

An Interview with
Doris M. Jackson

An Oral History conducted and edited by
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Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada
Tonopah
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Doris M. Jackson
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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 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 Tom 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 Doris Jackson at the Stateline Saloon in Amargosa Valley -
March 23, 26, 27, and 30, 1987

CHAPTER ONE

RM: OK, Doris. Who were your parents, and what part of the country did you come from?

DJ: Well, just working people, farmers. I was born in Michigan and that's where I grew up. But I always felt like I was a little bound, and I had to move west. So I moved west in 1960, to California. Then in 1964 I came to Las Vegas. And I found the desert, and the expanse of it and everything to my liking, and . . . It was like that's where I wanted to spend the rest of my life.

RM: How did you decide on Vegas? What brought you there, rather than, say, Phoenix?

DJ: Oh, I think it was the glamour of the town, and what everybody - even people in Michigan - had talked about. I was just intrigued by the whole city. And I was a professional singer, and that helped bring me here, too.

RM: Where did you sing before you came to Vegas?

DJ: Oh, in San Francisco, and Phoenix.

RM: What kind of singing did you do?

DJ: I sang blues, and torch - pop songs.

RM: Did you have your own group?

DJ: Well, I did sometimes, but a lot of times I just would pick up a group wherever I was. But I did that off and on, I never had a permanent group. It seemed like when opportunity came up for me personally, there was always something in my life that kept me from going on with it. You know, like going to Australia, or something like that. I had children, and I couldn't just go and do all the things I wanted to do. So I never was really successful at it, but I made somewhat of a living at it.

RM: Did you start singing back in Michigan?

DJ: Yes.

RM: In high school, and with your own band, or what?

DJ: Well, I had - my 2 younger sisters and I - we had a trio, and we started singing probably in about 1936 or '7. And then we sang at, PTAs, and Rotary Clubs, and family reunions, those kinds of things. And then we sang all the way up through high school as The Shaft Sisters. My name was Shaft. And then someone came and heard us, and they wanted to put us on Arthur Godfrey's Show. That was just before the McGuire Sisters. That was about 1947. But my mother said, "No way. You're not going to go to New York and . . ." There were 5 girls in the family, so she was real protective. And my youngest sister was about 14 - 13 or 14 - and so she was just real hesitant to let us go. Right after that the McGuire Sisters came on. We did a lot of Andrews Sisters material, and Mills Brothers.

RM: Well, you didn't keep together.

DJ: No.

RM: Yes.

DJ: No. After high school, we all kind of went our own separate ways. Then later I moved to Florida, and then I sang some down there in Florida, at some small clubs, little bars and lounges. And then I went back to Michigan. And by then I had all my children - 3 children - and opened our own bar in Michigan. Then later I got divorced, and then - in 1960 - I moved west.

RM: Where did you go? California?

DJ: California.

RM: Where did you land first?

DJ: I went to El Segundo because it was kind of a small area. I lived there not quite a year, and then I went up to Clear Lake.

RM: All the time singing?

DJ: No. Well, I worked, too, as a waitress and cocktail waitress also. And I sang some. But I really couldn't make a good enough living singing. They just don't pay that good. And then once I left Clear Lake, then I came to Las Vegas in '64.

RM: Did you come to Las Vegas with the idea of singing, or . .

DJ: Not really. I didn't think that . . . I thought Las Vegas was 'way out of my reach. And I didn't realize that they had some lounges and places to sing. I thought it was all big shows. I had this idea that Las Vegas was, oh, like a big movie set, you know. So then when I came to Las Vegas, then I went to the union, got . . . through the union, went to work at Flamingo. RM: And the union just sent you out to the Flamingo?

DJ: Yes.

RM: Because that was a pretty high-class place.

DJ: Well, it was, but there weren't too many places, and the only way you could get a job was through the union. Culinary Union. Because you could go to all the places, but they'd send you back to the Culinary Union anyway, so that's where I went.

RM: Describe what the Flamingo was like then.

DJ: It was small, and Morris Lansky ran it, and Steve Delmont was over the food and beverage. And when I started there I started as a food waitress, and I worked the counter. And I made . . . Oh, I probably was making like \$60 a day in tips, which was good.

