

An Interview With

LUCILE BERG

*An Oral History produced by
Robert D. McCracken*

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Nye County Commissioners
Tonopah, Nevada
89049

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PREFACE

The Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the recordings of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are *not* history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the NCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the NCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherence. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the *uhs*, *ahs* and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;

- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes—in many cases as a stranger—and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have long known and admired; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and Nevada—too numerous to mention by name—who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. “Bobby” Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project in 1987. Subsequently, Commissioners Richard L. Carver, Dave Hannigan, and Barbara J. Raper provided support. In this current round of interviews, Nye County Commissioners Butch Borasky, Lorinda A. Wichman, Joni Eastley, Gary Hollis, Fely Quitevis, and Dan Schinhofen provided unyielding support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave enthusiastic support and advocacy of the program within Nye County in its first years. More recently, Darrell Lacy, Director, Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office, gave his strong support. The United States Department of Energy, through Mr. Lacy’s office, provided funds for subsequent rounds of interviews. Thanks are extended to Commissioners Eastley and Hollis and to Mr. Lacy for their input regarding the conduct of this research and for serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. These interviews would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Lacy.

Jean Charney served as editor and administrative assistant throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Debra Ann MacEachen, Robert B. Clark, Lynn E. Riedesel, Marcella Wilkinson, and Jean Charney transcribed a number of interviews, as did Julie Lancaster, who also helped with project coordination. Proofreading, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Joni Eastley, Michael Haldeman, Julie Lancaster, Teri Jurgens Lefever, and Darlene Morse. Joni Eastley proofed all the manuscripts and often double-checked, as best as possible, the spelling of people's names and the names of their children and other relatives. Jeanne Sharp Howerton provided digital services and consultation. Eva La Rue and Angela Haag of the Central Nevada Museum served as consultants throughout the project; their participation was essential. Much-deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

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—Robert D. McCracken
2014

INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the close of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly discovered mineral deposits, were but a memory.

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that while most of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region—stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County—remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890, most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be so for at least another twenty years.

The spectacular mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), Rhyolite (1904), Manhattan (1905), and Round Mountain (1906) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, much of it essentially untouched by humans.

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the early 1860s through 1900. Austin had a newspaper, the *Reese River Reveille*, starting in 1863 and the Belmont area starting with the *Silver Bend Reporter* in

1867. Ione had a paper, the *Nye County News*, for a few years in the 1860s. More information representing the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915 is available; from local newspapers after about 1920. The volume of available sources varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously from its first year, starting with the *Tonopah Bonanza*. Goldfield had the *Goldfield News*, which began in 1904. In contrast, relatively little is known about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the *Round Mountain Nugget*, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. The *Rhyolite Herald*, longest surviving of Rhyolite/Bullfrog's three newspapers, lasted from 1905 to 1912. The *Beatty Bullfrog Miner* was in business from 1905 to 1906. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All these communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities once their own newspapers folded, although Beatty was served by the *Beatty Bulletin*, published as part of the *Goldfield News* between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 resides in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) in 1987. The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews

conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the Lied Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique—some are large, others are small—yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

On the basis of the oral histories as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories have also been archived. All oral and community histories and photographs collected under the NCTHP are available on the Internet.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impact of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a

mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions and quality of life of Nye County communities that may be impacted by the repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for a long time and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided at the site. And in the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

—RDM
2014

This is Robert McCracken talking to Lucile Berg at her home in the Olive Glen, Sacramento, California, May 7, 2010. Margaret Lawrence, Director of Christian Science Nursing at the Olive Glen, helps with the conversation, including writing out some questions for Lucile, who is very hard of hearing, to read.

McCracken also interviewed Lucile's nephew Roger Berg and niece Shirley Ann Henle. Those two interviews follow this on pages 11 and 29, respectively.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Lucile, could you tell us your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

LB: Lucile R. Berg.

RM: And when and where were you born?

LB: Round Mountain, Nevada.

RM: What year and date? Do you remember?

LB: October the 2nd, 1914.

RM: And who was your mother?

LB: Blanche Hunsaker.

RM: Where was she born?

LB: Eugene, Oregon. My dad was interested in mining and his mine played out; he ended up with a garage, selling gasoline and oil and taking care of cars. I lived there all my life till I moved to Reno.

RM: When did you move to Reno?

LB: In '44. I went to the university there, too.

RM: What was your father's name?

LB: Jack.

RM: And what year did he come to Round Mountain? Do you know?

LB: I don't know; pretty early. It hadn't been established very long.

RM: And where had he been before he came to Round Mountain?

LB: Eugene, Oregon. He came west when he was a pretty young man, probably the 1850s.

RM: Where did he come from in the East?

LB: Ohio.

RM: Did they have other children besides you? You're the only child?

LB: I'm it. [Laughter]

RM: Tell me about growing up in Round Mountain.

LB: I went to school there until I went to college.

RM: Do you remember any of your teachers?

LB: Mrs. McGilvery was the best. She taught there a good many years.

RM: What did kids do for entertainment in those days?

LB: Oh, various things. Poked around, for the most part. We did what we wanted to at the time.

RM: And of course, there was Will Berg, one of your dad's brothers. You grew up with all the Bergs, didn't you?

LB: Yes, there were four sons. Another brother was Karl. Karl "Skook" Berg was named after his uncle.

RM: Did Karl have children?

LB: Two—a boy and a girl.

RM: What made you decide to want to go to college?

LB: Oh, just to see and do something. I thought I would be a teacher but I changed my mind.

RM: Why did you change your mind?

LB: Kids didn't behave themselves like they should. [Laughter]

RM: Where did you teach?

LB: Round Mountain and Manhattan and Smoky Valley.

RM: What were the kids like? Were they good kids?

LB: Oh, they behaved themselves, I saw to that. [Laughter] They couldn't get away with things with me. I'd done so much already.

RM: You knew all their tricks?

