhere I'd go people would say, how's your book coming? And, um, I was still at Coronado, too, teaching during the day and then teaching here at night.

I'd say, I'd say, ah, it's coming good. Um. Who's going to do it? Um, oh, University of Arizona Press. I just, you know, I just figured, in, I didn't know anything about publishing. I thought, if you write a book, the publisher will publish it.



And so, I finally got it finished and I took it down to, uh, sent it down to UofA Press. And they sent it back to me about six weeks later and said, it's not scholarly enough for us. (swallows) We're a scholarly, uh, uh, press. So, uh...

So, I said, oh.

So, I was going to throw it away. I thought, well, it's five years, four or five years of night, working at night, uh, wasted. But, uh, I, I didn't think I was a writer anyhow.

And so, I took it down, I picked it up at the Scottsdale Post Office downtown. And, uh, I walked over to the Guidon Bookstore. And Aaron and Ruth Cohen were my mentors, had been my mentors for years. And they really were the ones that would tell me which books to read and which ones to avoid. (laughs)

So, so I got my education. Not at a university so much as I, I mean, not at a university class as much as from reading in conference and reading books on, um, subjects.

So, I walked in there, and she says, Marshall, why the long face? This is Ruth Cohen. And, uh, uh, I said, well, um, I just got my manuscript back and, uh, and UofA Press said they, it's not scholarly and they don't want it. And I was just looking for a place to dump it off.

And she said, give me that. Um. And in the, in the typical fashion of a Jewish mother, she said, um, there's a man in here from Doubleday and, uh, he's over there on the other side of the store. And, let me have that manuscript.

She walked over, and talk about audacity, she handed it to him and she said, you have got to read this. This is the best thing I've ever read on Arizona. (laughs) She had never seen it.

And, uh, he said, well, I'm flying back to New York. I'll take it, and (swallows) I'll read it and I'll let you know.

Well, I sort of forgot about it. And about a month later I got a call from New York City, and Doubleday wanted to publish it

And I thought, I, I can't believe this is happening. This is, this is more than a dream. And, um, they published it.

Not only did they publish it, but it was a big seller. And it stayed in print for maybe ten years.

**PS** And what was the title?



**MT** It was called *Arizona, um, a Panoramic History of a Frontier State*. I still got it here. It's right here. It, it's, it's, I keep it close because it's my sentimental favorite. And I wrote another 20 or 22 books after that, but that one's my sentimental favorite. And, it's a, it was \$10.95, hardbound. When it came out. But it...

**PS** What year was that?

**MT** 1977.

But when it started, when it first came out, I, um, or when it was coming out, I went into a panic attack. All that time I was so confident, and all of a sudden, I thought, what if it's bad? What if it gets panned? What if...uh...

And, and I thought, I don't worry about me, but my students. My students are going to feel bad for me and they won't know what to say. You know, they'll, they'll, they'll avoid the subject with me. And they...I don't want them, I don't, I don't want that to happen. I don't want them to feel bad for me. We tried and it didn't work.

One Sunday morning my student assistant from Coronado High, uh, called. And she said, Mr. Trimble, um, uh, have you, uh, have you gotten your paper yet? And I said, naw, it's still out in the street. And she said, I think you better go get your paper. (laughs)

And so, I went out to the street. And Kearny Edgerton, remember Kearny Edgerton? Of *The Arizona Republic*?

Kearny Edgerton...it was a full-page thing on the Leisure & Arts section of *The Arizona Republic*. And it was a positive review on my book.

And all five-thousand copies sold out within a week. And, uh, Doubleday went into a second printing. And I was, I got...

I always figure, that's where my life began.

**PS** How are we doing time-wise? (whispering in background)

**MT** I'm talking way too much, I'm sure.

**PS** (more whispering in background) Okay. No, we've got another... (whispering in background) No. Let me know when we're at two or three minutes. (talking about how long tape is and can they turn camera off and change angle)



(camera off while changing angle)

**PS** Is it rolling? Okay. Want to show us your book?

**MT** Yeah. This is the book we were talking about. Um. Good old Doubleday. And actually, it stayed in print, uh, for ten years. And, um, uh, well, it would have stayed in print longer but Doubleday, the family, sold out.

The Doubleday family was really good about printing the, these kinds of history books. And, uh, but the publishing business was changing. And I thought, I gotten years out of it. That was pretty, that was pretty good.

**PS** That's very good. So, it's out of print today.

**MT** Well, you can still get 'em on, uh, uh, Amazon and all that. I still, every once in a while, I'll give, give one away, and then I'll have to go buy another one. (laughs) I just did that last week. I gave one to somebody and, uh, for a fun, fundraiser. A silent auction type thing. So, I, I got, I, I immediately went to Amazon and ordered another one. (laughs)

**PS** All right. I'll have to get one. Um. And, so that was your first book. (**MT** – Hm, hm.) But you did a lot more books after that.

**MT** Yeah. That's the first, that's the last time I ever had to solicit, you know, solicit a publisher. I mean, even, even a attempt to uh, uh, from that time on they all came to me.

Arizona Highways came, uh, with, with one for a series of books. And, and, uh, then, uh, the Northland Press, uh, came. And tra, um, the Golden West, Golden West. Uh. Several different publishers.

I was always so busy here becau, you know, af, after that I was making, you know, appearing in conventions and things. I really didn't have much time. I always thought I wanted to put on my tombstone, my epitaph would be, "He always wanted to write one book sitting down." (laughs)

It felt like I wrote all of these standing up.

I was teaching five, when I wrote that book, (swallows) I was teaching, uh, twenty-five hours a week in front of a class at Coronado High School. And, uh, nine hours a week teaching two, two classes at Scottsdale Community College, and one class at Mesa.

And so, uh, I was teaching that many hours, uh, uh, twenty-five, two, twenty-five and nine,



thirty-four hours a week in front of a class.

Most college professors usually teach twelve, uh, hours or something like that. But there I was doing that. And then I was trying to write.

And I never felt like I was, uh, I never felt like I ever got to write a single one of those books, um, just...that's all I had to do. (laughs)

**PS** Did you ever think about going to teach at one of the universities?

**MT** I loved the community college. That's what saved me. The community college. (laughs) Uh. And I, I liked the adult...every time...