RM: That was fabulous money then.

DJ: And the musicians, and the floor people, and everything, they all sat at the counter. And I had a lot of fun. I made a lot of friends, and it was about . . . probably about 30,000 people in the whole town, so when you went out after work - went to the bars - it seemed like you knew all the bartenders and dealers and waitresses and - cocktail waitresses, and . . it was kind of like small town. And I like that.

RM: Did the Flamingo still have its dress code at that time?

DJ: Oh, yes. It was very classy. In fact . .

RM: What was required?

DJ: . . . that was the first time that I wore false eyelashes. You know, the whole scene made you want to dress, and everyone was dressed. Women had long dresses on, and furs, and the men were all in tuxedos or suits, or . . . hardly even a sport jacket at that time. Then when the pant suit came out - and I can't remember what year that was, but it was at the time I was working there - they had a meeting to decide whether they should let women in with a pant suit on. Some of them were real dressy, and so they decided, well, if it matched, if it was pants and a jacket - a slacks suit - then they could wear it in. But they still kept pretty much of a dress code. You had to have a tie, and if you didn't have one they gave you one; to wear.

RM: And a sport coat.

DJ: Yes.

RM: Did you have to wear a uniform?

DJ: Oh, yes. We wore uniforms. And they were all fitted to us, and everything. And then I got into cocktails. And they were fitted. Not like they were when I worked at Caesar's.

RM: Were cocktails considered a promotion? Or do you make more money?

DJ: Well, cocktails is easier . . . It's much easier than food. And the money isn't that much different. But the work is a lot easier. That's why everyone likes to get into cocktails. And back then it was, well, the floor man would bring one of his girlfriends in to work cocktails, you know. But they hardly ever lasted. There were always certain girls that just stayed. They were good workers, always went to work. You didn't drink, and . back then there wasn't doping, like today.

RM: There wasn't? No drugs?

DJ: Not that I knew about.

RM: Did you usually work the night shifts?

DJ: I usually worked swing.

RM: That was the best shift, wasn't it? For tips, and everything.

DJ: Right. We'd work, like, 3:00 to 11:00, or 4:00 to 12:00, and then we'd get off, and we'd all go somewhere and party, or might go roller-skating, or bowling, or something. And I liked it because everything was open 24 hours, and it was really new to me. I was kind of like a little country girl, but it didn't take long to catch on. And learn the language of Las Vegas, which is unlike any place in the world.

NM: Like how? What do you mean?

DJ: Well, when you get - even . . . You should have a tape recorder sometime of all the cocktail waitresses when they go to their dressing room after a shift, and hear them talk. Because if you weren't in the know, and if you didn't live in Las Vegas, you would sit there and you wouldn't have one idea of what they were talking about.

RM: Can you think of an example?

DJ: Well, if you said, maybe, "I've got a George on 1," or, "I've got a George on first base, giving nickels," or, "I've got a George on first base giving quarters," I don't know if anyone would know what that's talking about, or not.

RM: No. What would it mean?

DJ: Well, you would have a certain 21 table, and you'd have a man sitting in the first spot, which is first base, and he would be - he's George, so that means he a good tipper and a real nice guy - and if he's tipping a nickel it's \$5, a quarter's \$25, and a black is \$100. And then a lot of times if we had somebody that was tipping a \$100 tip, then we would take them once, and then we would let another girl take that station, so she could get one . .

RM: Oh, so she could get one. I see.

DJ: Everybody helped each other. Nobody was greedy, because we all did good.

RM: So people actually tipped \$100, then?

DJ: Yes. Lots of times.

RM: It was not common, but it happened.

DJ: It happened. But . . . it still happens. It still does.

RM: How long did you stay at the Flamingo?

DJ: Oh, I stayed at Flamingo about one year. I went to Showboat in '69, and I worked there, I think about a year and a half. But I was working graveyard and I had the pit and the bowling alley and the keno and the slots and everything there. I worked alone. So physically it was just too hard on me.

RM: Did you like the Showboat as well as the Flamingo?

