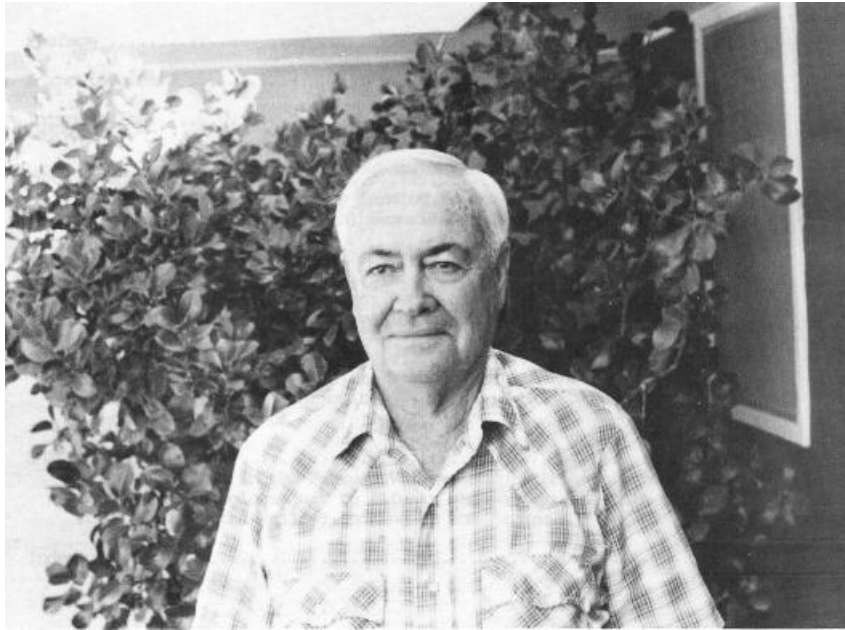


# An Interview with Perry Bowman

An Oral History conducted and edited by  
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project  
Nye County, Nevada  
Tonopah  
1988

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Perry Bowman  
1989

## CONTENTS

[Preface](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

### [CHAPTER ONE](#)

The Bowman family and dairy farming in the Moapa Valley; Walter Bowman buys the Manse Ranch; memories of the Kellogg and Pahrump Ranch; Mormon pioneers.

### [CHAPTER TWO](#)

The Leavitts - early settlers; Perry and his wife move to the Pahrump Valley; life in the valley in the early days.

### [CHAPTER THREE](#)

Memories of Pop Buol; problems with weather in the valley; the golden age of valley agriculture - cotton; what makes a good dairyman.

### [CHAPTER FOUR](#)

Different soils in the Pahrump Valley; complexities of growing cotton; how people adjust to life in the valley; the role of the LDS Church in the valley; looking to the future.

[Index](#)

## 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 tapes 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 incoherency. 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 known and admired since I was a teenager; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and southern 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. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Revert, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the project within Nye County and before the State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office and the United States Department of Energy; both entities provided funds for this project. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Bradhurst for his advice and input regarding the conduct of the research and for constantly serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. This project would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Bradhurst.

Jean Charney served as administrative assistant, editor, indexer, and typist throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Louise Terrell provided considerable assistance in transcribing many of the oral histories; Barbara Douglass also transcribed a number of interviews. Transcribing, typing, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Alice Levine, Jodie Hanson, Mike Green, and Cynthia Tremblay. Jared Charney contributed essential word processing skills. Maire Hayes, Michelle Starika, Anita Coryell, Michelle Welsh, Lindsay Schumacher, and Jodie Hanson shouldered the herculean task of proofreading the oral histories. Gretchen Loeffler and Bambi McCracken assisted in numerous secretarial and clerical duties. Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society contributed valuable support and criticism throughout the project, and Tan King at the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada at Reno served as a consulting oral historian. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

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--Robert D. McCracken  
Tonopah, Nevada  
June 1990

## INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the end 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 developed lodes, 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 much 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 for at least another twenty years.

The great mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), and Rhyolite (1904) 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, most of it essentially untouched by human hands

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 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 since its first year. 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. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper; Beatty's independent paper folded in 1912. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All six communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities after their own papers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, which was published as a supplement to the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 is stored 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). 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 James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada, 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 interviews as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories also have been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impacts 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 a repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided near the site. 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.

--R.D.M.



Robert McCracken interviewing Perry Bowman at his home in Pahrump Valley, Nevada - April 30, 1988

## CHAPTER ONE

RM: Perry, could you state your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

PB: Perry Lorraine Bowman.

RM: When and where were you born?

PB: I was born in Mesquite, Nevada, the 7th of May, 1917.

RM: And what was your father's name?

PB: My father's name was Elmer Squire Bowman.

RM: Where was he born?

PB: He was born, I think, in Milford, Utah.

RM: What was your mother's name?

PB: Her maiden name was Elizabeth Rebecca Leavitt. I assume that she was born in Virgin Valley.

RM: What did your father do for a living?

PB: My father was a rancher, he was in business and he put a power company in Logandale, and he was in the trucking business.

RM: Did he have his own ranch? It sounds as if he was involved in a variety of things - trucking, business and ranching. Was he a general entrepreneur, then?

PB: Yes, he was very busy. On the school board over in Moapa Valley when it was District I he was president for a lot of years. He was on the irrigation company over there and, in fact, I didn't see him much, he was always so busy.

RM: What kind of a ranch did you have over there?

PB: We had a lot of different things, but in about 1930 we ended up in the dairy business.

RM: How many cows were you milking?

PB: The dairy wasn't really big; I imagine 40 cows.

RM: Were you selling your milk in Vegas?

PB: Yes. The milk business started when the Boulder Dam started up; that opened the Moapa Valley to the dairy business.

RM: Did you grow your own feed?

PB: Yes, we raised our own feed.

RM: Did the Boulder Dam stimulate a lot of growth in Moapa at that time?

PB: It did as far as production of dairy products.

RM: Did you work on the dairy there with your father's dairy?

PB: Yes, and I went to school.

RM: How far did you go in school?

PB: I just went as high as high school, but not through high school. I was too busy farming and everything and I never did go back and pick it up.

RM: Did you have brothers and sisters?

PB: Yes, a large family - there were 11 children altogether. Three of them died in their youth, one as a baby, and 2 of them [when they] were 8 years old. I had one older brother and he died and I had 7 sisters.

RM: Then you were the oldest after your brother died?

PB: Right.

RM: When did you first hear about Pahrump Valley, and do you remember what it was in connection with?

PB: It was in about '42, in connection with hauling hay out of here to Vegas. At that time they had a stockyard in Vegas where they would unload and feed livestock before they shipped them on through. They had to take them off. You see, by law they could only ship them so far and they would have to take them out and feed them and let them rest awhile and then ship them again. My father hauled hay out of here, and so did some feed places around.

RM: Did you have occasion to come over here at that time?

PB: No, I didn't. I got married and my wife and I started with a dairy. We started our own dairy in Moapa Valley after we got married, and we had it prior to coming out here - on our own place.

RM: Was it successful?

PB: Oh, yes.

RM: And you were growing your own feed for that?

PB: Right.

RM: What ranches were selling hay in Vegas at that time?

PB: The Pahrump Ranch, mainly, was selling hay. The Manse had a bunch of cattle and were feeding [them].

RM: Who owned the Manse Ranch at that time?

PB: Dr. Cornell out of San Diego. He was an ear, nose and throat specialist. He wanted to get into the ranching business for his family and he thought this was an opportunity. I think they purchased that ranch for about \$20,000.

RM: Do you remember how big it was when he had it?

PB: I imagine it was close to 2,000-plus acres. And then he bought Lois Kellogg's ranch and he had that together when we came out here. When we came it was 6700 acres.