It was funny, funny you should say that because I would be invited over to guest lecture at ASU, and I always thought it would be neat to be a pro, a professor over here. But I didn't have my PhD. Uh. I, I just always felt, I never was out of a job long enough to earn a PhD. (laughs) And, uh, I didn't think I wanted to go through all that. I'd had to quit a lot of other things to go through the process of getting a PhD.

And, I was invited to come and get one, but (swallows) what they were going to pay me for an annual salary, uh, to, uh, to do it. Uh. After this book came out, they made that offer. And I, I thought, no. I, uh, I can't.

I'm, I'm happy doing what I'm doing now. And I love teaching at the community college because it was, uh, the adults, you know, I had the adults. I had tour guides. I had school teachers. I had people like that in the class. And, uh, those, those, that, they made up almost the bulk of my class.

And I had a lot of seniors and they just were eating it up, too. And, they wouldn't have gone over to ASU, I don't think. Taking a class. So. I was, and, and, Scottsdale was very good to me. They just, they just kind of let me, let me, uh, do, do what I do.

No, I, I, I was perfectly happy here, and, uh, decided I just wanted to stay here the rest of my life. (laughter)

**PS** And that looks like what you're doing. (laughter) I heard you, you are retired from teaching, right?

**MT** Oh, retired from teaching, but I still...I do a lot of statehood historian outreach. I still talk to school kids. Little fourth graders. They're not so little. They're pretty mature actually. (laughs)



Uh, uh. They're fun to be around.

And that's when they study Arizona history.

And I, I do...I talk to senior, uh, senior, er, places and things like that.

I, I tell people, I say, I, I'm teaching every time I get back behind a microphone. I'm still, I'm still out there teaching. And I, I, I think that's, that was, that's really my passion.

I love to entertain. Teaching's a little bit of, teaching's a whole lot of entertaining. And, um, I, I enjoy, I just enjoy teaching. I, I, I'm a teacher. (laughter)

**PS** And you still, you do have your office here, too.

**MT** I have my office here. And, that's, that's one thing about retiring. I think I really, I think I want to die, uh, right here at this desk. Uh. And then somebody else is going to have to come in and sort all this stuff out.

They're talking about taking and digitizing, and I hope they do, all the research I've done for forty-some, forty years, because it's still, even the high school lecture notes are still in those files. And, uh, all of these things are, uh...

They're in the computer now. A lot of it's in the computer. My research. But, it, it should be valuable to people, I hope. (swallows) And I want it to be.

I want it to be of use. That, I, I will have lived for a, a good purpose if people can make use of, of what I've written.

And, uh, the stories, the little short stories. The, the stories about Arizona. That, uh, I hope they can continue to be out there, uh, so that people can read 'em, uh, for a long time after I'm gone.

**PS** Well, I know you've also done radio and TV. In fact, the first time I met you, you came down to Channel 10 to our Special Projects. I was working in Special Projects. (**MT** – Hmm, hm.) And you came in there talking about doing TV.

**MT** Yeah. Yeah. The tele, I've done a lot of television. Uh. And, uh, just did something, just did something the other day on, um, gosh, what was it? It was just a couple of days ago. (laughs) It, it happens all the time.

We did a, Bob Bose Bell and Jana Bommersbach and I did this outrageous Arizona film recently.



And, uh, and it received a Rocky Mountain Emmy. So, uh, and we just told stories about odd characters in Arizona and things like that.

People, um, people like that. That, that's a kind of a history. It has a, it has a big following cause it's, it's, it, it...

You know, um, history, the job of historian is to give you the facts. The names, the dates, and, and places and such. But, the, the storyteller, uh, the storyteller's job is to, is to give you the, the, the feel of the words, the facts, and the soul of the characters in the story. And that's, I try to combine that in my, uh, teaching. As a, you know, as a historian.

**PS** But, didn't you have a...I think it was a, was it on radio that you did something called "Trimble's Tales"?

**MT** Yeah, "Trimble's Tales," those were just short, little short stories. Uh, uh. Two minutes, two and a half minutes, or something like that. And they're still played around the state in some of the radio stations, uh, in little towns.

And, uh, I, I had a show called, um, "Arizona Back Roads" where I traveled around. And, that, that also received a, a Rocky Mountain Emmy for, uh, I, I think 2004 or 5.

So, uh, that, that again, we just went out and met people in these little towns and interviewed them. Similar to what Bill Leverton used to do, uh, with his, on his "On the Road" show.

**PS** Okay. And now you're working with *True West Magazine*.

**MT** I've done the *True West Magazine*, uh, for about fifteen years now. Ever since it, uh, it came to Arizona. And Bob Boze Bell and I, we're both from Northern Arizona, and we, we got together. And he, he, it was his idea to come and, you know, to be an answer man for True West.

And talk about getting an education. (laughs) You get these, these questions come from everywhere. And, uh, you'd a never thought of that yourself probably, the, the kinds of questions that come in here. But I, I, I love answering 'em.

And, there's a whole encyclopedia, fifteen years of, of, you know, of, of doing this. Where you've got a, you've really got a lot of material there. So, if, if *True West* or somebody ever wants to take that out of the computer and turn it into an encyclopedia of questions, things you've always wanted to know about, uh, (laughs) Arizona or the West, uh, here, this is your book.



**PS** And, and what is your column called?

**MT** “Ask the Marshall.” (laughs) That was Bob Boze Bell’s idea.

**PS** There’s that name again. Okay. I think we need to change tapes at this point.

**PS** All right. This is Tape Two with Marshall Trimble. And, um, I think we’ll, there’s a lot of things we could talk about, but, talk about, a little about, I know you, you talked about teaching. But you do so many public presentations. When did that first start, and how did that...

**MT** I think the, uh, the public presentations... Uh....

I first got a, a tou, a sampling of it as a folksinger. Uh. I had never, uh, been in front of groups other than at, than as a coach with your, with your athletes. Or your, or your PE students. That’s the first time I’d ever been in front of a group.

But, uh, that was a little different. And then, when I was performing in, uh, in, mostly in the bars, and, uh, it was...

I got a little bit of that because I sort of became the guy who talked on the stage between the songs. And, (swallows) little humor there and stuff like that.

But, when I got, when I started teaching, uh, I was, I was awfully really shy. I had never, um, I’d never done, I’d never had girls in class before. It’d always been boys, and so, I had, it was a little different that way, too. And, um, a little bit...

But I was, I guess I was a quick study in just getting, communicating with people, even though I’d started out my life as...terminal shyness. And, uh, it was, uh...