DJ: Well, I liked the people. They were pretty much local people, and the people that ran it were real nice people. But we were so busy. I had a bartender. His name was Wally, he lived in Henderson, and he was real tall. I carried a big tray, and I could remember 32 drinks. Because we never had time to write anything down. So you went out to the pit and got 32 drinks, and I went in - I called that order in - once. And then I picked up the tray - the order that I'd called in last time. I went and delivered that, picked up another order, came back, and that's the way Wally and I worked all night.

RM: So you could remember 32 drinks?

DJ: And where they went.

RM And where they went. And then Wally could remember them. When you called them out verbally.

DJ: The way I called then.

RM: You had shorthand for them . .

DJ: Yes. You called your bourbon first. And, so, say you had a bourbon and water, and a bourbon and 7, and a bourbon and soda, and a scotch and soda. Then you went up and you called, "Water, 7, 2 sodas, 1 is scotch." So that's 4 drinks right there. From there, you went to your vodka, and then your gin. You kept everything so that a bartender never picked up a bottle more than once. And if he ever had to pick it up twice, you went to the back of the line. When they pushed the water button, they did all the waters. Whether it was bourbon, or scotch, or vodka or whatever.

RM: Yes. And I imagine it's still the same way, isn't it?

DJ: Oh, yes. And the way you call them in makes a big difference.

RM: Do they still do as many as 32?

DJ: Oh, I'm sure there are girls who do that. Yes. Because girls who work in a bingo room or in keno area have to. You just have to get those drinks out there.

RM: Yes. And you could remember where each of these went.

DJ: Oh, yes. You had little tricks for that.

RM: What are some of the tricks?

DJ: Well, most men would drink bourbon and water or scotch on the rocks. The women drink vodka and tonic, or anything with 7-Up in it, or a Mom Collins. Then you get into Mai Tais and Tequila Sunrise and all that. More women drink them.

RM: So if you had a certain drink, you'd know probably whether it would go to a man or a woman.

DJ: Yes. And if somebody had a twist, then you associated it with, oh, a hat or tie or something. That was a twist.

RM: I talked to a cocktail waitress, at the Holiday. And she told me that if people gave her a tip she could remember that guy for weeks. And what he drank.

DJ: Yes. You don't remember their name, but you still know what they drink. And when they come back, you remember what they drink.

RM: Yes. Especially if they tip.

DJ: But, see, if you go up and you say, oh, "I need scotch left and right," that's 1 scotch and water, and 1 scotch and soda. But you always just say left and right. Or if you just call "left and right," that's bourbon. You never say bourbon. That's automatic.

RM: Because that came first.

DJ: If you went up and you said, "I need a water," then that's automatically bourbon and water. If you want a glass of water, it's "plain water." Or "plain seltzer."

RM: How did you call beer? Or did you get many beer drinkers?

DJ: Not too many. But those you just have to call, you know: "3 Bud, 2 Coors." But you start by the way things are stocked. And those things that sell the fastest are up closest, so that's the way you call. You call "Bud, Coors, Millers" and down the line. And that's the way you stock your bar.

RM: Yes. So this was at the . . . You were at the Showboat for a year and a half.

DJ: Physically, that kind of wore me out. So I took about a year off, and then I went to Caesar's, and some time, when I worked at Flamingo - and I don't know who did it, or how it happened - I got a gold card at the union.

RM: What does that mean?

DJ: Well, a gold card . . . I really can't remember all the colors of the cards, because cocktail waitresses had 1 color, and food waitresses another. But somehow I got a gold card. So when you would go to the union the ones who had the gold cards went out immediately, before anybody else. And that card said that you were always on time, were always at work, came to work sober and ready to go to work, and you looked nice, and . . . Somebody had gotten me that card, and I just don't know who it was.

RM: So, somebody with some power had put in a good word.

DJ: Somebody at the Flamingo. And I still have the gold card.

RM: Is that right. In the union?

DJ: Yes.

RM: So you could go back there as a gold card. .