RM: When did he buy the Manse Ranch?

PB: I really don't know. I think he had it 6 or 8 years after . . .

RM: He bought it in the late '30s?

PB: It had been kind of abandoned for quite awhile. I don't think anybody was doing anything with it.

RM: I wonder why it was abandoned?

PB: I think probably the economy was such that they weren't producing here anymore for the mines. The mines had shut down and the whole area wasn't doing much.

RM: What do you know about the early history of the ranch?

PB: I never really got into it, but I've seen some pictures of it. It was a very attractive ranch and it had buildings up, and shade, and they had a spring that people swam in and there was a place where people hauling through the country would stop . .

RM: Was it a little hotel or rest stop?

PB: I think they had more of a cook shack type of thing. That's what they had when we came out and they had, say, a shop for repair for wagons and whatever.

RM: Do you know anything about the stage that went through - where their routes were?

PB: I think there was a early stage line that came in out of California down here to the south. It didn't go to Vegas and come back, but it come up through Sandy Valley and up through this way to come in down below toward Baker - it came through there and up through here. There was a railroad place down there - I don't remember the name of it now - but mail used to come in from that way.

RM: The mail came in from the south?

PB: Yes, mail come from the south in the early days.

RM: Are we talking about 1905 or '10?

PB: Yes, from what I got out of it.

RM: That would have been after the railroad to Vegas was built.

PB: Yes.

RM: And it would come in here by stage?

PB: And sometimes a rider brought a bunch of it in.

RM: How long was the Manse Ranch inactive prior to Cornell's buying it?

PB: I knew that the horses were all turned loose and a bunch of guys come in here and gathered them up.

RM: Was it down for a long time or a short period?

PB: I think it was more of a short period. Of course, things go down pretty fast when they are not being taken care of; [maybe] 5 to 8 years.

RM: Who did Cornell buy it from?

PB: I don't remember. I remember when I was a kid there were some people who came in here and worked on running cattle in here out of St. Thomas. I think Sam Gentry was one of them.

RM: And that was in the '20s?

PB: Yes.

RM: Did he own it, or was he just running it?

PB: He might have bought it, but he didn't have it very long.

RM: He didn't?

PB: If the price of cattle goes bad or something, sometimes it'll pick you up and catch you.

RM: When Yount originally had the Manse Ranch it wasn't as large as it was when Cornell got it, was it?

PB: That's true.

RM: How did it get large?

PB: When we bought it, it was 6,700 acres, after the Kellogg and Manse Ranches were combined into Manse Ranch.

RM: How big was the Kellogg Ranch?

PB: It was 2,000 to 3,000 acres.

RM: Then the ranch was around 3,000-plus acres when Cornell first bought it?

PB: 3,500 to 4,000 - in there somewhere.

RM: How did that land get transferred into the Manse Ranch as opposed to being state land?

PB: I don't know how they picked up the additional land and put it in there. I don't think they homesteaded it but they could have. [The land] west from Homestead Road was all homesteaded after we come out here. Some of this property tied on to Homestead, but somebody had picked it up.

RM: What can you tell me about Lois Kellogg?

PB: Well, Lois Kellogg had 3 sisters and what I [heard was that] they named all 3 of them Lois Kellogg - Lois first, second and third. Evidently, the parents were Russian immigrants. She started her ranch north of here and was raising cattle. She came down here interested in raising barley to roll up and put it through her cow program. She got the land cleared off and she got some barley, got the wells drilled and started her own and got it pretty well completed, but she got bitten by one of her dogs that had rabies and she died before she really got it going. She was a real small woman but she'd take her truck and load it with cattle here and drive it right straight through to L.A. on dirt roads.

RM: How old was she when she was here?

PB: I really don't know, but I assume she was in her late 30s. One Indian who worked for her and helped her clear the land worked for us for quite a few years. His name was Louis Sharp; he was her foreman here in Pahrump. What little I got about it, I got from him.

RM: How long was she here?

PB: I think 5 to 7 years. I think she drilled her wells in the late '30s. She drilled on one side of the county line; Doc Cornell drilled on the other side of the county line, and the wells are nearly together.

RM: Where would that be?

PB: Right north of us. This by my house was one of the wells she drilled on this side of the road.

RM: Is your home on the Kellogg part?

PB: Yes, she had this property. She drilled 3 wells.

RM: Was her property in Nye or Clark County?

PB: The wells were drilled in Clark County and her property was mostly in Nye County.

RM: Why did she drill her wells in Clark County?

PB: Because the springs were up here and the water was here and she just figured that was a good . .

RM: Who did she get the Kellogg Ranch from?

PB: I really don't know, but she developed some raw ground. She couldn't have homesteaded it, but it wasn't a ranch when she bought it. She just picked up acreage. I imagine Cornell picked up acreage too.

RM: How would he pick it up? Would he buy it from somebody who had homesteaded it?

PB: I don't know how it would be on a tax deal, but they'd buy it from somebody; it was deeded land, I'm sure. How the people who it was deeded to got it, I don't know. Land was only worth from \$5 to \$15 to \$20 an acre in the '20s.

RM: Who owned the Pahrump Ranch during this period?

PB: A businessman down in California owned it for a lot of years, but I don't recall his name. He'd sell it and get it back; it was this type of thing . . . It wasn't really a paying operation.

RM: Neither ranch was really a paying operation, was it?

PB: That's right. I guess when Yount was here it was probably paying because he had a lumber deal up in the Charleston mountains and he was hauling lumber from there into California and here. All the buildings here were built out of the native lumber that came out of Mt. Charleston.

RM: Do you know where his lumber mill was?

PB: Yes, it's in Clark Canyon, on this side unless . . . Lester Adams owns the property now.

RM: Are there still remains of it?

PB: Part of it's there, but there's not too much. It's just before you go into Les Adams' property. He fenced it to keep people from going in on him.

RM: Was it a pretty big operation?

PB: I don't think it was too big, just big enough to be useful and [be run by Yount].

RM: Was there some pretty good-sized timber up in there?

PB: Pretty fair timber. I guess they made coke to go to the mines in California.

RM: Are there coke ovens up there?

PB: Yes, there are 3 of them. That's this side of Wheeler Pass. I don't know if those coke ovens were in with Yount or not. I'm not sure.

RM: Did you know any of the Younts?

PB: No; they were all gone when we got here. I think someone or something owned the Roland Wiley property down here on the south end, but he wasn't here.

RM: Is that a few miles south of you?

PB: Yes, 6 or 7 miles south, down into the valley.

RM: Let's back up a little bit and let me ask you some questions about your great-grandfather and some of your family's pioneering activities in southern Nevada, Utah and New Mexico. What was your great-grandfather's name?

PB: My great-grandfather on the Bowman side was Isaac Bowman. They came out of the Pittsburg area; they were of German descent. They came out of Pennsylvania and came west about the time that LDS people moved into Salt Lake City.

RM: Did they come with the original migration?

PB: I think so. They settled in the Salt Lake Valley and he taught school; he was a school teacher. Then they came down into Utah and then to Moapa Valley and Virgin Valley. My grandfather bought a farm in Moapa Valley which he later sold. He had a business in the town of Moapa.

RM: This is your grandfather?

PB: Yes; his name was William Calvert Bowman. He then went into the Virgin Valley and lived there and had a business and a small farm there. When I was a kid he had a store and a small farm and he sold his store out to his one daughter and her husband. He was a typical kind of a German -very industrious and thrifty and trying to do something. My mother's father-in-law - Dudley Leavitt - came out as a small boy from Canada.

RM: He was her great-grandfather?

