

Butchering Hogs and Preserving the Meat. Charles said they ate everything that now they say is bad for you. He said, “We grew up on beans and corn, and everything was cooked in lard.” During the fall, they killed hogs. They got the water in the big pot hot and dropped the hog in. Scalding it helped in removing the bristles.

The skin from the hog was put in the big pot to cook down and get the grease out. They dipped the grease out of the pot and strained it through a cloth and put it in five-gallon [tin] cans. The skin that was left was put in a cloth. They pulled up the cloth and took a paddle and pushed in it. In later years, they got a wooden crackling press to put it in to squeeze it. This is how the hog’s skin was processed to make cracklings.

They salted the hog down with plain salt and put it in a box. It was left in the box about three weeks and then the salt was washed off and it was rubbed down with Morton’s Sugar Cure. Charles said they left it in that a long time, a month or so, then they hung the hams, etc. up in the smoke house and built a hickory fire under them. They smoked sausage also.

For the sausage, his mother made sacks out of old sheets. She put salt, pepper, and sage in with the meat and then ground it. She’d pack the ground meat in the tubes made from sheets, and it was hung to smoke. After the sausages were smoked, she dipped them in paraffin to coat them. This kept the bugs out. Charles’ wife said her family didn’t do that, and she added that you could buy tubes. She said a sausage and biscuit was what she took to school for lunch.

School. Charles went to the Elko School, a wooden building with two rooms. One teacher taught three grades. To get to the school, he walked north, and then it was on the west side of the road.

Cemeteries. Charles said none of his family is buried on the arsenal. However, in regard to cemeteries, he was told by a man he knew who worked there in the 1950s that in the early 1950s the crews got tired of using weed eaters to cut around cemetery markers so they put them in trucks and dumped them in the river. This is a statement that the researcher also heard from another source. The fact that tombstones that were known to be in some of the cemeteries are no longer there supports Wells’ statement. The area where the stones were allegedly dumped in the river is by the lodge at the recreation area.