LB: I knew all their tricks. [Laughter]

RM: What did you study when you went to the university?

LB: History.

RM: And then you got a master's degree. Tell about that—that's very exciting.

LB: I never used it, that I know of.

ML: You did, though, through articles you wrote in the paper.

LB: Yes, there's a few of them.

RM: What paper did you write articles for?

LB: The *Reno Gazette*.

RM: I'm going to try and find those articles. Do you have copies of them?

ML: Yes. The person who has her power of attorney is looking for them now. [To Lucile:] Beverly is looking for the articles in your boxes at her house.

RM: That's wonderful. Talk about writing your master's thesis on the history of Tonopah. I love your thesis; it's wonderful. We're going to publish it.

LB: Dad was my inspiration. He wrote newspaper articles and he urged me to do the same. So I wrote a history, more or less, of what I knew. He supplied the information for the background. He had been there for a good many years.

RM: Did your dad come to Round Mountain before your mother did?

LB: Yes. They were married there.

RM: Did you talk to the old-timers when you wrote your history?

LB: It's hard to remember dates.

RM: Tell about the old-timers you talked to.

LB: Harry Beckley and a man named Gus—they'd been in Round Mountain ever since it was established. Long before; I don't really remember what year they went there.

RM: How long did you teach school?

LB: About five years; that was enough for me. I spent more time disciplining the students than teaching.

ML: Then what?

LB: I didn't do anything for a while; I tried various things till I found something I liked.

RM: What did you finally turn to?

LB: Writing, mostly.

RM: And what did you write?

LB: I wrote about everyday affairs, what was going on in small towns.

RM: Were those the articles published in the *Gazette*?

LB: Sometimes.

RM: Do you have any of your writings that weren't published? Do you have all of your writings that you did?

LB: Some place.

ML: I think she has.

RM: That's wonderful. What did you do next in your life? You wrote, and then what

did you do after that?

LB: Oh, just played around, poked around, doing nothing.

RM: Were you living in Round Mountain at that time?

LB: Most of the time.

RM: And eventually you moved to Reno, didn't you?

LB: No, I moved to Carson City.

ML: When did you move to Carson?

LB: In '45.

RM: What did you do in Carson City?

LB: Nothing; just lived there. I moved back to Round Mountain in '46; didn't stay in Carson very long. Later I moved back to Reno.

RM: How did Round Mountain change?

LB: Well, everybody left. The mine gave out; there were very few people left. I didn't stay any longer; I needed too much help.

RM: Who did stay in Round Mountain?

LB: My cousins—Ned and Getta and Skook.

RM: When did you then leave Round Mountain for good?

LB: I first left there to go to college.

RM: When you moved back to Reno, what did you do there?

LB: Nothing; just lived.

RM: Did you have a job?

LB: I didn't need it; I had plenty to live on—investments, mostly.

RM: So you lived in Reno the rest of your life.

LB: A good place to live.

RM: And when did you move down to Sacramento?

LB: I don't know. I was here off and on for quite a while before I moved.

RM: Have you been back to Round Mountain lately?

LB: No, not for years. I don't think I would see anybody I knew there anymore.

RM: When you lived in Round Mountain, did you go to Tonopah much?

LB: Several times; I didn't stay.

RM: What do you remember about Manhattan?

LB: I didn't care much about it.

RM: Why?

LB: Oh, I didn't like where it was located. [Chuckles] That's a good enough reason.

RM: Did you do horseback riding when you were growing up?

LB: Yes, that's the way we got around. [Laughter]

ML: Yes, you had to; horse and buggy, too. What stores or churches were there?

LB: There used to be a store there, but no churches. They had services, but. . . .

ML: But they had stores.

LB: Safeway, mostly.

RM: The Bergs had a store, didn't they?

LB: Sure. Now they're dead.

RM: Were the winters cold?

LB: Not usually. There was no river to swim in.

RM: Did you go up to Darrough's Hot Springs very much, to swim?

LB: Sometimes, yes.

RM: What do you recall about dances and parties?

LB: They had dances once a week.

ML: Who played?

LB: Sometimes I played the piano.

RM: Were you good?

LB: Not anymore; that's the trouble.

RM: Do you remember Sheriff Bill Thomas?

LB: I know the name, but he was much older than I. He and Dad were very good friends.

RM: [To Marilyn:] Do you have any questions?

ML: What were the politics like there?

LB: About the same as today—some do and some don't. [Laughter]

ML: Were there bars there?

LB: Absolutely; couldn't do without them. [Laughter]

ML: Were there bar fights?

LB: I suppose so. I didn't pay much attention to that; not much interested.

RM: Did they find a lot of gold?

LB: No, not much.

RM: Did you make your own clothes?

LB: Most of the time.

RM: Did you like to cook?

LB: Not especially. I did like good things to eat.

RM: You never married, did you?

LB: Couldn't be bothered; too much trouble.

ML: Not the right man.

LB: Mostly.

RM: What kind of a man were you looking for?

LB: Oh, I don't know. It didn't bother me much.

RM: What was the Depression like in Round Mountain?

LB: The mine kept working; that helped a lot.

RM: Did you interview anyone special from the mine for your thesis or any of your articles?

LB: No.

RM: Lucile, were you a pilot?

LB: I flew around for pleasure.

RM: Where did you fly?

LB: Just around the country there, Smoky Valley.

RM: Where did you land in Round Mountain?

LB: The field was down in the flat, in the valley. There were too many hills where the town is.

RM: Where did you learn to fly?

LB: In Reno, at the airport.

RM: Did you fly from Reno to Round Mountain?

LB: Not very often, just once in a great while.

RM: You flew from Reno to Round Mountain alone? That's amazing. How old were you?

LB: Nearly 30.

RM: For how long did you do that?

LB: A couple of years.

RM: Do you have any pictures?

LB: I guess I have somewhere.

ML: When did you learn to drive?

LB: My dad got his first car and I learned along with him.

ML: What did you think of the car?