DJ: Well, I went back in '77, and I went in to get a job, and she said, "You know, Doris, I had a feeling" (because I would always take a withdrawal card when I was out) and she said, "I had a feeling you were coming back. I've only got 15 gold cards left."

RM: So they don't do that anymore.

DJ: No, they don't do it anymore. And the girls had either moved away or quit working altogether. But she said, "I had a feeling you were caning back, so I kept it." And it really made me feel good. And like I said, I don't really know who did it, unless it might've been Steve Delmont. I'm not sure.

RM: You're still in the union.

DJ: I have a withdrawal card.

RM: Yes. So you could go back any time you want.

DJ: Right.

RM: Yes. So you went over to Caesar's about 1972, something like that?

DJ: Yes. I think '71.

RM: And how did you happen to go to Caesar's?

DJ: Well, when I went to the union, she said, "I have a graveyard pit shift at the Riviera . . ."

RM: Now, what does that mean, a pit shift?

DJ: That's working cocktails in the pit.

RM: Oh, OK.

DJ: Or, "I have a downtown, I think at the Mint, or somewhere. I have a swing shift open, or I have a vacation at Caesar's."

And I said, "I'll take the vacation at Caesar's." [A] two-week vacation.

And she said, "I knew you would."

So I went to Caesar's, and it took me about - I think - 3 days before I really could get in there. One reason being that I was 42; but I didn't tell them that. And I looked about 35. But at the time, they hired girls who were 23. And so Jeannie and Joy. Woods talked to me, and then I had to put a uniform on, and I had to go before people, and they called me back, I think 2 more times, and then they said they would try me. So I was on a relief shift, and I went right into the pit, I think the 21 pit. And I was there about 2 days, and Joy came by, and she said, "You've got a permanent job." Because of the experience, and I knew what I was doing.

RM: And that was a real plum, to work there, wasn't it?

DJ: Right. Well, because the 21 floor men, and the pit bosses, said, "It's so good to have somebody in there that knows what they're doing." I mean, you'd keep your mouth shut, and you'd do your job, and you'd take care of business. Because that's what they really want.

RM: Yes. But you had a year and a half hiatus between the Showboat and Caesar's.

DJ: Right. I just stayed home.

RM: Yes. You got kind of burned out at Showboat from working so hard.

DJ: Right. Physically, I was really burned out. And Mr. Cushion would call and ask me to come back, but I said, "Well, I'd have to have another shift." And the girls who worked there had worked there since it opened.

RM: At the Showboat.

DJ: At Showboat. In fact, at Caesar's, too. When Caesar's opened, a lot of people from Flamingo went over there, and they were there since they opened. There are still girls there now [from] since it opened. 20 years. It was a good place to work, and you were treated, oh, very extra-special. You weren't a cocktail waitress, you were a goddess. At Caesar's they are goddesses.

RM: Was that true at the others?

DJ: No. But at Caesar's, you had mothers in the dressing room, and they undressed you. And they took your uniforms and your hair piece and your uniform never touched the floor.

RM: I suppose they still do that?

DJ: I'm sure they do. Yes. And each uniform is made just for you. And then they take your hairpiece and they have it cleaned about once a week, and . . .

RM: They wear hairpieces there.

DJ: Yes. The long ponytails, the Grecian style.

RM: Did you find any differences in the clientele, between the 3 places? DJ: Well, yes. At Flamingo, that many years ago, they were all extremely nice people, and it was really a pretty small family, there. And, I know even entertainers, when they would perform there, like - well, like Della Reese. She'd be there maybe for 3 - 4 weeks, but that's when you had the lounges open, where you sit at the bar and watch the lounge show. And then she would leave, be gone 3 months, and when she'd come back, she'd walk up and say, "Hi, Doris! How you been?" And they remembered your name. Because it was kind of a family. And everybody was just equal there.

RM: What other famous names came through there, in terms of performers that you sort of came in contact with.

DJ: Oh. Well, I got to be friends with Wayne Newton and his brother Jerry, and army Amato, and Frank Sinatra, Jr. He was there a lot. And Elvis Presley was there.

RM: He played in the show, didn't he?

DJ: I don't remember if he played in the show there, or not.