PB: Yes. He came out of Canada as a small boy of about 10 years. Their family came out and they came down and came across with the LDS into Salt Lake City. Part of them had problems and went back to Canada



## CHAPTER TWO

PB: They came through from Illinois, I think, with the LDS Church, and they ran into a lot of hard problems - persecution and adverse conditions - snow and all this. They pulled out of there in the wintertime. It was tough, and they were very . . . Well, he was an exceptionally strong man, physically. He came through, and that's why they got here on the ragged edge. They always pushed him to the [edge] because of his ability to do these kinds of things.

RM: We are talking about a book called *On The Ragged Edge, the Lives and Times of Dudley Leavitt*, by Juanita Brooks, Utah State Historical Society, 1973. Because of his strength he was always pushed out to the frontier, then?

PB: He was a brother-in-law of Jacob Hamblin's and they had an Indian Mission and they developed Santa Clara. They built places in Santa Clara and Gunlock, which is not too far from Santa Clara. At first he settled out of Salt Lake City and they built there and got pretty well started and they moved him out. Everytime he'd get one place going they'd move him to another place, so it was a series of developments . . . it was very, very hard. All those years, while he wasn't developing, they had him working with the Indian Mission. When he got old he got some money from the United States Government; they gave him \$1,000 for the work that he had done with the Indians

And he loved his family. He raised a big family and a lot of his family is left in southern Utah and southern Nevada right now. There's a great bunch of them. All the Leavitts around Las Vegas are primarily his descendants. They built a good reputation I think, as a whole. They were responsible people.

RM: Do you know what Indian group he worked with?

PB: This book tells a lot. He worked around Vegas and he worked in Arizona, and with the Indian groups all through Utah. He worked with that whole bunch.

RM: Did you tell me that he had worked at the Potosi Lead Nine?

PB: Yes, but I don't really know much about that. I know that the book says he and Jacob Hamblin were out there working that mine.

RM: Hamblin worked there too?

PB: He was out at the mine when he walked back to Santa Clara [when] the Indians stole their horses.

RM: This was in 1858.

PB: They had been down to the Colorado River, checking that out, and then they came to Vegas; the Church had them go out to Potosi. Evidently there is some other ore in that lead.

RM: Yes - silver; and they didn't realize it. It wouldn't cast right and little did they know it was silver. And while they were at the lead mine the Indians stole their horses?

PB: Yes; he walked back to St. George. He walked back to Vegas but there was no way to travel from there on through, so he walked from there to Santa Clara. "Two of the brothers returned to Santa Clara while Jacob and Dudley went 35 miles south to where there was a deposit of lead. Jacob . . . having some little knowledge of smelting of ore . . ." So it was Jacob Hamblin himself and Dudley who were out at Potosi.

RM: And then he walked back to St. George?

PB: Yes. I think someone was sent from Vegas to pick up Jacob Hamblin, but they didn't have horses in Vegas for him to take back.

RM: There were still some missionaries there in 1858, weren't there?

PB: Evidently. But there wasn't too much going on in Vegas, because part of the group . . . they came in there and helped the Indians plant crops in maybe April of 1858. They came down the first of March and went down the Colorado River, so I imagine . . . this is mostly my great-grandfather.

RM: But you never knew him?

PB: I never knew him. In fact, I never even knew my grandfather because he died when he was probably in his 30s.

RM: What did he die of?

PB: He strained himself while lifting; set up a blood clot or something. They had quite a job there on the Virgin River when they started developing that property. They would have to take mesquites and rocks and put wings out into the Virgin River to send the water into the ditches, and when the next flood came by it would take them out. All those years they built them and cleaned ditches in that Virgin Valley; it was a tough place. It took tough people to stay there and the toughness is still there.

RM: The Virgin and Moapa valleys were very difficult, weren't they?

PB: Very difficult. You didn't get too many benefits.

RM: Was that same kind of toughness required in caning to the Pahrump Valley?

PB: Pahrump was very tough. Pahrump hadn't made anything successful prior to just the time we came out here. There was nothing here that was solid, or that was paying for itself. The money was coming out of California to run it.

RM: It wasn't a paying proposition when Cornell had the ranch?

PB: No, it never did pay for itself. The Pahrump Ranch didn't pay, either. That's why he wanted to sell it; it was a losing proposition.

RM: What made you think that you could make a go of it?

PB: No brains, I guess. The story is that my father was in the bank in Vegas and this Cornell was talking to the banker there. He wanted to sell it. The banker was named Minetti - he was out of Reno and he'd come from the Reno office and was running the bank on 3rd Street. He was saying he wanted to sell it and Minetti said, "How you going to sell it?"

"Well," he said, "I know a man who could run that." He'd make a deal for it; that's where he came out and heard about it, and we were just then . . . We had bought land in the north end of the valley when this came up for sale.

RM: How did you happen to buy that land?

PB: My father had been hauling hay out of here and he was impressed with the land. A big part of the Moapa valley, agriculturally, was over with. The bigger farms all cut down to little farms and they weren't productive and they weren't making money. It seems like these valleys go through these kinds of things.

RM: Could you discuss that cycle a little bit?

PB: I wasn't born in the Moapa Valley; I came there at about 2 or 3 years of age. They had a bunch of big ranches in there then, and they were being operated by men with ability. Then as they grow the people of the families that bought them split it up between them, and this type of thing, and before long they have it down to small acreages. It wasn't productive.

RM: Because the person is dividing it up among his children?

PB: That or selling part of it. I knew a man in there by the name of Gann who had the big Gann Ranch in there. When his father died, it wasn't 20 years until he had it all sold, a piece at a time, because he wasn't interested. He'd had it easy all his life and he didn't want to go run it. We could see that in the early '40s, property was getting pretty well split up. My father and my wife and I could see it - opportunities for buying anything and doing anything with it were not too good.

RM: Why couldn't you go out and buy these smaller parcels?

PB: Prior to that they had a lot of produce they had raised in there. They would ship it east to New York and all over on the railroad but they'd come up with new areas that would cut you out . . . Maybe some closer or areas that were bigger and more productive. Take, for instance, the San Joaquin Valley caning in . . . you see what you could do to a little place - you'd cut them out; ease them out. They were losing their markets and getting smaller and smaller trying to fight it. We saw these acreages and farms in Pahrump and we decided to come to Pahrump. I was all gung ho for it.

RM: What made you think you could make a go in Pahrump if you didn't have markets in Moapa?

PB: We were figuring on coming to Pahrump and eventually building a big dairy here. That was the main goal when we came here. And, from what I hear now, that's about to happen again.

RM: Why couldn't you have built a big dairy in Moapa?

PB: We didn't have the feed, we didn't have the . . . Land was cheaper and you could produce more. It was limited there to what you could produce. Moapa Valley has, in any 40 acres, 4 or 5 different types of ground. In the Pahrump Valley, too, there are different kinds of land in one ranch. It doesn't make things too productive and we figured we were good ranchers or farmers or dairymen and we could make it.

RM: Who did you get the land at the north end from?

PB: We got it from Ray Van Horn's brother.

RM: What did they call the ranch?

PB: Cal-Vada finally bought it. It's part of Cal-Vada where that sports complex is.

RM: How many acres did you buy?

PB: 1,000 acres.

RM: Do you remember what you had to pay for it?

PB: I don't really remember. Between \$20 and \$30. We got it on terms and we started developing.

RM: Did you hear about this from Minetti?

PB: Yes. Dad was going in the bank. He saw him on business and told him and asked him over and asked my wife and me if we had our dairy going, and would I be interested. He was 50 years old then. He didn't want to come out here for himself; he was looking more for his family.

If the family was interested, that's what he was ready to do, even though after he got it all, the family wasn't all that interested. But he said, "Do you want to move to Pahrump?"

RM: What did you think when he said this?

PB: We went out and looked at it and I was impressed with it.

RM: What impressed you?