LB: Not much to begin with. [Laughter]

ML: How long have you been a Christian Scientist?

LB: All my life. I was healed when I was less than a year old.

ML: And that's what brought you into Christian Science?

LB: I was in San Francisco at the time, got sick, and doctors couldn't help me any longer.

RM: What was wrong?

LB: I was too young to know.

RM: But you were healed.

ML: So your mom called for prayer?

LB: I suppose so.

RM: That's how it works?

ML: Yes, if they hear that someone's been healed of something that the doctors have given up on, back then they went right to prayer. So that's how she was introduced to it. That's wonderful.

RM: Were you the pride and joy of your parents?

LB: I probably was. [Laughter] That is, if I behaved myself.

RM: Did your father like to write with you?

LB: I don't know; he didn't say very much of anything.

RM: He was a quiet man?

LB: Very quiet.

RM: What was your mother like?

LB: They went very well together. They were good parents.

RM: You loved them a lot, didn't you? Would he be pleased to know you are publishing your book?

LB: Knowing him, maybe not. [Laughter] You [McCracken] make me think of him. You're very much like him. Not that you look like him, but you act like him.

RM: I do? Well, thank you. [Laughter] Can you think of anything you want written in the preface we're going to write to go with your thesis when we publish it?

LB: No, I'm very satisfied.

RM: Thank you so much for talking with me; it's an honor to meet you.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Roger Berg at his home in Smoky Valley, Nevada, September 26, 2010.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Roger, could you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

RB: Roger Daniel Berg.

RM: And when and where were you born?

RB: I was born July 20, 1946, in the little town of Tonopah, Nevada.

RM: And could you tell me your mother's name as it probably reads on her birth certificate? (Of course, I know her as Rene Zaval.)

RB: It would be Irene Catherine Rogers.

RM: And when and where was she born, do you know?

RB: She was born November 13, 1914, on the RO Ranch—out here in Smoky Valley.

RM: And could you tell me your father's name?

RB: Daniel Sanford Berg was his name. He was born in Tonopah.

RM: Do you know his birth date?

RB: Let's see, he was a year younger than my mother—May 5, 1915.

RM: And he was a member of the well-known Berg family in Round Mountain. They had a store there and all kinds of things, didn't they?

RB: Yes, they had a store and his father owned the waterworks in Round Mountain.

RM: Will Berg was his father, right? How many Berg brothers were there?

RB: Will Berg was my father's father; there were four brothers, Elmer, Will, John, and Karl.

RM: And which one was Lucile's father?

RB: Lucile's father was John.

RM: Could you tell me a little bit about John?

RB: He, of course, went with Will to the Yukon, along with his other two brothers—all four of them went to the Yukon. Lucile made one comment that whatever Will wanted to do, he seemed to talk John into it, and she didn't really care for that. I can see that that troubled her a little bit. But they all went to the Yukon in their 20s, and then they came to Round Mountain.

Then John bought, I believe, two Cadillacs, and he used to haul people around. I think he hauled people to Goldfield, to Tonopah. I have a receipt about his buying one of his Cadillacs in about 1911.

RM: And he would take them over those dirt roads?

RB: Yes, isn't that amazing?

RM: So he was basically running a little bus service?

RB: And he was a mechanic; he started a garage. He had the garage in Round Mountain directly across from the old historical Berg house in the center of Round Mountain. He had that for many years—he pumped gas, fixed cars. He was known as By Jingo, because it was an exclamation that he always made—"By jingo!!!"

RM: He must have been a pretty good mechanic. Is that how he made a living for most of those years?

RB: I would say so.

RM: He wasn't involved in mining that much?

RB: Oh, they all had claims. In fact, some of the gold that you see in my display comes from Lucile's father. Almost all of the collection that I have comes from the Yukon.

RM: Do you know of any claims that he had in Round Mountain?

RB: He had some claims at the Fairview, which was directly above the town; of course, it is now owned by Round Mountain Gold. It's due southeast, so to speak.

RM: Does the Fairview still exist? Is that mountain still there or has it all been open-pitted?

RB: I think they are getting ready to drill it.

RM: Did he make some money there?

RB: I believe they all made a little money in gold. I think some of us have inherited their love for it; they were all involved in gold.

RM: Do you know the claims some of the other brothers had?

RB: No, I do not. But they all had some claims around Round Mountain because that's just what they did, along with the other things they did.

RM: Will had the water business, didn't he? As I remember, he dug those water lines by hand; remarkable.

RB: Will put the water in Round Mountain, so he basically had the waterworks. And he sold ice.

RM: How did he make the ice?

RB: He would go up Shoshone Canyon in the wintertime and chop out the ice into blocks and then store it in sawdust. He'd sell it to people to put it in ice boxes. And then I'm not sure which brother he went in with to buy Berg Brothers Mercantile. They had that store, and then he bought the ranch—he got the ranch down here that we're presently on, the Berg Ranch.

RM: And John had the garage. What did the other brothers do?

RB: Elmer left and went to Modesto. He was around Modesto and Eureka, California.

I think he had a garage, also, where he fixed vehicles. That's what my uncle Karl ["Skook"] Berg told me. I think Karl Berg and Katie, his wife, had a little grocery store at one time. (Skook was named Karl after Karl, his uncle.)

RM: So there were two Berg brothers that had garages.

RB: Yes, one in Modesto, the other in Round Mountain. The other three brothers stayed in Round Mountain and I believe they all three died in Round Mountain.

RM: And are presumably buried here?

RB: I think they're all buried here.

RM: Now let's say a few words about your mother. She comes from a famous family in this area.

RB: Yes, the Rogers.

RM: Tell a little bit about her background and the RO Ranch and so on.

RB: Ma's dad, Benjamin Rogers . . . I believe his father, her grandfather, came from Reese River over to Smoky Valley. He was a rancher and cowboy, and she was born on the RO Ranch; I believe it was the biggest ranch in Smoky Valley. I think it ended up becoming 6,000 deeded acres, something around that. It was maybe not quite that large when he had it—it probably got bigger as time went on. Her dad also bought the Wine Glass Ranch ten miles south of the RO.