RM: Yes. Or just came in maybe?

DJ: Yes. But I remember the colonel [Tom Parker]. And Nancy Sinatra. Of course, Frank Sinatra would come in and watch them. And Dean Martin, and Joey Bishop, when they were all together and had the Rat Pack.

And then, when I worked at Caesar's, Frank Sinatra had his "01' Blue Eyes Is Back - Coming Back" coming out party after he retired. So they picked I think 5 girls, or maybe 8, to work the party. And everyone there was a star. He just did one show that night, and everyone in the audience was a star. Then they went up on the top floor of Caesar's and they covered the swimming pool and made a dance floor out of it - had a big orchestra (which I can't remember the name of the orchestra). But everyone was there that I had always ever wanted to see. Even Edgar Bergen, and Jimmy Stewart, and Johnny Carson, and Ed McMahon. Tony Llamas and Esther Williams, Don Adams, and of course Sammy Davis, Jr., Ricardo Montalban . . . It was a fun party to work. Zsa Zsa Gabor - all of them were there. All of them. Every one. But it was wonderful. So we worked that party 'till - I started around 11:00, and we worked until about 4:30 in the morning. Rosalind Russell - she was doing a Charleston. It was fun.

RM: Did you ever, in watching these performers and kind of rubbing shoulders with them, did you ever get the urge, maybe, that you wanted to perform again?

DJ: Oh, yes. Some.

RM: Did you ever give it a try?

DJ: Well, I sang around a few places in Las Vegas. But nothing to speak of. Well, one time in Phoenix I was singing at a little club down there and a man - I can't remember what his name was - but he had helped push. Wayne Newton. So he wanted to sign me up. But the husband I was married to just said, "Well, she just sings only for me, and I'm not going to go for it."

RM: He didn't want you to.

DJ: No. So I said, "Well, that's it. I'm not going to sing anymore." So I just kind of quit. But when you worked at Caesar's, and you were a goddess and even if you were waiting on Frank Sinatra or somebody, it seemed like you were equal in your being. The only thing that they had more of

than you was money. But you felt that they weren't any better than you are; they were just people.

RM: And I imagine all the people there felt that way, too, didn't they?

DJ: Yes. Because they had some really big high rollers. But they're just nice people. Very nice.

RM: There weren't that many stinkers?

DJ: No. The only one I remember that most people didn't like was Joan Rivers.

RM: People didn't like her?

DJ: Oh, she was bossy: "Hey, c'mere, you!" and that kind of thing. We didn't get treated like that. We just didn't. We weren't used to it.

RM: Do you have any interesting anecdotes from that period?

DJ: Well, there was one cocktail waitress there, who was just madly in love with Clint Eastwood. So Clint Eastwood came - he was in the audience at a show one time, with his wife. So we went and got him. And this girl's name is Barbara Harrison. She still works at Caesar's. His wife was standing off at the side and he went and grabbed her up in the lounge, and bent her over backwards, and gave her a big kiss, you know. And she just screamed [laughs]. Because she had posters of him hanging up in her bedroom, you know. [laughter] So we thought that was funny.

And then they used to have a lot of small cocktail parties. And they had them - a lot of them - in the Frank Sinatra Suite. There's a brass plaque outside and it says something about: "Frank Sinatra Suite from Caesar's - from One Italian to Another." Or something like that. And it's a beautiful suite. It's 2 stories, and has a spiral staircase, and a baby grand piano, and it's really beautiful. One of the bedspreads was all sable, and it just hung on the floor about 2 feet all the way around the bed. And I think there were 5 bedrooms and about 8 bathrooms . .

RM: In the suite?

DJ: In that suite. It's gorgeous.

RM: And they rent that to people, right?

DJ: Well, they had cocktail parties there.

RM: Oh, it was a party place.

DJ: Yes. I worked a lot of cocktail parties. And when I would get off work, I'd go punch out and then I would just go right to the party. And sometimes I had to wear banners and they had a lot

of pictures taken. But I'd work, like, union parties - culinary union parties - in addition to my regular shift.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: Let's see . . . We're talking about your double shifts.