So, I, uh, and when I came up to SCC, that was when it really began. People started, uh, asking me...people in my class. They were, they were in Rotary and they were in these different groups.

And I remember the first time it happened with Rotary. This fellow asked me to come and talk to his Rotary group.

And it was my first semester of teaching Arizona history, and I thought, I hope...we were, at that time, we were about in the 1850s, or something like that. And I thought, I hope nobody asks me anything. (laughs) (can’t understand) I might not know the answer. Uh. I gotta wait till we get to that chapter, till I teach that week, and learn something about it.



Cause I was just learning. I was staying one week ahead of them.

And it, uh, it worked, uh, I guess. (swallows) I had the gift of the gab. You know, I had the Irish blarney. And I could get through it. But, I...that's where it started.

And, uh, then when, then after they...also I started getting a request to speak, uh, uh, with the book. About the book.

And I thought, I'd, I'd seen other authors just read their books, read from their books, and things like that. And I thought, I'm not, I'm kind of an entertainer. I've had this entertainer back, entertainment background.

I started playing my guitar. And I'd do a couple of songs and tell some stories, and, and keep it on the light side. And, and, um, and that's kind of where it began.

And then pretty soon, pretty soon there was, uh, pretty soon I had a manager. Uh. And somebody was getting, uh, good money for doing that. I thought, boy, this is, you know, this, this, this pays, this pays pretty good.

So that's, uh, that's how I kind of got into the, uh, you know, into the public speaking part of it. Again, it was all self-taught.

I, I think everything I ever did, it had, it was, it was self-taught. I (laughs), I never, I wished I'd had a mentor somewhere along the line. I might not have made so many mistakes along the way. (laughter)

**PS** Well, and you're often called the "Will Rogers of Arizona." How did that come about?

**MT** That's, that came about one day. I was leaving SCC to go down to be on Pat McMahon's show. And, uh, KTAR. And on the way I turned on KTAR to listen, and, and he was doing a promo. And he said, next hour, uh, we have, uh, we have Marshall Trimble. Uh. He's the Will Rogers of Arizona.

And so, uh, I, I, boy, I was really, I was walking on a cloud. I was really inflated, you know. And I...walking on a cloud.

I got down to the station and, and, um...because Will Rogers was my dad's idol, and I kind of inherited that. And Dad was always quoting Will Rogers. When he wanted me to do something he'd say, Will Rogers said that... (laughs) I listened. I didn't pay much attention to him otherwise, unless he said, this is something Will Rogers would do.



And so, um, uh, I got down there. And during a commercial break I said, uh, I, I, I really, I really was flattered that you called me the Will Rogers of Arizona. So, I says, you know, Will Rogers was my hero. And, uh, I just, uh, I said, I really, I really don't deserve it though.

And he said, I know you don't. (swallows) If I'd a said Marshall Trimble, historian, was going to be on next hour, they'd have switched to another station. (laughs)

Well, that took the wind out of me on that one. (laughs) Good ole Pat. (laughter)

**PS** So that's how that came about.

**MT** Yeah.

**PS** Cause I hear that a lot. (laughs)

**MT** Well, I thought, I'm going to use it anyway. So, so, I just, I thought, well, I'm not making it up. Pat McMahan said it even though, even though he, he probably didn't mean it. (laughs)

**PS** Okay. Uh. Well, in addition to all of your teaching and all of your books and everything, I know you've been involved in some volunteer projects. Um. The one I'm thinking of is the Arizona Culturekeepers.

**MT** Yes. That was a, that was a ten-year program. Um. And, uh, I was called in as a consultant down to the hotel for their Essence of Arizona theme. And, uh, when, and, and, and Kax Herberger was, uh, course, Herbergers were, uh, were among some of the owners.

And, uh, Kax and, we came up with an idea to create a, cause the hotel opened, uh, ten years...

**PS** What was the name of the hotel?

**MT** Westin Kierland, um, Re, Resort and Spa.

And, uh, it oh, it was, it was in 2003. And for, so for ten years we thought, Arizona will be a hundred years old in ten years. Why don't we honor ten Arizonans, or nine Arizona individuals or couples, and a, and a historical group, uh, each year for ten years. And then at the, at the end, uh, during the Centennial year, we'll have one hundred, uh, Culturekeepers.

And that's how it all started. So, uh, yeah, it was a ten-year program. Just ended, it ended, um, well, last year.



**PS** And, how did you come up with that name?

**MT** That was, uh, that was Kax's idea. So, I, I give her credit for that.

**PS** Cause I think I like that term.

**MT** It's, it's a nice, it's a nice word. Yeah.

**PS** And...

**MT** And we've been all over the state. We were, we, we just searched all over. And I had a, I had a committee, uh, uh, from all points in the state. Northern Arizona. The White Mountains. Yuma. All around the state. Of, uh, so that we would, we would be a group that honored people not just in the Valley. There, uh, there are so many in the Valley, but so often, uh, the people in the rural areas, and, and coming from a rural area myself, I, I, I thought it'd be nice to give these people recognition and the communities, their communities, would appreciate it. And it worked out. It really worked out great.

**PS** Are there any other volunteer projects that we should know about?

**MT** Well, I've served on the Arizona Peace Officer Memorial Board for, uh, uh, almost thirty years. And, um, that's whenever an officer is killed in the line of duty. Uh. We were created by the legislature to, um, uh, uh, to provide, uh, you know, first a memorial. We raise the money from private funds for the statue down at the Capitol. And then, uh, the officers' names are inscribed on the memorial.

It's a very... I'd, I'd call it a sacred place for police, uh, for anybody in the police community today, uh, there at the Capitol. And, uh, we, we, we wish there'd be a year when we wouldn't have to put another name on there.

But I, I, I actually, I started the... gosh, I hate to say it. It sounds like I'm trying to (swallows) take the credit. But...

I wrote a letter to the editor of *The Arizona Republic*, um, when an officer in Phoenix was killed needlessly in 1986, I believe it was. 85.

And I said, we, we should have a memorial at the Capitol so that they will be, these, these, they will never be forgotten. Cause otherwise, they're forgotten. Uh. You know, six months from now the only ones who'll remember are the families and the officers who served with them.



Attorney General Bob Corbin and Steve Twist, his assistant, uh, uh, saw the letter, and, uh, the day it appeared in the paper. And they called and they said, (swallows) we're going to go to, renno, uh, write up a bill and create this. Would you be our civilian? The rest will be from the police community. Would you be our civilian, uh, on the, on the board? And I said, I'd be honored to.