PB: Oh, the soil and the water. It was all non water then; no pump water. That impressed me very much, [as did] the soil and the type of crops they grew here and how well they grew. It's a tight soil in here, primarily. Things start slowly in it, compared to where I came from before. But after they took off they just kept growing. Of course, new ground is harder. With old ground it had been farmed for years and years -the same thing all these years. It still took off the same way, only a little better.

RM: So plants start slowly in this ground, but then they keep coming?

PB: Yes. There is more depth to the soil; it's deeper. The new ground didn't have too much humus in it, but the old ground was good. This all fascinated me because in high school I went for agriculture. I guess I was the first state farmer on the FFA in Moapa Valley. That's what I was interested in and I went from there. When I was 19 . . . when I got out of high school we leased a ranch where they had the dairy out over there, below Moapa, and I ran that for a number of years. That's what I've been all my life. I haven't worked for anybody and I've always made my an way. It's not an easy thing to do. I think I could have done a lot of things easier, but that's why we came out here. Then it didn't work out between the family . . . He brought a bunch of son-in-laws in and he wanted to run it one way and we'd run our own business a little too long to go back into that type of thing.

RM: You mean, he wanted to run it as a family business and you had just been independent too long?

PB: Too independent and a little hardheaded. What my wife and I tried was very hard. We had the land and some water, but no equipment and no cattle to start with.

RM: Now when he bought the place from Van Horn at the north end of the valley, did he care and ask if you wanted to move out there?

PB: Yes, and I was already thinking about caning in there, and we'd agreed, but then when this came up for sale, he said, 'What about going down there where it's already started?' It was a lot of difference - so many head of cattle - 350 head of cattle and the range and the hay - it gave you a little something to start with. But I hadn't care here yet. My wife and I were still running the farm and dairy in the valley.

RM: Then when you came here in 1946, it was you and your wife and then a couple of brothers-in-law?

PB: Then Anderson came, and Arlen Frehner's father came from Littlefield - Joseph Frehner. He was a brother-in-law. Then one of my younger sisters got married and her husband, Christianson, came out here later. I had 2 young brothers - one was in high school and one was in grade school or junior high - and they came out.

RM: When you came out, was there a place for you to live?

PB: Yes, there were some buildings here. [We lived there] for the first year, and then the second year I took part of them and built a little house on it. My wife and I moved out and started our own operation.

RM: Did the brothers-in-law all live in one house down there?

PB: No, they had a cook shack, a shop, 2 small houses and a big house; that's where we came in to . . . Anderson added on to one little deal - made him sell a little house - and he lived in that for a lot of years. They took turns living in the other little house.

RM: But you and your wife moved out to your own little place?

PB: Yes. We had 2 children when we come out here, a girl 2 years old and a little baby boy who was about 6 months old.

RM: How did you feel about moving small children out into a pretty isolated area like this?

PB: Well, we found out a lot of things. We had to go to Vegas for doctors and we had to go to Shoshone for fuel. We had no telephone and we had no oiled roads. We had no power. So that gives you an idea of what you really ran into. When we started out I put in a little generator for my wife [right away], to make it as nice as we could, and [we continued] up to when we built this house in '59. I put a big generator - to 25 kJ - up here to run this. It was harder on the women than it was on the men.

RM: In what ways would you say it was harder on them?

PB: Well, they missed all the things they were into. It was harder on them with families, no doctors, harder on the schools . . . Our first little girl went over to Moapa Valley to school at 6 years of age and stayed with her grandmother. That's hard. I wonder to this day how she went through that. I feel bad about it. That's the only thing I really feel bad about. Then they went to high school in Vegas.

RM: Did she go through her whole schooling over there?

PB: She went over there for the first grade. Then she had to go to Vegas for high school and ended up in Shoshone. Shoshone had developed and they ran a bus over there, and around here, we bought the first bus - an International. We put seats in it and everything and the district paid for the gas. That's the way the kids were picked up; I think they paid the driver and the gas.

RM: Did your family all come over here about the same time?

PB: Well, we ran the dairy. The ones who didn't have jobs came first - maybe a month [before we did] - and helped move them in here. We came out here in October. It was in the fall and there wasn't much they could do other than move in and start learning and taking care of [the place].

RM: Then some period of time went by and you decided you didn't want to be with the whole family so you moved off by yourselves?

PB: It took quite a little while getting the paperwork done and everything on it and we decided we'd go with part of it so I took part of the Kellogg [acreage].

RM: What happened to the other parts - the Manse and the rest of the Kellogg?

PB: As soon as my father got done, he split the Manse up between his boys and his son-in-laws. For what little money was owed on the ranch, he didn't get anything out of it. The family didn't get anything out of it, split up, so they got their property at a very reasonable [price]. He kept some and he kept some mountain property up there - 160 acres right up Trout Canyon - and he kept a section down here next to Homestead and sold it to Burson.

RM: What did you and your father do with the Moapa dairy and all of that?

PB: I sold the dairy and the house and property to one fellow, and he sold his to another.

RM: So you moved over here lock, stock and barrel. You didn't hedge your bets at all.

### CHAPTER THREE

RM: What did people think when you moved in here, Perry?

PB: They thought we were a bunch of freaks

RM: Why did you think they thought that?

PB: Because we were in the LDS Church. Their opinions of Mormons weren't too good in this area. But they never really showed anything to me; I didn't pay any attention to it. And, years afterward, I've had a lot of compliments from a lot of people. I always tried to do right, you know, and they never held anything against me over it.

RM: Did they figure that you'd go belly-up?

PB: Right. They knew we were going to go belly-up, because they didn't figure we had enough money to make it.

RM: Who was on the Pahrump Ranch at that time?

PB: The Pahrump Ranch at that time was run by a business out of California. They had a foreman in there running it. We had no problems with him, because he was a real nice guy. We had one character in here and he kind of liked me - a guy by the name of Frank Buol. He was a character; quite a brilliant man, and different in his likes and dislikes.

RM: In what way?

PB: In everything: politics, farming . . . he had a bonded winery in here prior to when we came out and it was kind of amusing - he always had wine and if he liked you, he would give you a little good wine, and if he didn't like you, you'd get the junk. After we got acquainted . . . there was a little bit of agitation between him and my father. My father was a very outspoken type fellow. They were a little bit alike and they pushed each other a little bit, but they finally got so that they got along fine.

RM: Do you know where Buol came from?

PB: I really don't know. He'd been in this area for a long time and he had a ranch up there . . . more of what you'd call a little gentleman's type of farm. He never ranched, he was raising fruit and grapes and . .

RM: Did he make a living at it?

PB: I don't really know where he made his money from. He ran the store . .



RM: Was he making any money at that store, do you think?

PB: Well, he only ran it when he wanted to open it. He said, "If you can't come and get your groceries on this one day, I don't need your business." He was independent. I think it was Sunday or Wednesday. Probably had the mail there too; he got it once a week.

RM: Was there much in the store?

PB: I never did buy anything from him. When I came out there was a guy named Guy Penell, and he had what they called the Trading Post. Today they've remodeled it into the A & A Market. The post office was in that. Buol had given up the store and Penell had the post office and the store. Penell ran it till he died.

RM: Was Buol successful in growing fruit?

PB: Yes, and he probably sold it.

RM: Is this a good fruit-growing area?

PB: Not really.

RM: What's the problem?

PB: The climate can change too much. In the spring or fall [the temperature] can drop and freeze your fruit. That ruins vegetables or produce. When you raise a crop, you've got to raise it for a specific date to get to market with it. And if that doesn't work, you're not going to go.

RM: Because you don't get your price?

PB: Yes. For instance, in the Imperial and San Joaquin Valleys, if you are raising lettuce, they have a whole bunch of different places that they raise lettuce. When one comes on, it's for a specific time; then the next one comes on. That's the way you get your crops.