DJ: Yes. Working the small cocktail parties. Some would be for the Culinary Union. [For instance], the man that wrote a book on Howard Hughes would come out and put this book out and it would be just strictly for the press. I can't remember that old man's name. He was 80-some years old.

RM: Well, that was about the same time Hughes was in town.

DJ: Yes. When he came in, that's when the town began to change.

RM: How did it change?

DJ: Well, it went from the Mob to corporations.

RM: Was the town really controlled by the mob?

DJ: Oh, yes. It was wonderful.

RM: What were the good things about it?

DJ: Well, the good things were the people who came to Las Vegas. When I worked at Flamingo, there were only 8 casinos on the Strip - big casinos - Sahara, Riviera, Sands, Flamingo, Dunes, Hacienda, Tropicana. Those were the big ones. And the people that came into the casinos were people with money. They were high rollers. They had money. They were dressed. And we never had any problems. Whether they lost money or not, they never showed that it bothered them.

RM: So that, when the mob controlled it you got a better clientele?

DJ: Much better.

RM: The whole thing was oriented more toward high rollers?

DJ: Well, most of them were cooped on everything, and they just signed everything, and whatever they wanted, they got. Without any questions being asked. They never, never embarrassed them. And the places were real clean - and the carpets were clean - and everything was shiny. It's just not that way anymore.

RM: How would Hughes coming in change it?

DJ: Well, the corporations started buying it. Then they started making each department pay for itself: the keno department had to pay for itself. And if they were furnishing a keno drink and

there were too many drinks, they cut back on it. Then, you could only go in the keno lounge once every hour. They didn't feel like the people there warranted a drink. And before that, it didn't make any difference. You just could freewheel. You could go to the pit, and just go around, and be sure that everybody was happy, and taken care of. And then you couldn't go into the pit until they clapped for you. And you had your station.

RM: Oh. They clapped for you. How did they do that?

DJ: The floor men just clapped twice, and that's to call a cocktail waitress. And then you go . . .

RM: And you had to hear that.

DJ: Oh, yes. You heard that in your sleep. [laughter] And you'd wake up with a start. [laughter] Because you got attuned to listening for that, you know. Because nobody said anything. And then you went to that floor man, and then he told you what table to take. Because every blackjack table had a number. So when you went to work, you had your station, and then that's the number you went to. In some casinos there might be 100 tables. So your station would be: Blackjack 1-12; and somebody else had 12-24.

RM: So when he clapped, he'd tell you that?

DJ: Then you went into the pit, and then he said, "Get 3rd base on number 8," or something. That [would be] the only one you could take, was the 3rd base. And before that, when you could freewheel, then you went to the tables and you emptied the ash trays, and if they wanted cigarettes you got them. They used to have free cigarettes on the tables; they don't even do that anymore. When you could freewheel, if you had somebody who was a good tipper, you were sure that he had whatever he wanted. And their idea was, whether they're winning or losing, keep those people there. Keep them happy. And we never - I never - pushed drinks, or pushed anything. Because you didn't have to. I would watch from the cocktail station, and when I saw somebody had finished a drink and was looking around, I would order them one and take it to them. And pick up their empty glass.

And then, later, it got so a cocktail waitress couldn't even pick up an ash tray. Because that was a porter's job. And everything began to change. If you dropped a glass, and broke it, you couldn't pick it up. You had to call a porter. You couldn't pick up anything. Because that was somebody else's job. Before that, it seemed like you did your work, but everything was done. You know. If it needed to be done, you just did it. You had a lot of fun. You looked forward to going to work, because you had a good time - with the floor people, with the customers, with the bartenders, with the other girls. It was all fun and games, and you made a lot of money, and everybody had a good attitude. Real good.

Then when it changed, they went to volume, and they began to want more \$2 betters, and tourists who weren't astute 21 players. And then they found that they didn't have to give than anything. They could sell it, and they would buy it. So they took the cigarettes off, and if they wanted cigarettes they had to pay for them, and then the only time you could go to the pit

was when they clapped. And the money that they're making now, working 8 hours in tips, is the same money I was making back in '64.