My mother lived in Smoky Valley and Round Mountain all her life. And then she married my dad and had us three boys—Russell William Berg, who's my older brother—he goes by "Jim"—and Kenneth Ward Berg, who is my younger brother, and me, Roger. Jim was born in '39. I was born in '46 and Kenny was born in '48.

RM: What stands out in your mind about growing up here in the area?

RB: It was something that I was born to, so what we did here was just what I thought

life was about.

RM: And what did you do?

RB: We were born on the main ranch down there and went to grade school in Round Mountain; we went to high school in Austin. And all of us took our turns working at the RO Ranch.

RM: Not the Berg Ranch?

RB: We worked there, but we also worked out on the RO. Then I went away to Reno to make my fortune; Kenny and I both did, the young brothers. We didn't make our fortune, so we came back to Smoky Valley. Jim stayed, raised cows; he still does the same thing, and very well.

RM: What did you do in Reno? What was your occupation there?

RB: I decided to get into gaming, and I went to work for John Ascuaga when he had a very small place. He was just buying it from his father-in-law, Dick Graves. I went to work for him for three years in the gambling. I was in the slot department. I started out as a change boy, running around with a belt on selling change to customers. I was there three years and then got married to my wife, Anne Howd, from Hawthorne.

I brought her back here in 1970 and my older brother and I started working at Kingston when they first started building up Kingston; we went to work for Carl Haas. We built fence. We helped build the old lodge that's up there. My younger brother had moved to Tonopah and got married and he worked as a fireman, and he worked for the water company and ran cows at Lone Mountain.

RM: And Jim and you worked up at Kingston in the early '70s. That's when they started that subdivision up there, wasn't it?

RB: Correct.

RM: And then, when did you build this beautiful home you have here?

RB: I built this in 1980. My younger brother and I bought Carvers [Station]. We had it for a year and a half, then we sold it and we made a good profit. I built this log house and we moved in in 1980.

RM: Did you buy Carvers from Jean Carver?

RB: We bought it from Gary Carver, the youngest brother. He had bought it from his mother, Jean.

RM: And who did you sell it to?

RB: We sold it to a couple named Greg and Susie Scott. They were from Lake Tahoe, I believe.

RM: Do they still have it?

RB: They had it for 20-some years, and then I think they lost it.

RM: Oh really? And in the meantime, there's been a lot of growth in the valley, hasn't there?

RB: Well, the mine took off. My older brother and I went to work at Round Mountain. It wasn't even Round Mountain Gold then; it was Louisiana Land and Exploration. They were attempting to find out if it was a viable gold project; the mine was closed at that time. They found out it was viable, so we worked in the pilot mill and the beginning of it. We sampled underground. Not my older brother—he was doing other things. But I worked in sampling all the underground workings up there. We were there for a few years.

RM: Were you sampling in the old Sunnyside and things like that?

RB: Yes, we sampled everywhere underground. We sampled in Gold Hill.

RM: Did you have some pretty wild experiences down there in those old diggings?

RB: Oh, absolutely. Some of the timbers looked like they were literally matchsticks and were going to come apart at any time. It was scary. We spent a lot of time down there with chopping hammers and plastic bags. I worked with John Blumenauer, who was an old-timer from Round Mountain, and Ernie Sebastian from the Philippines.

RM: Did you know Bob Wilson? Was he was down in there?

RB: Certainly I knew Bob Wilson, but he never worked up there when I did. He had his own little place he was working.

RM: How about Norman Coombs? Was he ever involved?

RB: Norman was a little older then, and he didn't work at the mine then. I knew Norman.

RM: Were they using him as a consultant? He knew a lot about the Sunnyside, I know.

RB: I don't think anybody knew more about gold and mining than Norman. He used to be my mom's boyfriend before she got married.

RM: Yes, Norman told me that when the tape recorder was off. [Laughs] In fact, I have a wonderful picture of them as young people. Was Don Simpson the boss at Round Mountain at that time?

RB: When the mine started, Echo Bay hired on Simpson as the manager and Jim and I went to work for him.

RM: Now let's talk about Lucile and her family. John was her father, and what was her mother's name?

RB: Her mother's name was Blanche; her maiden name was Hunsaker. John was up in the Yukon and he had written a letter to Blanche's parents down in the States asking for her hand. My grandfather, Will, took Blanche up to the Yukon, all the way to Dawson City, and she got married to John. She stayed up there with him for several years until

they came back to Nevada.

RM: So John had known Blanche down here before he went up there? Where did she come from?

RB: I believe in Oregon.

RM: How in the world did John meet her?

RB: He had to have met her in Oregon because John and Will and Elmer and Karl came from Yellow Springs, Ohio, to Oregon, Oregon to the Yukon, Yukon to Round Mountain. They came out in their 20s. I'm not saying they went to Oregon in their 20s, but they left from Oregon around that age.

RM: What were they doing in Oregon, do you know?

RB: I do not know, but they got the fever, I guess, when . . . here comes the gold rush, you know.

RM: And John and Blanche fell in love and then he's up there? And writes a letter?

RB: He writes a letter to her parents, and Will took her back up.

RM: What was Will doing down here? Did he come down to get her?

RB: He'd come back. He'd been in once or twice already. He went there first, in 1896.

RM: When did John go, do you know?

RB: I don't know. John went in a little bit later.

RM: So Will took Blanche to Dawson City so she could marry John.

RB: Absolutely.

RM: Did they marry in Dawson City?

RB: I'm not sure; I would suspect that's what they did.

RM: That's a great story. How long did the couple stay in Dawson City?

RB: I think they come out in 1906, when the mine started up here in Round Mountain.