RM: And if you miss the sequence?

PB: Then you are selling on a low market.

RM: Oh, I see. And if you have a weather problem, that throws you off?

PB: Yes, the weather throws you off. Most people think that agriculture is simple, but I think that it is about as hard to understand as anything you can get into, because things aren't constant. You've got another occupation. Maybe the wind or the rain wouldn't affect you, but you are fighting all the elements . . . And you've got all your investment up front and most of the time you're not making anything much on your investment.

RM: When you started here, was your father a leader?

PB: I'd say he was the leader in the valley at the time he came here. There's one guy I'd love to have you talk to if you ever had time - that's James I. Lee of Las Vegas.

RM: Who was he?

PB: He was to do with the government support and all the programs the government had and he would tell . . . At the time we came here there wasn't any money; there wasn't anything productive and paying. He's very honest and he would give you a lot of information on Pahrump agriculturally.

RM: Did he live here in the valley?

PB: No, he came out of Vegas. He took care of the government farm programs in here and he watched agriculture develop. He knew who did this and who did that, and what you could accomplish if you wanted to get into that type of thing. You hear a lot of people take credit for things that didn't really happen that way. But he knew how . . . Actually, between '46 and '50, agriculture changed to where it started making a little money.

RM: How did that happen?

PB: The money was coming in, land was being developed and Blosser and a bunch of fellows came in and developed farms. They were good farmers and they had a cash crop - cotton - to start with. In the '50s and early '60s, everything was great. That was the golden agricultural period of Pahrump Valley.

RM: What happened in the late '60s?

PB: Development of the cotton was when it was going great and people were starting some little businesses up, and it was great, but then the price of cotton went down. You start out with one thing, you think you've got it all set up and 10 years later, something else [happens]. Then the area went through a slow time. Everybody but the very efficient ones were losing money. Then we changed to subdivision.

RM: Did subdivision begin when Cal-Vada came in?

PB: That's basically when it started. It was about 1970. It went through a slow time in the late '60s and '70s and a lot of people were in pretty bad shape, financially; some of the ranches. That's why they bought out the Pahrump Ranch - they were ready to sell.

RM: Was the slump in the late 1960s caused by the cotton price?

PB: It seemed that everything kind of went slow. We had a series of ups and downs, money-wise, continuously. And with cotton going out, farmers couldn't change over to another cash crop; they didn't have another cash crop.

RM: Why didn't they?

PB: There just didn't seem to be a crop . . . They tried 2 or 3 and they tried lettuce in here and eventually they had to give up on it. Basically, when it started going bad, I could see it was going to go bad, so the last 2 or 3 years the cotton industry ran in here, I quit and started back into alfalfa. So I didn't have to farm in here . . .

RM: How did you know that cotton was going bad?

PB: Well, Cal-Vada was buying out a third of the acreage in the valley and the gin had to have so much money to operate, with theirs gone, that they charged more per bale for ginning. And on top of the not high market, you got your throat cut before you could turn around.

RM: So you saw the handwriting on the wall and went back to alfalfa?

PB: Yes, I went back to alfalfa and more into cattle.

RM: Is that where you are now?

PB: Yes, that's where I am at now - basically back where I started from. Only I didn't have any cattle when I came in here.

RM: Your first year or two here, what crops did you plant, and what was your thinking?

PB: The first year or two we had to buy some equipment . . . there were About 100 acres of hay standing on the property I bought. We bought equipment and put up the hay. They still had a feed yard in Vegas and the first year, lo and behold, a guy didn't pay me for the hay that went to Vegas. I didn't have . . . if I had been smart enough I could have got through it easily. He came to me and said, "Well, here I've got some half-grown calves," and would have let me have them on the hay bill. But I was so stupid, I couldn't see that. I was looking for the money to pay my bills, which were due. If I took the cattle, I could have sold them and made a little money on them and paid the bills. That's where I think everybody needs some schooling. Either you get it the hard way . . . Especially on business. You can raise it, but you've got to sell it. RM: Your dad didn't say anything, did he?

PB: No. He wasn't having too much to do with me after I went out on my own. It was a long time before he got too friendly with me. He figured I'd go under because I didn't have any equipment. I was supposed to get some equipment when we split up, and he agreed to it, and everybody turned him against it and he backed out.

RM: What did you do for equipment?

PB: I had to buy a little, and one brother-in-law who went off by himself, Frehner, and I bought some equipment together and we just kind of shifted along.

RM: The first year or so, when the family was together, what crops were you growing and what was your plan?

PB: We really had got it planned . . . my deal originally was to put a dairy in. We both figured we were good dairymen. We'd tried everything and it didn't make any difference what came up. I told him one time that I thought they could send him out in the middle of that dry lake, and he'd make a living somehow. He'd have made some money doing something. That was our plan, and then later he followed through and put in a dairy, but it kicked me out of there when I went down there and I had to go by myself, when we did. Not blaming him, but . .

RM: Sure, you went out on your own. What was your plan?

PB: Well, I had this land and I started developing it.

RM: Was it virgin land?

PB: All but 100 acres. Some of it was pretty bad to develop, too. In 1951 I sold 200 acres. my dad sold some other and that's when Hafen come in here - in 1951. When he came in, he already had cotton. He and his dad had a dairy in Mesquite. He had support from the outside but when we come out, we had no support from any place but right here.

RM: Between '46 or '47, when you went on your own, and 1951, when you sold 200 acres, what were you growing?

PB: In '50 I started raising cotton, but the allotment for Nevada was minimal. They had a small allotment and we built that up . . . the state built it up to about 3,500 acres when they got to the better part. After it was built up it did all right.

RM: What were you growing in the late '40s?

PB: When we started, we were raising alfalfa and we were selling quite a little of it in Vegas. Then it started going to California markets in '50. They'd come in the wintertime and buy it. Everything was operated on a yearly basis. We'd pay our fuel bill at the end of the year. We'd pay for our parts . . . we paid everything when we sold. The interest wasn't much then - probably about 3 percent. That made it so that you could operate, because we didn't pay fuel for pumping or anything like that. They'd bring our fuel in and we'd store it.

RM: Were you selling your hay in L.A. or in other parts of California?

PB: The L.A. area.

RM: How did you get it to market?

PB: They would bring their trucks up and pick it up.

RM: Did they care up through Shoshone on the dirt roads?

PB: Yes. They oiled that road from Shoshone to Baker not too long after the time they started hauling hay out. The only thing that was bad was getting it from here to Shoshone. If it would rain hard those trucks would go out here and as soon as they got off the slopes they'd bog. They'd have to take a Cat out and drag them out.

RM: You mean, when they took them out in the fields?

PB: Just going down the road. The ground wouldn't hold them up and they'd drop down [in the] slick.

RM: How did you get to Vegas then?

PB: There was just a gravel road to Highway 95 and around to Vegas. That was about 100 miles down to where we lived, then.

RM: So initially you were raising alfalfa. Were you doing much feeding?

PB: In my own operation we fed a few, for cash - to get a little money coming in.

RM: Where did you sell them?

PB: We were selling then to Vegas. There was kind of a packing house there; a guy slaughtered cattle for Vegas. We'd ship them in and he'd slaughter them, or you could sell them locally and he'd slaughter them.

RM: Do you remember the company?

PB: I should remember it; he still owes me. He went broke in there and he always was going to pay me whenever he got his new business set up. I can't remember.

RM: Basically you had a hay and cattle operation until you went into cotton?

PB: That's what the valley was. There was no produce in here selling worth much. There were, at one time, quite a few watermelons that went out of here to Vegas. They raised a real sweet watermelon. That was a lot of work in the summertime. That was in '47; before Hafen come.