And, uh, that bill ran through the legislature in one day. (laughs) And, uh...

Oh, and then, then we had to go out and raise a quarter of a million dollars. (laughs) To build the statue. And, we've been in business ever since. And the, it gets better all the time. They, uh, so that's, that one I'm very proud of.

And, uh, I, I serve on, um, I was on Barry Goldwater's Arizona Historical Foundation, uh, for about 20 years. And, uh, they've been, boy, there's been a lot of 'em.

I, I'm just the boy that can't say "no." (laughs)

**PS** Okay. And I know that you've gotten a lot of awards. Uh. But I guess the one you're most known for is to be Arizona's Official Historian. How did that happen?

**MT** That one happened, uh, that question comes up pretty often. And, I'm proud to say it was done by schoolteachers. (laughs)

I gave a, a talk, uh, a few years ago, oh, out in, uh, Paradise Valley schools. Although the teachers, it was an in-service professional growth, uh, uh, class in the summer. And they're from all over the Valley.

They were taking, uh, uh, Arizona studies. Uh. Fourth grade teachers.

And so, uh, I was asked to come over. So, I, I strapped on my guitar and told stories and entertained them for an hour or so. And after I left, they asked the teacher, uh, the professor from ASU, um, (swallows) does Arizona have a state historian? And, uh, he said, uh, no.

And he said, you think you would let us, uh, uh, you know. If we promoted him with the governor, uh, for state historian, would it be okay with him? And he said, well, I'll give him a call.

So, he called me and I, I, uh, I said, I said, tell him good luck getting those politicians to do anything that's not their idea. (laughter) And, uh, I said tell 'em to go for it.



These teachers were pretty persistent, I guess. And, uh, uh, so they...

About two years later I get a call from the governor's office, uh, from Fife Symington's office, and he said, uh, we want to have a, an event down here and, uh, honor you as the Official Arizona State Historian.

And so, that's how it all began. That was 1997.

So, then I've been doing it ever since. It's non-salary. It's, uh, it, it...we were talking about volunteer jobs. (laughs) Boy, that one came, that one turned out to be a real volunteer job. That, uh...

You know, the obligations to show up here and show up there, and do this and do that.

But, yeah, uh, people had told me before, said, uh, that was the best thing that ever happened to you because nobody knew how to, what kind of a brand to put on you. They didn't, uh, you, you had something to hang your hat on.

Now they thought, uh, who is Marshall Trimble? Well, he's a teacher. Who's Marshall Trimble? Well, he writes books. Uh, uh. He gives speeches. He talks at...uh, uh...you know...

And, uh, now they can just say, he's Arizona State Historian.

**PS** And is that a lifetime appointment?

**MT** No, no. Every governor has to appoint me. And, uh, so, uh, every one of them has been a good friend. (laughs) Been a personal friend. So, I haven't had any trouble so far. Uh. I guess time will tell.

You know, if, if, if, if another governor comes in and decides, uh, they have somebody else that they want to do it... I've had a good run, and, and I know I did my duty.

**PS** And what response did you get from the professional historians, the PhD type historians, to that?

**MT** I, I think early on when I, back in the 70s and 80s, I think, I think there was a problem. But, it, it was never discussed openly, but I, I'm pretty sure it was discussed behind, you know, when, when I was not around. And, uh, cause I didn't have the PhD. And then I, I, I, I, I, I can't, uh, you know, I've, I just...



I just felt if it ever comes up, um, I had, I learned mine out in the field. I got an education out in the field, uh, with experience, uh, and having lived here, uh, so long, that I couldn't have ever gotten at a place like Harvard.

I could go to one of these small towns, and, and I, I can say, um, I, I can drop a name of somebody that maybe I knew at Boys State, that I met at Boys State back in the 1950s.

And, uh, and I know little stories that you couldn't have gotten if you hadn't lived here and devoured *The Arizona Republic* newspaper (laughs) every day for forty, fifty years. Which I have. (laughs)

You pick up these little stories. And, uh, if I hadn't been a teacher at the high school level, I'm not talking about the university, at the high school level, where you have to really get in there and know some stuff to get, to reach those kids. And co...and the same here.

All of those things...that's my pedigree. (laughs)

**PS** Do you sometimes feel like that you're not respected those by those people?

**MT** I've never felt that. But it, it's, it's possi...you know, I always...

I was always kind of my own man, I guess. Um. I just, uh, there's enough cowboy in me, I think, that, uh, you know, you have to like me for what I am.

And I, I respect the academe group, and, and, there are a lot I know really well and have been friends with for years.

And I wished I would have had a PhD. Uh. I, I, I wished I'd had time to do it, and the money, and everything else to do it. At the time I didn't. And, uh, it would have been nice to have had that, that after your name.

It, it didn't happen. But I, I got so many other things that, uh, that, uh, you know, that, uh, have helped me that I think, I think it's been, you know. I guess that's kind of a trade-off. You can't have, can't have it all.

But, yeah, I have to admit, I would have loved to of, uh, even had my old alma mater, ASU, give me an honorary PhD. (laughs) Uh. I'd even settle, I'd even, I'd even be proud of that. But, uh...

I just, I just keep on, you know, I just do, I just do what I, I just do my work. And, and, uh, if they, if they, uh, (swallows) if they find a reason, uh, not to respect me or think I've, uh, uh,



don't have that credibility, uh, I think, uh, I, I just look at myself as a teacher, uh, for all these years. And, I think that, that deserves, that deserves some respect. (laughs)

**PS** So do I. (laughs) Uh. Well, what about...I've got a long list of awards that you've received. Uh. What are some of the other rewards you've received that mean the most to you?

**MT** Well, the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame. Uh. When they approached me, I, I, I said, I, I'm around veterans all the time, and, uh, I, I didn't do anything. I was in between wars. I, I did not, I was not a hero certainly. I, I've, uh, I did not do anything. I don't deserve this, I can't accept it.

And they said, no, it's not what you did. It's...you have an honorable discharge. Uh. You have served, you served enough time on active duty to be qualified. You, uh, (swallows) you, uh, it's what you did after you got out of the service. That's, that's who we honor. Um. Um. All you need's an honorable discharge, and, and, uh, I forget what else. But, you, you, you qualify. (laughs)

And, uh, uh, I said, I guess I'm, I guess then I can accept.