Some of the brothers even had claims as late as '09. When I went to the Yukon, I went to the recording place, and I saw them. But of course they'd lost them by then—given them up, whatever. There's a picture in the Berg Museum here that I donated of Blanche and John and their team of dogs. They had a beautiful team of dogs.

RM: Oh, my goodness. Now, how did they all know about Round Mountain?

RB: Well, word gets around. It's like when all of the stampeders were in the Yukon, they got word about the finding at Nome, Alaska. They'd heard about Round Mountain one way or the other, and here they came.

RM: So they decided to give up the Yukon and come here.

RB: And they came out with some gold. It's not like they were wealthy. They didn't come out rich, but they made money.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: And then John and Blanche (and everyone else) end up here. And some years later, Lucile was born?

RB: She was born just a few years later because I believe she's one month older than my mother. She was born in October in 1914.

RM: And she was born in Round Mountain?

RB: Yes.

RM: So she's truly a Round Mountain girl.

RB: Truly; and never changed her name, either.

RM: Did her dad, John, have the garage most of the time when she was growing up?

RB: Oh sure, because I remember he had it in 1950, '51.

RM: I wonder when he started it.

RB: It must have been around 1910 or so.

RM: And it's a big beautiful building even today, isn't it?

RB: Oh, yes.

RM: It must have cost him some money to put that up.

RB: I certainly would think so.

RM: Did he have a lot of machinery and equipment in the building?

RB: Oh yes, a lot of tools. And then, of course, my uncle Skook got into the garage business. Whether he had made a deal with John or what I don't know, but Uncle Skook had it for years. Uncle Skook's a fine mechanic. Then his son Larry, Henry Lawrence, got the garage.

RM: How nice to think it's stayed in the family. When did John give up the garage?

RB: I really don't know. I think he might have had it when he died, but I was too young.

RM: Where did John and his family live? Will and Lillian, of course, lived in the house across the street, the best home in Round Mountain.

RB: John and Blanche lived up the street, so it would be somewhat kitty-cornered to Will's rock house, up the street towards the south.

RM: Okay, where the dump is.

RB: Exactly, on the corner.

RM: Is the house still there?

RB: I don't think so.

RM: What do you know about Lucile's growing up?

RB I'm of the next generation so I don't know a lot. I know that at several different times, she worked as a secretary at the mine. I believe she worked in the assay office. And she was an outside girl—there are lots of pictures where she's always outside.

RM: You mean like getting supplies organized to send underground and everything?

RB: I'm not sure what she was doing. She went with Eddie Critchfield, who was an assayer up there, so she got familiar with the mining part of it; he probably helped out quite a bit, too.

RM: He was her boyfriend?

RB: He was one of her boyfriends.

RM: Didn't you say that she kind of went for older men?

RB: I would guess she must have because it seemed like she had ones that were a little older, all through her life. And she never changed her name; she always stayed a Berg.

RM: And never married, right? When you showed me that picture of her, I remarked

on what a beautiful woman she was. They don't come any more beautiful. And in almost every one of those pictures, she's got a big, beautiful smile.

RB: Oh, absolutely.

RM: When did she go off to Reno?

RB: I'm not sure. I'm thinking that she worked at the university at Reno in some capacity. When I first started visiting her in the early '80s, she'd been in Reno 40 years. She lived in Reno in that house on Taylor Street, directly across from the Veteran's Hospital, between Wells and Kietzke Lane. In the '90s she had had it for 40 years, so she come in the '50s or right around there.

RM: Yes, and she wrote her thesis in '42. I wonder what year she went up there to begin her education, because she would have had to put in four years to get her bachelor's degree.

RB: I do not know.

RM: And then she wrote a wonderful thesis about the history of this area. What do you know about her writing of that thesis?

RB: I know literally nothing, except I think it's wonderful. I read it, but she had written it long before I was born.

RM: To me, it's still the best source, the best-written thing, on the area.

RB: Absolutely. I've talked to a lot of people, including geologists and mining engineers, that have read her thesis and liked it.

RM: So she finished that in '42. She must have lived in Reno continuously. But she came home a lot, didn't she?

RB: She drove back to Round Mountain and visited a lot. She was very independent. I remember her driving around Reno; she shouldn't have been doing that. Every time I

would go see her, I would pick her up and we'd go down to a little restaurant on Wells and eat lunch. She was still driving at that point, and oh, my lord. Then she finally gave it up.

RM: And she had been a pilot.

RB: Yes, I think one of her boyfriends taught her how to fly.

RM: Do you know which one?

RB: It had to be Eddie Critchfield.

RM: How much older was he than Lucile?

RB: He was our Boy Scout leader when we were real young—as a matter of fact, that's how I knew Eddie. He must have been 15 or 20 years older than Lucile.

RM: Did she have other older boyfriends?

RB: The one she had in Reno was an older man.

RM: Do you remember his name?

RB: I don't remember his name. I never knew him: I only saw his picture.

RM: Did she have any other boyfriends besides those two?

RB: I think she used to have a cowboy boyfriend by the name of Pat O'Neal; my mother told me that she used to run around with him. Pat O'Neal was Irish and Indian and was quite a character. He drank and had a good time.

RM: Was he from this area?

RB: I think he came from Idaho. He was a rough-and-tough cowboy. When my mom told me that Lucile had gone out with Pat for some time, I found it strange. I wouldn't have thought she would be associating with a guy like him because she was raised a Christian Scientist.

RM: Yes, apparently she nearly died or something when she was little and the

Christian Scientists cured her.

RB: Yes, there was some story like that. They were strict Christian Scientists.

RM: Were her father and mother Christian Scientists, too?

RB: I do not know if her father was, but her mother definitely was.

RM: So maybe that's where she got it.

RB: Oh, certainly. She inherited it.

RM: Was she a Christian Scientist when John married her?

RB: I think her mother was a Christian Scientist when she got married. I think it went back even to Blanche's mother.

RM: And what do you recall about Lucile's personality, either through stories you've heard or from your own observations?