Frehner came in here and he had been in that type of produce business and he started the watermelon deal.

RM: Was there enough of a market in Vegas for watermelon?

PB: The only thing wrong with the market was that it was after the high prices were over with; we were too late coming on. They wanted to use it for leaders, so we didn't really make any money. I sold watermelons and my brother-in-law hauled them to Vegas in a ton and a half truck. He's my wife's youngest brother and he owns one of the biggest construction companies in Nevada now.

RM: What's his name'

PB: Garth Frehner. They have Frehner Trucking and Frehner . . . they have a bunch of things. He came out and was real successful. He stayed with me a summer or two after he got out of high school.

RM: What made you decide to go to cotton?

PB: It had been raised in the valley; everybody takes credit of it. But as a cash crop - to make money off it - that hadn't happened [before].

RM: You were the first one to use it as a cash crops?

PB: Well, my father had Leon Hughes and a guy named Schwartz who came in here and leased part of the Manse and raised cotton one year, but they didn't make any money either. That was before the allotment [system] come on. When they put the allotment on, there were only 150 acres or something that he had raised the year before. The allotment went to my dad because he owned the land and he had half of the crop so that put it right back . . . He spilt it around a little bit and we all started raising a little cotton and then they improved it and that's where cotton came in here.

RM: And then you got your allotment increased?

PB: Yes. They had a bill in congress or whatever they had to go through to increase Nevada's allotment.

RM: Were you or your father or your family instrumental in getting that bill through congress?

PB: Well, he knew all the senators and everybody, and the state worked hard on it, so it really wasn't that hard to get it increased. But for the first ones who raised [cotton] there was no allotment. That's why they came up here to raise it in the first place. There was no allotment in here and you could raise it. When they put the allotment on, that shut all that off. Then they kept raising it and Hafen come in here and Blosser come in here in the early '50s - '51 or '52.

RM: Then, you and your dad could see pretty early that cotton was going to be a profitable crop?

PB: Yes, but he was still looking at [the] dairy [business] and he had put the dairy in, in the early '50s. It was a nice dairy, with its own electric plant.

RM: How many cows did he have?

PB: I don't know for sure; I imagine about 300. That was a good dairy then. It's nothing now - that's a small dairy by today's standards.

RM: What kind of cows was he milking?

PB: Holsteins. And he was selling the milk to Vegas.

RM: Was he raising his own feed?

PB: Well, he bought some because he was raising cotton and he was making good money on the cotton.

RM: Was that profitable?

PB: He had a very profitable thing going. And he was doer and a builder. This is where Jim Lee would tell you what he did in the few years he was in here. It was unbelievable!

RM: What years did your father have the dairy?

PB: He had it - let's see - from the real early '50s until the boys got out of college - probably 6 years or so.

RM: What made him quit the dairy?

PB: He was getting old then. One boy had gone to school and he asked my dad if the dairy was making money. He said, "You figure it out. You've been to school, you figure it out." But they didn't want the dairy.

RM: To me, a dairy is the hardest work there is because it is so constant; you never get a break.

PB: You don't. Especially, if you are putting up crops too. You have to be dedicated to be a dairyman. There are a lot of people that enjoy it. It just depends on where you come from - Sweden, for instance. But when you get into raising cattle, that's the part that I enjoyed. Not so much the milking, but the production and the animals themselves, the bulls, this type of thing; it was interesting to me.

RM: Did you like dairying?

PB: Yes and no.

RM: But you never liked it well enough to start a big one here, did you?

PB: I was going to, but I couldn't get myself in shape to do it financially. I figured that this was ideal dairy country and then, after I was out of it I could make a little money doing something else . . . it kind of drifted off. I didn't think about it much.

RM: So by 1950 you were raising mainly cotton?

PB: Yes. All the time I was raising cotton, it was an alfalfa and cotton combination.

RM: Were you feeding at all?

PB: Mostly I was selling after I got into cotton. I had to work too many jobs so I just sold it.

RM: What were the problems you saw in growing cotton?



## CHAPTER FOUR

PB: Some problems were created when Bermuda grass was brought in out of Texas. It just flat took over everything. You put cotton in and you put fertilizer on and that nitrogen would just make that grass grow. You got grassy cotton, which was bad; you couldn't clean it out. It spread all over the valley. The idea was to reclaim the new ground with it.

RM: Oh? I don't follow that.

PB: Well, if you take the brush off and clean it up, for the first year or so it doesn't raise much, so they planted the Bermuda grass. They figured all they had to do was plow it and kill it. It had roots about the size of my little finger. Nobody was going to kill that stuff. You know. And, it made too much. weeding.

RM: And the grass had never been here before?

PB: No. They brought it in here. They just didn't think. That's where you can get into a lot of programs that can cause you a lot of trouble. RM: How did you deal with it?

PB: Plant hay. I quit.

RM: What were some other problems you experienced with cotton growing?

PB: Well, the market price went down and, as I said, they sold off and started subdividing ground. There was only so much land in the valley that was fit to raise cotton on. You could make a profit with the top ground, and all the other land was marginal. You were just throwing your money or taking it from one pocket and putting it in the other pocket, or throwing it away. If you farmed cheaply and tried to do it the cheap way, you still went bad; if you put on a lot of fertilizer and tried to do it right, you still didn't make it.

RM: How would you describe the top ground as compared to the marginal ground in the valley for cotton?

PB: The top ground here is on the east side of the valley. it is top ground because the flood brings the silt down from off the slopes of the mountain The first place it stops off the rocks don't move - the gravel moves - and the smaller gravel goes farther out and farther out and then when the gravel quits, the silt goes on farther. When you get out so far, the silt has already stopped, so you've got tight clay ground, with alkali in it. And the silt lies along the east side of the valley.

RM: What was out farther?

PB: You go out to the dry lake and then nothing.

RM: What is between the silt and the dry lake?

PB: All different types of ground; the dry lake isn't good.

RM: What's the matter with it?

PB: Well, first it doesn't take water, and second, it's got too much alkali in it. It's a sticky gumbo type of ground, because your clay goes farther than your silt. You've got your gravel, your silt and then your clay and then when you get out to the dry lake, you've just got your minerals. The silt lay around so far . . . in these fans. You've got a big fan caning into the Pahrump Ranch which put the good land in there. Then it's blocked off, and then you get another fan coming in at the upper end of the valley and a fan coming out of here.

RM: Oh, I see. The gravel is no good, is it?

PB: You can't farm, but they are going to use a lot of gravel in here making roads out on the flats. You put it out there and in 6 to 10 years it's sunk; you have to keep putting more. There's no place to stop it. RM: Basically, then, you've got a zone here between the gravel and the clay?

PB: That's right; that's primarily the good land for hay, cotton, or anything you're raising.

RM: HOW many acres did you start with?

PB: I started out with 150 acres.

RM: The Pahrump Ranch, when Walt Williams bought it, was about 12,000 acres, wasn't it? Now, how much of that would have been this good ground we are talking about?

PB: They came between the Manse and the Pahrump . . . they developed a bunch in there they called the Mizpah. That's just this side of Homestead, and it's pretty fair ground. There might have been 300 or 400 acres in there of that.

RM: Out of 12,000 acres?

PB: Well, on the Mizpah. And on the other there might have been, maybe, half the land in fanning . . . I [think] they were farming about 800 acres in there, altogether.

RM: No more than 1/10th, then, would be what you would call good farm ground?

PB: No more than a 10th of it. They had developed their allotment - they were raising about 1,000 acres of cotton - but I would say a 4th or 5th of that wasn't very productive ground.

RM: When you were raising cotton, how many acres did you have?

PB: I think I raised 175 acres one year.

RM: I'm trying to get an idea of how much of the ground in the valley is really good.