I didn't, uh, I still am a little humble around those, uh, some of those people that, you know, they...Rick Romleys and people like that. Uh. Fred Ferguson, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient. And these guys.

But, again, it's what you do with your life after you leave the service. So...

**PS** Joe Foss. Did you know...

**MT** Joe Foss. Yes, I knew Joe Foss. Had lunch with him a few times. Yeah.

**PS** (can't hear)

**MT** Yeah. Oh, he was, uh...

I sat down with Joe Foss, the first time I met him at lunch, and I looked under those eyes and I thought, this is a real gunfighter. (laughs) We talk about Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday. This is a gunfighter.

**PS** Actually, he spoke at the, the Barry Goldwater lecture series. I had to edit those when I was at Channel 8. So, I (**MT** – Yeah.)

**MT** Yeah, that's where I, I, that's when I was, uh, uh, the, uh, chairman of that. Uh. I, I brought,



brought him on to...I did that for about twenty years, I guess.

That one and, uh, the, uh, the, my own professional organization, The Wild West History Association, honored me with a Lifetime Achievement Award. And, um...

**PS** What's that association?

**MT** They, they are western, uh, western historians, writers and aficionados. Uh. It's a national group. And so, uh, so I... (hear **PS** murmuring in background, can't understand). Lifetime Achievement there.

The Arizona Historical Society gave me, uh, the, uh, Al Merito Award. It's up there. Uh. The Al Merito Award. And, and that's, uh, for, uh, contributions to the state. I, uh, that caught me by surprise.

All of these catch me by surprise. I, (swallows) I just don't go, I don't go looking for... I, (**PS** laughs) I never have politicked for anything. (laughter) Including State Historian. Just, (laughs) you know, just refused to politic for it.

But I'm, I'm honored to be chosen.

**PS** I noticed you have the Scottsdale Hall of Fame, too.

**MT** Oh, yeah. Scottsdale Hall of Fame. Uh. That was about 2004, I think.

And the Daughters of the American Revolution honored me with their, uh, uh, Medal of Honor. And that's for patriotism and community service. And that sort of thing.

I have to look on the wall over here. (laughs) Just see, uh, uh, what the, uh, the, the, uh, ...

Oh, the Music and Entertainment Hall of Fame. Uh. Over there, too. That, um, that came in 2004, also, I believe. And, uh, that was, that again is, uh, uh, you know, for just contributions to. Certainly not...

I don't call myself a musician. I don't call myself a singer. I, I, uh, I'm just a, you know, I just...wha...I just do whatever I do, and I guess they...anyway, they voted me in.

**PS** And, of course, this last year has been the Centennial year, so that's a big year for historians.

**MT** Yeah. That was a big honor to be on the Centennial Commission. We were on there together. Did



all those, you know...

I thought, I thought we all...you know, we really did an amazing job. And I don't mean pat ourselves on the back. But we had no money from the legislature. And we just had to, we just...

And, uh, I (audio glitch) complain and say, why didn't you guys do more? Why didn't you do more?

And I thought, Oklahoma got about twelve-million dollars when they had their centennial. Their legislature gave them twelve-million dollars. We got zilch. And we still had a pretty good time.

I'd always go, I'd say to the, I'd say, hey, this is America. Do it yourself. (laughter) Don't ask for, don't ask for, uh, what's the government going to do for us? And, is the government going to throw a party for us? No, we're, uh, we're...these are tough economic times. Let's go out here and, uh, we'll make our own, we'll make our own good time.

Plant a tree even if that's all you can do. Just plant a tree.

**PS** Then and all the, the little legacy projects that everybody...

**MT** Yeah. Yeah.

**PS** (can't understand) create a legacy.

**MT** Yeah. That's right. Oh, and they were great.

And I, I told people in these little towns, do something here. Even if you just put historical markers up. They'll be here a hundred years from now. And that's what you want. A party's only one night. (laughter)

**PS** Well, how do you want to be remembered?

**MT** As a teacher. (laughs)

I want people to say, he was a teacher. Or an educator.

**PS** Well, and I know your fo, your focus is on the history of Arizona, but how do you see the future of Arizona?

**MT** I always, maybe it's being Irish. I know why (laughs)



But, I, uh, I, I, I always say, uh, we've, we've got to think positive.

Americans have always had problems. We've always faced di, uh, dilemmas. Think of the people, think of the people in the Great Depression, what they must have thought. What the future holds. And, and yet the best was yet to come.

Who could have known that, uh, going through the Great Depression and then going through a, a terrible war, uh, that affected everybody, uh, one way or another. And all of the losses, and all of the suffering that went on. And yet we went into the best of times, uh, in the next, in the next decade, I thought.

The fifties was a great time to be a kid. (laughs)

I, I like to think that, uh, that the, the good times are, the good times are still coming.

**PS** And...

**MT** That's Mama Cass. (laughs)

**PS** And something I like to ask everybody, and it's particularly appropriate for you as a teacher, is, what advice do you have for young people growing up today and trying to decide what they want to do with their lives?

**MT** I would say, uh, follow your heart. But, uh, uh, an education. Get an education. You're, you're going to be competing, uh, uh, in a way that nobody's ever had to compete for good jobs. But, do what you love.

Don't, don't do something just because (raspy audio in background like something's hitting the microphone), don't become a lawyer because your father was a lawyer. (laughs) A doctor cause your dad was a doctor. Or, or something.

If that, if, if you love that, you have a passion for that, do it. But, um, I always think that the, more important than money, uh, uh, a passion for what you do.

Teaching and education...you'll never get rich being in education. And, and you don't have all these big bonuses and things like that to look forward to. Uh. But there is something in, in education, there's a feeling you get when, uh, a fifty-year-old person comes up and says, I took your class when I was a kid, and, and, you really made a difference to me.



And, I hear that every once in a while. And I hear that from other educators, too. Um. (swallows)  
And they say that means more to me than all the money, uh, I could have made doing something else. And I really, I really...

In fact, cause I've had that happen to me. And, uh, I, I just know what a feeling that is to think that you, you made such a difference in somebody's life. And that's what, maybe that's what we're, we're here for.

**PS** Okay. Uh. I don't usually ask about other History Makers, but I know that this year's group of History Makers, that you know several of them, or knew them, quite well. Um. And particularly, one I was looking forward to doing, interviewing, and didn't get to do it, is Bill Owen. Can, what can you tell me about Bill Owen?