RB: I only knew her, of course, when she was much older. That's how I got to know her, because I was going to get pictures that she had. She was extremely bright, extremely knowledgeable, always learning things. And she could talk literally for hours about the past—not necessarily about when she was younger, but about things that happened early in life, then and now.

RM: You mean in the area?

RB: In the area and just in general. She was worldly. She also took a bus tour to the Yukon on some type of tour with a group of other elderly people. She went back to where her parents had been married.

RM: When would this have been?

RB: She went back to the Yukon in the '80s. She was extremely private, too. Her best friend, I think, was her cat. She had a terrible-looking cat; his name was Sugar. I couldn't hardly stand that cat. [RM laughs] When she sold her house and moved into assisted

living, she took her cat with her.

RM: About what year would this have been?

RB: This was probably in '90. She stayed there for a few years, and then away she went to Sacramento to a Christian Science enclave, where she is as we speak.

RM: Would it be fair to say that she was a liberated woman before it became politically popular?

RB: Well, she was extremely strong-minded. I don't think she would want to get married anyway, because she was proud to be independent and I don't think she wanted to give her name up to anybody. She simply had friends. I think you could definitely say that she was a liberated woman in a particular sense. Having said that, she was also very religious. Christian Scientists have to read lessons every day.

RM: And she would do that?

RB: Oh my lord, yes. I even asked her one time, "You read lessons all the time, Lucile."

"Oh, I've read them all my life, Roger."

I said, "Is there any time you ever take a test?" She laughed. She thought it was funny.

RM: And when she got sick, would she basically deny it, or what?

RB: She fell, broke her hip, and, of course, was rushed to the hospital and she did have a hip operation. I believe she got a new hip. But they refuse pain medication; they do it only by prayer. One of their readers will come in and hold their hand and read lessons to them over and over, and that brings them through. She never had anything in her house like an aspirin because they don't take them.

RM: How tall was she?

RB: She was of average height, around 5'5", about the same as my mother.

RM: She was so beautiful in her pictures—were guys always chasing after her?

RB: I would think so—a variety of guys, from older miners to younger cowboys. Now, that cowboy, Pat O'Neal, was her age so not all the guys she liked were older.

RM: At about what age did she give up on men and not have a boyfriend?

RB: When I visited her in Reno over the pictures, her boyfriend lived at, I believe, Soldier Meadows; it's outside of Reno somewhere. She was visiting him in a rest home in Reno; she would drive there every day to see him.

RM: It seems like she would have made a wonderful history teacher. I wonder if she ever considered that.

RB: She would have made a great lecturer. Even now her mind is rapier sharp, except she can't hear very well.

RM: Did she receive any special acknowledgement for her writing and her education?

RB: I really don't know. I've never seen anything in all the material that I have of hers.

RM: And you say Eddie Critchfield taught her to fly?

RB: Eddie Critchfield would have taught her to fly because he had a plane at Round Mountain International down here, and a hangar.

RM: I've heard that she flew alone—she'd take off in Reno, fly over Lake Tahoe and also land down here. Is that true, as far as you know?

RB: That's exactly what I heard. Eddie might have been a good teacher, but one unfortunate incident was that he come down to land and went into his hangar and out the other side. That had to be hilarious. He was taxiing pretty good. [Laughter]

RM: Oh lord. So she had a pilot's license and everything. That was quite a thing for a

woman.

RB: In those days, yes.

RM: What else can you tell about her that would give us a flavor or a sense of who she is?

RB: As I say, I only knew her when she was elderly. I wish I had known her when she was younger, but I didn't. She was fairly severe and, of course, quite religious. Taking that into account, you're not going to get a lot of flavor as to what she was like when she was younger.

RM: It doesn't sound to me like she was the type that would have had a wild streak when she was young.

RB: I really couldn't foresee one of those, but you might talk to Shirley Henle.

RM: I believe I should.

RB: Shirley's 15 years older than I so she would know her.

RM: Is there anything else that you want to add here? You've provided some wonderful information.

RB: Bob, I really can't. The closing deal here from my side of it simply would be that I say thank God for her. Without her I would have lost a piece of history that I'm going to pass down in the form of pictures, which are always important. And the gold collection, which is mine. But it's not mine, I'm simply the keeper of it. That, to me, is very important. And consequently, I'm very lucky that I do know her.

RM: Yes. For me, it's been a really, really good experience to meet her and to do this project, and to talk to you and see her pictures—it's been really great. And to be able to publish her thesis all these years later.

RB: I would like to add that I am really happy to hear that her thesis is going to be

published as a book, Bob, and that you're going to do it.

RM: The credit goes to Nye County. The Yucca Mountain project money is funding it. It wouldn't be happening without that; people in Nye County are really interested in the area's history. Her thesis has always been there in Xerox form, but now it's going to be a hardbound book, printed on acid-free paper. It'll be there as long as people keep their books.

RB: And maybe you'll put that one picture, that one glorious picture of her, on the front of it. Bless her heart.

RM: Oh, yes. Well, thank you so much for talking with me.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Shirley Ann Berg Henle at her home in Round Mountain, Smoky Valley, Nevada, October 31, 2010.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Hello Shirley Ann, I'll appreciate any material you have about your aunt Lucile Berg.

SH: She was off to college, but she came back to Round Mountain to teach school. And she must have taught out in Weepah. I don't know what year, but . . .

RM: What year did she go off to college, do you think?

SH: I have no idea. About the only way to find out would be the date that's on that thesis. But she came back and taught third grade in Round Mountain. I went to school with her, and I flunked third grade geography. [Laughs] When she taught, she gave you an assignment and you read it, and then she would ask you questions, and that was it. Period. No interaction, no big discussion or whatever. You were supposed to read it. You did it, and she'd ask you the questions. So when I was in the fourth grade, I had to go back to the third grade room and do geography.

RM: Was she still the third grade teacher?

SH: You know, I don't know how many years she did teach. I think just that one.