PB: A good third of all the producing ranches here wouldn't be fit for cotton.

RM: How is the ground at the north end of the valley?

PB: It wasn't too bad. When I looked at it, I didn't want to leave the south end - nothing else really appealed to me. Most of it didn't take the water like the south end, and the farther out on the flats you go the colder it is. My ranch is a half mile west of here, and there's a 4-degree difference between here and my ranch.

RM: You mean it's 4 degrees warmer here?

PB: Yes, 4 degrees warmer, and 4 degrees or more cooler in the summer. If you think about it, you go down to California, and where do they raise all the oranges - on the hillside. The cold settles in the low areas. I could raise better cotton where I was than they could at the Manse Ranch. The cold would settle in a little old pocket in there.

RM: Could they raise good cotton at the north end?

PB: They raised some up there, but they never did . . . Well, there was no hay raised in that before the cotton went; that would have helped it. They had some pretty fair land up there. The strip between the north end and the south end isn't good.

RM: Where would that be?

PB: Do you know where that airport is up there north of Blosser's?

RM: Yes?

PB: The good ground shuts off right here, on the north end, and the poor ground comes pretty well down to Pahrump Ranch, which would be the Shoshone road. Blosser's is about the end of the good ground on the north. And you have to farm it all differently. [When] the California fellows came in here they wanted to farm it the way they raised things in California.

RM: And what happened?

PB: It don't work.

RM: What were they doing?

PB: All your practices have to be timed differently and you've got to do different things because of the weather and the soil conditions. For instance, if it's time to put the fertilizer and the water on and push it and get your growth, then you've got to load it . . .

RM: Do you mean putting the seeds in?

PB: No, putting the bolls on it. It's time to put the seeds in, too, but, to put the bolls on it . . .

RM: Then when you get ready to start making the bolls you've got to do something special?

PB: It's got to be irrigated and fertilized right - the timing [is important]. When you have the fertilizer to put the bolls on, then after the bolls come on, you've got to be running out of fertilizer so that it will mature. If there's a little bit too much nitrogen it will grow too much and put on a bunch of light bolls that don't do any good and slow down the other bolls from maturing. It's a very complicated process.

RM: I had no idea that there was that kind of timing throughout the whole growth cycle.

PB: Through that whole growth cycle - planting, the whole thing - you have to pick it up.

RM: How in the world did you ever figure it out?

PB: We started out little - I think that was the best thing. If we had started out big, we'd probably have all gone broke. You have to watch it, and if you can get something to work, you go from there if you don't jump too far.

RM: So you've got to be a researcher, don't you?

PB: Oh, yes. And all through that time, raising cotton, we probably had 20 different varieties of cotton to work with. They would change them on you; you'd send to California and get different seed. Some that works well there don't work here that well, so you find something that will work, but if they quit that [type of] cotton down there, you are out of seed; you can't get it anymore.

RM: Then you were dependent on California for your seed?

PB: Yes. We had to buy our seed out of California and we had to plant it [between] the 15th of April and the 1st of May. About the 5th of May is the latest you could get it in and make it mature. The moisture in your ground is another thing. If it was too wet, your seed would rot.

RM: You had a lot of variables to work with.

PB: You didn't sleep too well some nights. And if it rains right after you plant, it'll crust and it won't come up.

RM: Did you ever have any outright failures?

PB: No. I replanted some. If I had half a stand, I wouldn't replant. It seemed [that by the] time you decided to replant you didn't have enough time. Two weeks go by so fast you just don't know what you're doing. RM: Could you talk a bit about social life in the valley when you came here in '46?

PB: The first 2 years or so we didn't have much social life. After that we mostly had a social life oriented through the church. They came in here and started a little branch.

RM: The LDS came in?

PB: The LDS came in and we pretty well went that route, but the rest of the people in the '50s were pretty nice. People respected each other and everybody was a doer - that makes a lot of difference. There was nobody who was making a living [off] anybody - they were all making their own living. That's the one thing that I've always enjoyed in southern Nevada, and I've know them ever since the valley started. Even the guys who came out of California were different. They didn't belong to LDS Church, but it didn't make that much difference; they all got along real well.

RM: Basically there were 2 groups that came into the valley, weren't there? The people out of the Moapa valley and the people out of California; is that right?

PB: Most of them were out of California. And they just kept rotating. Every few years, one bunch would go out and another bunch would come in. There have been a lot of people in here, but . . . The guys who came out of California and stayed here were very dedicated guys and they were pushers and doers.

RM: Why did some people make it and some not?

PB: I'd say dedication is the main thing.

RM: What do you mean by that?

PB: Well, for instance, I came in here and planted the way I planted things over in Moapa valley, and it looked like I lost everything. You had to wait and give it a chance to develop. Then the plants caught up and did well, but you had to do it the right way and you had to have faith in yourself and your abilities. And you had to figure out what was going to work and what wasn't going to work and go all the time with something that you figured was going to work. Another thing that was bad was the social life here, which got a lot of people.

RM: The isolation?

PB: The isolation, and nobody to show an interest in them. It got a lot of people and most of them went on an alcohol binge or something. A lot of them started drinking. Of all the guys who have come in here from pretty near everywhere, the drinkers never got anyplace. That's because you can't take your mind off what you're doing - I don't care what business you are in. The ones who did it . . . Blosser came in from California and he stayed and did well, and the Brady brothers were hangers; they'd do what had to be done and they did pretty well. They were, in my estimation, a little too tight to make it and I think that was one of my biggest . .

RM: You mean tightfisted?

PB: Well, they didn't gamble quite enough. If you gamble too much you're going to lose it, and if you go too tight, you never make it.

RM: Could you describe the gambling part of it a little bit?

PB: You've got to take a chance. For instance, one year they give us a program, called the A and B Program. On the A Program you could overplant, but they wouldn't guarantee you as much money. With the B Program you could go little and they'd guarantee it. Well, any time you go little, actually you're cutting your own throat - I don't care why you are in. If you don't have much expense you can save money and do all right, but there were 2 or 3 of us who gambled on it and I made good money going on the A Program, because if you can raise good crops, you can do it, and if you can't raise good crops, you can't do it. It's just that simple.

RM: A farmer has to be willing to experiment, doesn't he, in order to try new things and always do it better?

PB: Yes he does. [You have to] put it in the right perspective - with limits.

RM: And if he's too tight . . .

PB: He might not do it. Also, you've got to watch what other people do and figure out how it's going to work for you. You don't try to do it exactly as they are doing, you do what you think will work. That's what happens with the government experimental deals - they will come up with some program and that's the way to do it and it don't work that way. Those are the guys who have been trained to do it - they are supposed to set an example for us. As an illustration, one time when we had the dairy they raised a corn called Mexican June and they figured they could develop a better corn. So 25 or 30 years later what do you think they're doing? They are right back to Mexican June.

RM: They haven't come up with a better one?

PB: They haven't done anything in the 25 years or so . . . they raise corn with more ears on it and they were smaller and you were making silage, and they just did all kinds of things, but it still came back to Mexican June. That was a big old corn, especially if you were a young kid and

had to bind that stuff by hand. Whew! That's another story I'd like to forget. But we tried to adapt what little we knew from Moapa Valley into Pahrump Valley, and I think it gave us a little better opportunity than the guys coming out of California.

RM: Is that because Moapa is more similar to Pahrump than Pahrump is to . . . ?

PB: Yes - to San Joaquin or the Imperial Valley or someplace like that. RM: Were there many people who came from the south? I know Walt Williams came out of Texas.

PB: Walt Williams and his partner came out of New Mexico.

RM: I thought he came out of Pecos, Texas.

PB: Yes, but he and Cruz were raising cotton in New Mexico.

RM: Were there any others that came out of the south?