**MT** Well, I, uh, I met Bill. Bill's another small-town boy. You know, come from Ajo. And, uh, and he, uh, just had a natural talent for the art.

And I met him, um, I met him, uh, first I met him when we were, uh, writing a book, uh, a coffee-table book, uh, for Northland Press on the, uh, Babbitt Ranch. The CO BAR up in Flagstaff.

And he had done a lot of, uh, art work on it. Painting. And sculpting. Uh. On, on the, uh, hanging out at the ranch up there. And I'd written a story on the, uh, on the Babbitt family.

And so, they asked us to, uh, you know, they wanted to use Bill's art and my, my story on the history of the ranch. And the Babbitt, the Babbitt, uh, legacy in Northern Arizona.

So that's how we met.

And then, uh, *Arizona Highways*, um, *Arizona Highways* asked us to, uh, go on a wild cow round-up. And, (laughs) uh, we were going out in western Arizona. And I, it was Joe Beeler, um, um, you know, the great Joe Beeler. I, he was one of my favorite peo, people of all time. And Frank Polk, a, a sculptor who, uh, lived in Mayer, and kept his...lived in the old hotel there in Mayer, and kept his, uh, sculpture in the bank there. In the bank vault of that place.

And, uh, colorful characters.

And, uh, we went out to western Arizona to a, uh, an expert in wild cows. A fellow named Dave Erickson.

And we were out on the, the, um, Big Sandy River. And we went over there, over the mountains, uh, over the Colorado River. It's the wildest country I've ever seen. And, that's where the wild



cattle hang out. Along the Big Sandy.

And, as we were riding that first night, there were rattlesnakes. Just everywhere we'd look would be a rattlesnake. And, um, Bill was riding, Bill Owen was riding right ahead of me, and Joe Beeler was right behind me. And, every time we'd hear, we were riding these toulees (sp?), uh, that came up about, uh, almost up to the, to the top of a horse.

And every time we'd, uh, hear a rattlesnake rattle, we'd, we'd pause. Because, uh, if you'd just wait the snake will leave.

But this time the snake kept rattling. Every time we'd start to move, the snake would rattle.

My horse wouldn't move. And, uh, I kind of tapped him with a spur and, and still no movement. And finally, Joe, behind me, he, he says, Marshall, I hate to be the one to have to tell you this, but that rattlesnake is right between the front legs and the hind legs of your horse. (laughs)

I leaned down and I looked under there, and, sure enough, there was a big rattler coiled up right between old Wiley's hind legs and his front legs. And, we waited a little while, what seemed like a long time. Probably was only about thirty seconds. But finally, the snake got bored and left. And, uh, we rode on.

We laughed about that. Uh. But when we, we rolled out our bedrolls that evening on the ground, um, the, uh, (swallows) the...our first thought was, I hope a snake doesn't crawl in here tonight. You know, looking for warmth. And, it was kind of April and the nights got cold. And the days were blistering hot.

But we were out there chasing these wild cows. And they were wild. They were wild as deer. And, uh, only, they...and, and meaner. And Bill and, uh, and, and Joe especially, they went after those like a, I was, I was so impressed cause I thought, these guys are not just artists. These guys can ride and rope.

That was rough country. Really rough country. And I was, I, I...especially Bill. Uh. He was younger than the, you know, he was younger. And, uh, he was, he was just, he was, he was all cowboy from the, from the boot heels all the way to the top of his hat.

And, we had a great week. And he, he was not a boastful guy. Didn't talk a lot. Uh. And, uh, just a lot...you just respected him. He had a, uh, uh, a lot of respect.

And his talent, talent was great. Uh.



So, I, uh, from that time on, you know, we stayed, uh, we, we stayed friends over the years. And, and, um, then we, when it came time to pick a Culture Keeper, uh, uh, I selected, uh, or I was...we had, there were several of us, nominated Bill to be an Arizona Culture Keeper.

And he'd also had a bad accident, and he overcame that. You know, a rope snapped back and put one eye out. And, uh, so he had to, you know, it hurt his depth perception for his art. And, uh, but he overcame that, too. No, he was just a great man.

**PS** Well I know, I had interviewed him for a Copperstate Cavalcade program, uh, "Creations of the Imagination" on artists. And I think it was like in the late 70s. And, I was impressed that his, um, cause I did something with all the Cowboy Artists. But, instead of trying to recreate scenes of the Old West, he, uh, his art was the contemporary cowboys.

**MT** Yes. And that's what this work was. Uh. It was with the CO BAR, too. All of his stuff, yeah, it was the modern-day cowboy. Not the history and not the, not the mythical, mythical West like some of them do. Uh. The shoot- 'em-ups and the stagecoach chases and everything.

No, Bill's was, Bill's was the modern-day working cowboy. And I'll tell you, he was really respected, uh, uh, wherever he went. Uh. By the, by the working cowboy today.

**PS** Yeah. And sadly, I guess when he died, he was out on the ranch.

**MT** That's what he was doing. Just like Joe Beeler. He was out there doing what he really loved when he, uh, when he, when he caved, cashed in.

**PS** Yeah. So that's, that's good. Um. And one of the other History Makers...I don't know if you him, because you weren't the, the official historian yet, Raul Castro?

**MT** Yes. I, uh, when he was first governor I wrote, uh, I wrote a speech for him. It was, it was the nation's Bicentennial going on then. And, uh, they asked me to write a speech for him. And, I, I don't think Governor Castro had given many, uh, you know, he was an ambassador and other things.

I don't think he'd done a lot of public speaking.

And, uh, so I, I went to hear my speech, uh, that I'd written. And I was sitting there and, and he, he went so fast. (laughs) He just, he just read through it real fast.

I thought if I were ever...you know, I didn't, uh, didn't get a chance to ever, to get to know him well enough to kid him about it, but I was going to tell him that was the fastest I'd ever, I've ever



heard one of my speeches. (laughs) **(PS – But he did give...)** He did give the speech. Yeah. Yeah. Did do the speech.

**PS** I've written a lot of things for Terry Goddard, but he never follows them word for word. He just sort...

**MT** Yeah. (laughter)

**PS** (can't understand)

**MT** Well, I think he, I think he did, I do remember him saying (says "I want to thank Marshall Trimble for this." really quickly). (laughs) It was real, real fast. Real fast. But, uh, anyway, that was, that was my, that was my...