RM: But we've had all this inflation.

DJ: Except now you work harder. Because you have more people. You have bigger stations. You have a whole series of slots that you work. See, when I worked we didn't even have cocktail waitresses to cover the slots. They were kind of a sideline.

RM: Yes; they didn't have many slots, did they?

DJ: It was more crap tables and 21 tables, and roulette. But slots pay so much. And then when slot machines changed, especially when they went to video - computer and video poker - then they just took out 21 tables and put slots in, mainly because of your maintenance and your help. It cost 17 percent a shift to run a 21 table. And they are supposed to hold 23 percent, so it costs you 17 percent to run that table. Then you hire your dealers and pay your taxes - the quarterlies and yearly tax - and the floor space that takes up. Instead of that one 21 table you could have 4 slots, without labor involved. And without dealers stealing from you.

RM: Did you see the industry becoming more impersonal?

DJ: Oh, yes. The people changed. And the clientele became rude. And the dealers changed. You don't find too many happy dealers in town, except the ones that might work at Caesar's, or the real good houses. But they're always looking for a better job.

RM: They used to be happier?

DJ: Yes.

DJ: In the old days each dealer worked for himself, and his own tips. Then they started splitting all the tips every 24 hours, or sometimes by shifts. Then they could be nasty with the customers because it doesn't make any difference; they were going to get their share anyway. Then they hired all the Orientals because Orientals are real fast dealers and they hardly speak English. They don't even know what people are saying, and they don't care. And I've seen dealers who never, ever made one toke - not one dollar, and that really isn't fair to the ones who do. The floor men started saying, "Just shut up and deal." And the more hands. Now, you have to get in so many hands. And I've never dealt in town, but I've worked enough in the pit to know what the dealers had to put up with from the floor men. And if they lost, it was their fault. They'd get them off the table and they'd be surly to them.

RM: But it wasn't like that, then?

DJ: No, it wasn't. It just wasn't. And you really had to be a good dealer. I knew these 2 brothers that came to Flamingo. They stayed in that place probably 16 hours a day for at least 10 days,

just begging for a job. And finally somebody didn't show up, and they let them audition to see if they knew how to deal, or not. And if they got hired they were really happy. Because they don't have any union. But they don't have any security, either. None. You can get fired just as fast as you get hired. And they change dealers all the time.

RM: Did you ever think about doing dealing?

DJ: No. One of the cocktail waitresses, named Donna, went dealing at Caesar's. But at Caesar's, if you worked there, and if you wanted to deal, they had some people - especially Cubans, 4 men - and they had a little room, and they would take you back there and teach you how to deal. And once you got a job at Caesar's - if you wanted to nave up - you moved right in there. They didn't hire outside people. They had a black porter start there, and 6 years later, he was running the hotel. He was over the hotel. Because he had the initiative, and he wanted to work his way up, and he did. And they let you, in there. So if you were a cocktail waitress and you wanted to be a dealer, you could. Or if you were a dealer and you wanted to move, you could. And they took their dealers up and they made them floormen, and eventually they worked their way up to maybe a shift boss, or something. But they stayed within their own family, there. That's why people have been there so long.

RM: Yes. That's a little bit atypical for the other casinos, isn't it?

DJ: Yes.

RM: None of the others do that.

DJ: No. You know, when they hire a new casino manager, then that casino manager brings all his own people in - his floormen and people that he can trust and people he's worked with, and a lot of his dealers. If you're a dealer, and you know people that are in managerial positions, then that's your juice. And wherever they move, that's where you move.

RM: Was the term "juice" used back then?

DJ: Yes. It goes 'way back. A lot of people say "clout," but in Las Vegas it's "juice."

RM: It's "juice" [chuckling]. How long did you stay at Caesar's?

DJ: I only stayed there about a year and a half. I got married and I left. And then - I think I called them and asked about my last check, or something - and they said, "Well, we still have you on the list." Six months, they kept me on the list. Just in case the marriage didn't work out and I wanted to come back, I had my job. And that meant a lot to me. But they do that.

RM: Sounds like you had a really good reputation around town, with your gold card and everything.