PB: No, there weren't too many southerners. It was just this group here and Hafen and the Frehners who came out of Moapa. Another setup that was going good in here 'till one of them died was Simkins. They came out of Utah.

RM: Were they LDS?

PB: They were LDS. They didn't have any contact with the church or anything like that, but they were good boys, and they were raised up under the philosophy of "make your money and spend what you can, just don't blow everything and say that it is going to come back; [because] generally, it doesn't!" They were raised that way and they did pretty well. And there were some older fellows who came in here, but they were too old when they came; you shouldn't come in here in your 50s or 60s - it's too tough. Of course, if you run a business . . . a lot of our good business people now are nearly retired people who have done something and know how to do it. The older people, I think, are better than the younger ones for [running] the valley.

RM: Because they have skills? Or what?

PB: Yes, they are doers. When you run into non producers you just don't have anything. They don't have the interest and they don't want to produce - their jobs don't mean nothing to them. The whole country has gone that way and that bothers me. I'd love to see somebody who does their job, loves it, and is interested in it more than in the money involved in it. Then you've got a better class of people.

RM: That's right. How did you store food?

PB: We'd buy supplies for a certain period of time. We didn't buy many groceries, only what we needed to fill in with.

We did enjoy the church. I worked about 22 years in it and that's probably the most enjoyable time I had. I met some wonderful guys out of Vegas, Salt Lake, and all over.

RM: You mean in establishing the church here?

PB: Yes; we had to go to Salt Lake. One thing about the LDS Church is that everybody gets their instructions from one place, so wherever you go, they are all getting the same thing. I think as far as religion goes, that is nice.

RM: Originally you held your services in your dad's home, didn't you?

PB: Yes. Then we held it in a bunch of places and it was up and down, and then when my father quit farming quite a few of them quit. When he quit he didn't want to stay here because if he didn't think they were doing something it bothered him too much, [wanting them to] do it right.

RM: When did he leave the valley?

PB: I think he was about my age when he left here - about 70 years old. That was about 20 years ago.

RM: Where did he move?

PB: He moved to St. George, Utah and then my mother had health problems, and it was very hard for him to take care of her. He was getting older, so they come back to Vegas and stayed there with my sister. My 2 brothers went to Vegas and tried to talk me into going to Vegas and I talked to the church guys and they said, "Stay where you are." It was kind of hard to see a bunch of them move out after all those years.

RM: Do you still have family here?

PB: I've got 2 sisters here.

RM: Did your children stay here?

PB: Out of 5 children, 3 of them are here.

RM: Are they on the farm?

PB: The 2 boys are messing with farming and cattle, and I've got one daughter who teaches school here. We sent her to school in Provo and she has been teaching here for quite a few years. Then I've got a girl in Henderson and one in Riverside.

RM: Did you get involved in subdivision after Cal-Vada came in?



PB: No.

RM: You haven't done any subdividing? Your ranch is in Nye County but your home is in Clark, isn't it? That means a little bit of the old Kellogg Ranch is in Clark County, doesn't it?

PB: Yes, but not much. The reason I got into Clark County [is that I was] plowing up all these hay fields to raise cotton and somebody built a house. If you have a south wind it would blow that dust and all . . . the north wind would blow it to the south and you get so much dust that sometimes you could hardly see. I had a pump up here and that's why I came up and built up here - just to get out of the dirt

RM: Do you think we've covered your history? Did you have a chance to talk about what you know?

PB: I don't really fare well history-wise. I just kind of hung in and did whatever I had to. Being a promoter type of fellow never interested me. My father was more of a doer and a promoter and my youngest brother is that way - he's pushing himself, if he doesn't push himself into a grave. never did do that much, but I believe that we had it hard and we tried to help a lot here - to help promote the church and the valley.

## INDEX

A&A, Market  
A and B program  
Adams, Lester  
alcohol,  
alfalfa,  
alkali,  
allotment (cotton  
alluvial fans,  
Anderson, Mr.,  
Arizona  
Baker, CA  
barley,  
Bermuda grass  
binding corn,  
Blosser, Ted,  
Blosser's ranch  
Boulder Dam  
Bowman, Elizabeth Rebecca Leavitt,  
Bowman, Elmer Squire,  
Bowman, Isaac  
Bowman, Mrs. (Frehner),  
Bowman (Perry's children),  
Bowman, William Calvert, 9  
Bowman family,  
Bowman farm,  
Brady brothers,  
Brooks, Juanita,  
Buol, Frank "Pop,"  
Burson, Mr.,  
California  
Cal-Vada,  
Canada,  
Caterpillar,  
cattle, beef,  
cattle, dairy,  
Charleston Mountains,  
Christianson, Mr.,  
Clark Canyon,  
Clark County, NV,  
clay  
climate,  
coke ovens (mining

Colorado River,  
corn,  
Cornell, Dr. Harold,  
cotton,  
crusting  
Cruz, Mr  
dairy  
deeded land,  
drilling (wells  
dry lake,  
electric power,  
experimental programs,  
PTA,  
farming  
fertilizing  
floods,  
Frehner, Arlen,  
Frehner, Garth  
Frehner, Joseph,  
Frehner family,  
Frehner Trucking  
fruit,  
fuel,  
Gann, Mr. (elder),  
Gann, Mr. (younger),  
Gann ranch  
Gentry, Sam  
German,  
government programs  
grapes,  
gravel,  
groceries,  
ground, marginal,  
ground, new,  
Gunlock, UT,  
Hafen, Tim,  
Hamblin, Jacob,  
hay  
Henderson, NV,  
Highway 95,  
Holsteins,  
homestead,  
horses,  
Hughes, Leon,

humus,  
Illinois,  
Imperial Valley, CA,  
Indian Mission,  
Indians,  
International (bus  
isolation,  
Kellogg, Lois,  
Kellogg family  
Kellogg Ranch,  
LDS Church  
LDS people,  
Las Vegas, NV,  
lead,  
leasing (ranches),  
Leavitt, Dudley,  
Leavitt family,  
Lee, James I.,  
lettuce,  
Littlefield, AZ  
Logandale, NV,  
Los Angeles, CA,  
lumber,  
mail  
Manse Ranch,  
markets (cotton),  
markets (farm produce),  
medical care,  
Mesquite, NV  
Mexican June corn,  
Milford, UT  
Minetti, Mr  
missionaries,  
Mizpah (farm),  
Moapa Valley,  
Nevada,  
New Mexico,  
New York,  
nitrogen,  
Nye County,  
overplanting,  
Pahrump Ranch,  
Pahrump Valley, NV,  
Pahrump Valley people,

Pecos, TX,  
Penell, Guy,  
Pennsylvania  
Pittsburgh, PA,  
post office,  
Potosi, NV,  
Potosi lead mine,  
Provo, UT,  
railroad,  
ranches,  
range  
Reno, NV,  
Riverside, CA,  
roads,  
Russians  
St. George, UT,  
St. Thomas, NV,  
Salt Lake City, UT,  
San Diego, CA, 3  
San Joaquin Valley,  
Santa Clara, UT,  
school,  
Schwartz, Mr.,  
seed, cotton,  
Sharp, Louis,  
Shoshone, CA,  
silt,  
silver  
Simkins family  
slaughtering cattle,  
social life  
springs,  
stage line  
"state farmer  
stockyard,  
stores  
storing food  
subdivisions,  
Texas,  
trading post  
Trout Canyon,  
trucking  
United States government,  
Utah

Van Horn, Everett,  
Van Horn, Ray,  
Virgin River,  
Virgin Valley,  
water  
watermelons  
wells,  
Wheeler Pass  
Wiley, Roland  
Williams, Walt,  
wine,  
women (life in Pahrump Valley),  
Yount, Mr.,