And he's another one that you had to admire for his, uh, for what he came from and what he did, what he did with it.

**PS** (can't understand)

**MT** And I also liked that he was a pugilist, too. He could box. (laughter)

**PS** Yes. And he was a football player, too.

**MT** Yeah. He, he, uh, and, you know, coming from Pirtleville. That's a, uh, not really many people can make that claim. Uh. (laughs) Or growing up in Pirtleville anyway. That's kind of like me and Ashfork. Pirtleville was about the size of Ashfork, I guess.

**PS** And he ended up at NAU.

**MT** Yeah. **(PS laughs)**

**PS** He has quite a life story to tell. **(MT – Hmm, hm. Yeah.)** Uh. And the other, uh, the Lakins. Did you know the Lakins?

**MT** Yes. We did some cowboy poetry together. He was into cowboy poetry. Uh. I think it was way back in the early, I think it was in the early 1980s. Somewhere back then. We, uh, we did a big show over at the Scottsdale, um, Center for the Arts. And, that's where I first, fir, first met him. And then he was way out in the West Valley, so we communicated back and forth.



**PS** Anything else you want to say about him?

**MT** Well, I wish he'd have been here for this.

**PS** Yeah. Sorry we...I did get to interview him.

**MT** Oh, did you?

**PS** Yeah, but within a few weeks after I did the interview...

**MT** Yeah.

**PS** ...he passed on. I did it quickly because I knew he, he was quite...in fact, e was actually on oxygen doing the interviews. (laughs) Okay. Uh. Oh. Dave McCary. She wanted you to talk about Dave McCary. Uh. McCary? McGary? McGary? Oh. McGary.

**MT** I'm trying to think.

(photographer whispering in background about sculptures and galleries)

**MT** Oh. You know, I don't think I knew him. I don't believe, don't believe I knew him.

**PS** Oh. Well...

**MT** I don't know too many...the only artists I really, uh, I really don't know too many of the artists. Just, uh, you know, the, some of the, (photographer talking over him) CAA. (photographer talking more)

No, I don't believe we ever met.

**PS** So, other historians that you think are...would want to...any of them you'd want to recognize as, uh, Arizona historians?

**MT** Well, let me think now.

There's been...you know, you, you, you encounter all of these, you encounter all of these, uh, other writers. And, and most, you know, it's been mostly the writers that I, that I've know, and had, had influence. Uh. And, people like Kearny Edgerton and, and, uh, that have been, in, influenced me over the years. Dan Thrapp.



It's probably been more of the authors because, like I said, I, I, uh, uh, I'm trying to think. And the local, you know, and I rely on the local museums, like Joe Meehan up in Flagstaff. And, and, uh, the people that, you know, around museums around the state. Uh. Kathy Klump down in Willcox.

You know, these are people that I stay... Verline Meck (sp?), uh, is my old buddy out in Buckeye. These are people who have really helped me over the years because I can, when I have a question, I can, uh, about something out there, they're, they're my go-to people.

You, you collect these people li, as resources. Fay Reen (sp?) here in Ashfork, the woman who's almost, you know, one hand, single-handedly saved the town from complete oblivion.

And, and, uh, you know, and a lot of these, lot of these I was able to, uh, to, uh, nominate for Culture Keepers, too. Just for, you know, their service and such.

But there've just been so many of them over, over the years, that...

**PS** The woman in, uh, (hear photographer talking in background) ...uh, in Prescott. What's her name?

**MT** Oh. Betty Ruffner.

**PS** Yes.

**MT** Betty Ruffner. She's, she's probably the best of them all. Uh. And the hardest working person I've ever seen. I swear she's got Duracell Batteries in, (laughs) inside her. Uh. I just can't believe she doe...

She was with me for ten years on the Culturekeepers. And I just prayed through that whole thing that she would, uh, she'd last for ten years. And she's still going strong.

**PS** I know. She's in her 90s.

**MT** Yeah. Oh, yeah.

**PS** She still drives.

**MT** Yeah.

**PS** I'm on the Women's Hall of Fame, uh, (**MT** – Hmm, hm.) Executive Committee and she was still involved with that.



**MT** Yeah.

**PS** And when they were asking, uh, whoever it was, who's going to chair the, uh, induction ceremonies for the last, this last year? She goes, I'll do it.

**MT** Yeah. That's what she did with Culturekeepers. She would always say...I'd say, you're, you, you're taking on too much. I knew she just had a plateful up in Prescott. And, uh, but, but she does. And, you know...and her husband was a mentor to me. Budge Ruffner.

That's a name I should have mentioned right off the top of the head. Uh. Budge, Budge Ruffner. Because he was a storyteller. And I met him when I was a young historian. Actually, he influenced me a, a whole lot. Because he, he was a writer, a newspaper writer, too. But he could tell a story.

And he'd set you up, and, and, it, I don't know. He'd just, he, he...

I studied people like that when I was, uh, when, when I was becoming a public speaker. And, you know, the timing and...

I also studied people on TV. I studied Johnny Carson, uh, for, for timing. I watched Johnny Cash, uh, on, on television. And his live performances here. How he, you know, the charisma.

I was looking for people that just had that, that, that charisma, and could, could, uh, could hold an audience. Or they had the timing like Johnny Carson. You know, just, everything was, everything's in, that is timing. (laughs)

**PS** Guess you never got to meet Will Rogers.

**MT** No. No. Probably, uh, of course he was from a different, a different era. But, uh, he...but, but, you know, I listened to some of the old recordings. And I think, um, I like him better reading, reading his stuff than listening to him. But he was from a diff, yeah, it was a different time.

**PS** Okay. Well, I think I've covered most of the things that I wanted to talk about. Is there anything you wanted to talk about I didn't ask you?

**MT** No. I just, uh, I knew you had done this, (laughs) I think you're a real pro at this. I, I, uh, I, I came totally unprepared. I just thought, I'll be, I'll just think on my feet here today, and, uh, and let you, uh, let you have the questions.



But, I, uh, I think I probably already said that, I, I found that passion back in, in, uh, the mid-1960s, uh, for, uh, I finally found something I...

I think I was kind of a lost soul for a long time. And, in fact, some of those years I call my Lost Years. And, and, even in interviews I just never, you know, I just prefer to leave it out.

Because I always, from the time I was a, the time I was a little boy in Ashfork and, and, uh, there seemed to be no future at all there, and times were tough. And I thought, I want to make a difference. Uh. I, I want to, I want, I just want. I don't want to just live and die. I want to make a difference with my life.