RM: Just that one in Round Mountain? And then she taught at Weepah?

SH: I don't know what years.

RM: I think she taught in Manhattan, too.

SH: I don't know because she wasn't around here, really, when I was growing up. She was either off teaching, or at school.

RM: Was she a good teacher? How would you rate her?

SH: I think she was a good teacher in the fact that she knew what she was teaching.

But I think she had a hard time getting it across to kids.

RM: She must have gotten a bachelor's degree first, and then went on to get a master's degree. Did she teach between the bachelor's and the master's, or what?

SH: I have no idea. I don't really know that much about her life outside of the later years, when she came back and stayed with her mom and dad and helped them out.

RM: What years would those have been?

SH: I don't know; I was in Ely and Tonopah. And then she ended up taking her mom and dad to Reno with her.

RM: So they retired, or spent their later years in Reno?

SH: Yes; her father sold the garage to Skook.

RM: What year was that?

SH: I don't know on that, either. Like I said, living in Tonopah and having a houseful of kids, I just didn't keep track of anything like that. I do know that she took Aunt Blanche and Uncle John to Reno, and that's where they lived until they passed away.

RM: Were they buried in Round Mountain?

SH: No. They're up there.

RM: I had heard that all three of the Berg brothers were buried here, but that's not true? Will is buried here.

SH: Uncle Karl and my dad, but Uncle John isn't up there, or Aunt Blanche.

RM: How did Karl earn a living here?

SH: He had the grocery store.

RM: And what was that store called?

SH: We just called it the butcher shop.

RM: Was that the Berg Brothers Store?

SH: No, that was the Berg Mercantile Building. I guess all the brothers were in it because Uncle Elmer was still here at that time.

RM: So her parents left here and lived with her in Reno?

SH: Right. 673 East Taylor Street. I used to write to her all the time.

RM: So you were in third grade in, let's say, '39. That was before she wrote her thesis, because that was in '42. So she was teaching in Round Mountain in, roughly, 1939. And she was born in '14, so she was about 25 years old. And it sounds like she might have gone back to school to get her master's degree.

SH: She could have. Because she was gone a lot; I don't remember her being around.

RM: Do you remember her as a pilot at all?

SH: In later years, yes. They had a Cessna 120, she and Eddie Critchfield. One of them would take off and the other one would do the landings. John Lofthouse and I bought that 120 from Eddie Critchfield.

RM: Oh, really? He was her long-term boyfriend, wasn't he?

SH: Right, they were friends forever. But I think we were in Tonopah, and we came out in '66 and stayed out here for two years. We had bought the 120, and had it parked at our house.

RM: Where did they land the plane?

SH: They had that little old airport, down in the middle of the valley.

RM: Is it still there?

SH: No, the building's fallen down. It was just an old dirt runway with a little wooden building.

RM: The hangar was where they kept the plane?

SH: Yes. There was no door on it or anything; they just backed it in there. I don't

know who taught them to fly.

RM: I heard that he taught her.

SH: It could have been, very easily. But who taught Eddie? John and I bought the little 120 from him. He had had all metal wings put on it, instead of the cloth.

RM: About what time did she leave here for good?

SH: Like I said, I have no idea. I was in Ely for six years, and Tonopah for about 15.

When I got back, she was in Reno and Aunt Blanche and Uncle John were with her. We moved to Tonopah in '58, and moved back out here for good in '74.

She could've been here part time with them in those years. She did work at the mine when it was first trying to start up, when they were doing assessment work, and whatever.

RM: About what years would that have been?

SH: I would say in the early '50s. I think it was right around the time that John and I got married. I went over to the mine and helped them do inventory. Eddie Critchfield would go around and count the stuff and tell me what it was. And Lucile was the bookkeeper at the time.

RM: And what was the mine called then? Round Mountain Gold?

SH: I don't know. It might have been Nevada Porphyry.

RM: About what year was that, that she would have been working at the mine?

SH: It would have been the early '50s—'50, '51, '52.

RM: From her pictures, she seems a very beautiful woman. Was she?

SH: She was. She always had a smile on her face.

RM: Was she a happy person?

SH: I imagine. She enjoyed things. I know that when I was working at the mine, when she'd come over here from Reno, she always made it a point to stop and see me. She'd

come up to the mine, to the security, and they called me and I went down to see her.

RM: Now, she was your first cousin?

SH: Yes.

RM: How would you describe her as a person?

SH: Independent. She was very religious.

RM: Did she wear it on her sleeve?

SH: No, I don't think so. They were Christian Scientists. And she was very frugal. She learned that from her mom, because Aunt Blanche was that way. And she was very independent. Not only in her way of doing things, but in her way of dressing. [Laughs] In those days, women would wear heels and nylons. But Lucile would wear heels and anklets, Bobby socks.

RM: Was that part of being frugal?

SH: Well, probably, and just being independent—"That's what I like, and that's what I'm going to wear," you know?

RM: How tall was she, about 5' 5"?

SH: Probably a little taller. And very slender. Very independent.

RM: Would you describe her as smart?

SH: I think Lucile was very smart and would have no problem getting a job. As far as the teaching, I think she was smart, but I don't think she had the tricks to get the material across to the kids and get them to respond to her.

RM: I did an interview with her, and she said that on one hand, she said she knew all of the tricks the kids pulled. But on the other hand, she said she didn't like teaching because of the discipline you had to maintain.

SH: That could be true.

RM: Why do you think she never married?

SH: I don't know. She and my brother Dan and Getta were all about the same age. In fact, when they were small, they palled around together a lot. She had her share of boyfriends, if you look in those pictures that Roger has.

RM: Eddie Critchfield and so on.

SH: Even before that, there was pictures of guys.

RM: I asked her that, and she said, "Well, I just couldn't be bothered." [Laughter]

RM: Now I've got a question; maybe you can answer it. One source said that John and his wife, Blanche, met in Oregon, where she was from.

SH: Yes.