And I want to find that, whatever that is that will give me that opportunity to make that difference.

And that's why I, to this day, I'm so grateful that I, uh...

The visit to Little Big Horn. The chasing cows in Montana. Uh. The folk singing in those smoky bars. And, and, uh, and the, the...all of that. Uh. It just, it, it came to fruition with (laughs)... I thought, you know, I can, I can, I can be a teacher.

**PS** And brought your singing into the classroom.

**MT** Yeah. And brought all that, brought all that to it. Yeah.

As I said, you know, I, I saw others, uh, that... As an effective way of teaching, I saw, as we were talking earlier, Bob Finkbine (sp?) brought Jenny Yates, uh, in. And I was, that was when I was first starting to...I hadn't even started teaching yet, I don't think.

And I thought, (swallows) she can bring the music in. He had, he brings in, tells these stories that are just riveting. And, uh, uh, I thought, this is what I want to do with the rest.

Bring a guitar and do the songs.

Johnny Cash, Johnny Cash was from the same part of Arkansas as my mother was. So, she was just up the road in, in Evening Shade, from Evening Shade, Arkansas. And I, I thought, um, that, uh, that who...

I related, I related to those people. Uh. They're in my roots. And, uh, and they tell stories. And so, that's, anyway that's what I...



And I just evolved from there, I guess.

(photographer whispering in background)

**PS** She has a question. Uh. Of...what films in Arizona are your favorites? Or films about Arizona, I guess.

**MT** I like, I like *The Searchers*. Uh. The, uh, with John Wayne, and, uh, Natalie Wood. And, uh...and Monument Valley. Uh. And so many of those films made up in Monument Valley.

I liked *Monty Walsh*, which was another good one. Uh. Jack Schaffer's the author of *Shane*. People remember him for *Shane*. But *Monty Walsh* was about the end of the era of the cowboy, and it was filmed down in Southern Arizona.

And maybe one of my all-time favorites is *Oklahoma!* (laughs) It was filmed down there, and I, I love Broadway musicals, the old Broadway musicals. And, uh, I could just sit and watch *Oklahoma!* every night.

**PS** I remember seeing the, the house down there that...

**MT** Yeah. San Rafael, the San Rafael Valley. Yeah, I've been there many times.

(**PS** and photographer talking and laughing in background)

**PS** Yeah. When I did, I did the Border Towns (can't understand) for Copperstate. And we traveled through all the border towns. (**MT** – Yeah.) and I was with Manny Garcia, and I...

**MT** I remember Manny. Yeah. Is Manny still, uh...

**PS** Oh, yes.

**MT** Is he still a...gosh, I haven't seen him in ages.

**PS** No, he's working with, uh, Bill Miller on this, uh, oh, what is it called? That show. Uh. It's a video show that's on...

**MT** Oh, I didn't know they were still working. Yeah.

**PS** Yeah, they're doing, uh...

**MT** And I used to do, I used to do some recording with, with, uh, Bill's, Bill's brother. Um.



**PS** Oh, Jack.

**MT** Jack. Jack Miller. Yeah.

**PS** He's still going strong.

**MT** Jack's still going. Yeah.

**PS** In fact, every Christmas Bill hosts a Christmas, what used to be lunch, now it's breakfast, at, uh... And, um, Jack's there and Manny and Maurie Helle. And all the old-timers are at the... Steve Bodinet and... I'm one of the only women from the, the group...

**MT** The ones, (can't understand) women, there weren't that many around. (**PS** talking over him) There weren't that many women around back then. Yeah.

**PS** Special Projects...

**MT** When Mary Jo came on, it was really a rarity. I still hear from Mary Jo through Facebook and stuff.

**PS** Yes, I do too.

**MT** I'm looking at those, those pictures over there, uh, uh, on the wall. And, those are my girls. Uh. The rodeo queens. Those were Miss Rodeo Arizonas. And that was another, uh, thing I was proud of doing for several years. Uh. And that is...

They had to do something on Arizona for NFR, for the National Finals Rodeo, for Miss Rodeo America. And they had to do a little talk.

So, these girls are beautiful. They're, they're, they can do anything on a horse. And they're just amazing. But, some of them are kind of shy, and when they get on that stage in Las Vegas and those judges are looking at 'em. And they've got to do about a two-and-a-half-minute spiel on Arizona.

So, we would bring 'em in here and, uh, and then we'd take 'em over to the theater, put the light in their face, and get them on stage. And I, I encouraged 'em, you know, to really, uh, flirt with, uh, flirt with the judges. Smile. Uh. Make eye contact with the judges. And, and, use your hands and don't just stand there. But, and you, you know, get your inflections, and tell this thirty second, or two minute, two and a half minutes, on, uh, what Arizona is to you.



And we would sit down and write the piece together. And, uh, the one, uh, uh, one of 'em won Miss Rodeo America. MiQuel Holyoak. And, uh, she's still living up, she's now, as a family, living on a ranch out in Eastern Arizona.

And, uh, a couple of others. Uh. Two or three others there were, uh, were the top, top three or top five, from Miss Rodeo Americas. So, it was really, I was really proud, really proud of 'em. And, they've, uh, they...I hear from them every once in a while.

**PS** That's great. Great. Well, you've done a lot of little things that... (laughs)

**MT** This, this, yeah, those are things that you do, you don't even think about at the time. I have to see something in here to remind me. (laughs) I, uh, I look at the, I look at the wall, and that's why I just, uh, I, I sit in here and I just stare at these. At all these mementoes. And every one of them has a memory. And, every one of them has a story, story behind it. And, and, uh, I've, I've just...this office is really, really very special to me.

**PS** Okay. Okay. I think we're ready to wrap up unless (**MT** – Okay.) there's something else you wanted to mention.

**MT** No, I think we've pretty much, uh...

**PS** Okay.

**MT** Pretty much, uh, said it all.

**PS** Okay.

**MT** I think we've covered my whole, (**PS** talking over him) my whole life up to now.

**PS** We can tell more details, but I think we've got enough. (laughs) Okay. Very good.

(camera off)

(Marshall in cowboy hat)

**MT** Happy trails, everybody. And don't go buying any ocean-front property yet.

**MT** Happy trails, everybody. And don't buy any of that ocean-front property. And it always rains after a good dry spell.