RM: John went on to the Yukon and he missed her. So he wrote a letter to her father, asking her father for her hand and he said, "Yes." I guess Will happened to be down here, he brought her . . .

SH: He went to Oregon, and took her to Alaska. Roger has Aunt Blanche's little notebook. She wrote in that every day.

RM: She has a diary?

SH: It was just a little tablet-type thing.

RM: And it's Blanche in the Yukon?

SH: Right. She's telling about how she just can't wait to see her dear one. And how Will took her on the boat and they went up there and met Uncle John, and they were married.

But I'll tell you another thing that Roger has—this is Aunt Blanche again. She and Uncle John, and I'm assuming, Lucile—I can't remember; I read the dang thing—went on a vacation down through Texas and all that to wherever they were going—

Washington, D.C. They went up and came through Ohio and visited relatives there and came on home. And that was back in the days when you didn't have motels and hotels.

When you came to a little town, there was generally somebody there that would rent out a room to you, to stay for the night.

RM: And she tells of that? And Roger has that?

SH: Roger has that. I read both of them.

RM: Okay. In the other version, which is Lucile's (it's very hard to talk to her, because she's almost totally deaf), she said that her parents got married in Round Mountain. But that's not the story, is it?

SH: No, not according to Aunt Blanche's journal.

RM: I wonder if we should try and see if it's publishable.

SH: It was marvelous. Do you remember how, years ago, *Reader's Digest* had these human interest stories, before it went to pot? I thought of that being published in the *Reader's Digest*. I had another thing; I think I've still got it stashed away. When we lived at the Tonopah Airport, there was a couple that lived out there, Wally and Boots Head. He worked out at the Test Site with John in the security department. They moved to Rexburg, Idaho, because she had some property up there. And there was a trailer on it, and a couple other outbuildings, and they moved up there when he retired. And the dam broke; I don't know what year that was. She had a bad heart and they ended up flying her in to Salt Lake and she had heart surgery. But she wrote a diary of that dam, the chickens, the animals, the people, because the flood came across their property. I always wanted to put that in *Reader's Digest*. Because it was a letter to me, in her own handwriting.

RM: How interesting. So the version of Will taking Blanche to Dawson City in the Yukon is the correct version?

SH: According to that story.

RM: What kind of a man was her father, John?

SH: Uncle John? He always said, “By jingo.”

RM: And his nickname was “By Jingo.”

SH: Right. He was very . . . regular. You’d see him going from his house to the garage. And then he’d go home for lunch. And you’d see him go back. Then you’d see him close up the garage and go home. He was a nice enough man. I never was afraid of him, or anything. He wasn’t stern. Aunt Blanche is the one that taught me how to crochet and do things like that. I’d be over at her house quite a bit.

RM: Was there any sense of joyousness in Lucile?

SH: Like I said, I wasn’t really around her that much. And as I got older, I kept in touch with her by letters after I grew up and had kids and stuff, but I never had any social things with her.

RM: Are there any other recollections that you have of her?

SH: Very few. Like I said, back in those days I was so busy raising kids, and keeping busy, and working. And we didn’t travel; we didn’t come out here, we never went to Reno. It just was unheard of. And living in Ely, about the only ones we’d come to see would be my mom and Skook and Arlene.

RM: You don’t have any pictures, do you?

SH: No. I know Lucile had quite a few pictures of my nephew Frank and me in her bunch. Evidently, she’d take them when we’d go visit her. I don’t even remember that—we were, like, five or six years old.

RM: Did she work in Reno?

SH: Yes, but I couldn’t tell you where she worked. She worked as a bookkeeper. She

was good in an office, doing bookkeeping and things like that. But I couldn't tell you what the business was. I don't even know if Rene could.

RM: I wonder how much Rene would know?

SH: I don't know. She's got a sharp mind.

RM: Well, this has been helpful. And we're publishing her thesis.

SH: She's got to be older . . . when was she born, '14?

RM: Yes. She's 96, I guess.

SH: And Rene is right in there at 96. Dan, and Rene and Lucile were all about the same age. Getta was younger.

RM: Describe the house that Lucile grew up in, in Round Mountain.

SH: It was very small. The rooms were very small, very tidy, very neat, very warm—you might even say kind of crowded. When you walk in the front room, there was a little bay window there. Aunt Blanche always had flowers in that window, always. African violets. Just beautiful. And then you walked into a very small kitchen. Then you would go down the steps into a back porch. Off of the front room to the right was a bedroom and another bedroom. The first bedroom was Aunt Blanche and Uncle John's and the next bedroom was Lucile's. There was a bathroom there, but there was also another little room off of that, which was just a little hole in the wall. Even as a kid, it was small to me. Aunt Blanche used it for her sewing room.

RM: But it had indoor plumbing, at this time?

SH: Oh, sure.

RM: And we're talking, what year?

SH: Well, when I was growing up. I'd say in the late '30s and '40s.

RM: Your dad Will was probably providing the water supply.

SH: Yes, he was, by then. The Waterworks, as he always said. No, the house was very small. And Aunt Blanche was frugal. To tell you how frugal she was, Uncle John always wore white, long-sleeved Arrow shirts underneath his bib overalls, or the light blue shirts. She would always turn the collars for him. When one side wore out, she'd take it off, turn it around, and sew it back on. The cuffs were the same way; she'd turn the cuffs around.

RM: Were they poor?

SH: No.

RM: That was just her?

SH: Yes.

RM: And Lucile was not poor throughout her life, was she?

SH: Oh, no. That's just the way they lived.

RM: Was Lucile a good cook or good at sewing?

SH: I don't know. Aunt Blanche could do everything. She sewed, she crocheted, she knit, all of that kind of stuff. I have no idea if Lucile did it. Aunt Blanche taught me. I'd go over and sit and crochet. In fact, I have a couple patterns in her handwriting. Her writing was very, very backhanded.

RM: It's really fun working on this book, trying to ferret out information. Thank you so much for your help.

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