DJ: I did. But it was only because I'd enjoyed it, and I did my job, and I was good at what I did. But there are lots of good cocktail waitresses in there. The best in the whole world. And bartenders.

RM: Meanwhile, any singing or anything on the side?

DJ: No. Not then. No, not 'till I came out here and had my own place, and then I did some out here, but just with the bands I get up here. That's all.

RM: When was your first sight of the Amargosa?

DJ: Well, in 1965 I came up to Amargosa Valley to look at a mining property with a geologist. My husband and I owned 10 percent of the mine. I was riding in the back seat of a Lincoln Continental And Norman Kaye brought me out . . . He's a real estate broker in Las Vegas who used to be part of the Mary Kaye Trio. And he drove us all around the valley.

RM: What mine was it?

DJ: It was a bentonite mine. It was just pure bentonite. And there was an overlay of, maybe, 3 feet of silt on top, that's all. So you could open-pit. And as we drove around the valley, somehow I just had a feeling that I had come home, or something. To it. And I thought - maybe I said, I don't know - "Some day I'm going to live in Amargosa Valley." I just loved it.

RM: What was it, that affected you so?

DJ: I think the expanse of it, and the free feeling that I had here. It was also kind of like I'd been here before. It really felt like home to me.

RM: Do you think you had been? You know, you were talking about reincarnation?

DJ: Yes.

RM: You think you were here before?

DJ: Well, yes. I do.

RM: Back in the Death Valley Days?

DJ: No, I think before that.

RM: Before that. As an Indian?

DJ: Long enough ago that it felt like I knew things about the valley, and felt like - and I've never tried it - like I could take you places that I've been before.

RM: That you have never been to.

DJ: That I haven't been to, yes.

RM: Have you tried that?

DJ: No.

RM: But you feel like you could.

DJ: Yes.

RM: So you just had this immediate attraction.

DJ: Yes, immediate. I had liked the desert, and the colors and the permanent feeling it has to it. And it also has a lot of history to it that I like.

RM: So when was your next visit?

DJ: Eight years later, in 1973, I came out to buy a ranch.

RM: What had made you decide to here? You must've been thinking about it.

DJ: Yes. I was thinking about it all the time. But in the meantime I was just living my life, and my husband decided that we would move out, somewhere. We talked about moving to Sandy Valley, just getting out of Las Vegas, but still staying in Nevada. And I said, "Well, let's go to Amargosa Valley." So we came out here one day, looked around, looked at property, and went home, went back to Las Vegas, and then called some people and made them an offer, and they accepted it.

RM: And what property was that?

DJ: Well, it was a ranch owned by Colonel Irwin Schultz and - her name was Dutch - Dutch Schultz; they got the ranch during the Desert Entry Act in '63. They both worked at the Test Site and lived in Las Vegas. And they came out in order to get the property through the Desert Entry Act. So they proved up on 40 acres, and then got the right to 160.

RM: So you bought 160.

DJ: No. We bought 60 because they had divided and sold some during that 10 years. It was at the northwest end of the valley.

RM: It's called the Schultz Ranch?

DJ: Yes. About a year later, we bought another 320 acres. And we grew alfalfa, and moved water lines, and worked hard.

RM: Did you like it?

DJ: Yes, I liked it. We had about 30 fruit trees, and grapes, and . .

RM: What fruit did you raise?

DJ: Well, fruit was anything from almonds, figs, nectarines, apples, cherries, peaches, apricots . .

RM: Did you sell it, or was it just for your own consumption?

DJ: Oh, I sold a lot of it to local people. And I canned, and froze it, and we had a garden, and grapes, and I made my own wine - we had Zinfandels, and California Red, and Thompson Seedless, and Concord grapes. Anything will grow out here. Anything. All you had to do is have a wind break and water. And enough shade.

RM: What did you do with your alfalfa?

DJ: We sold it locally, and we also sold it to people as far away as Sacramento.

RM: Did you have a pivot, or a sprinkler?

DJ: We had wheel lines on some of it. And then we put a pivot on 40 acres of it. But it's hard work.

RM: What it was like for a woman moving out here from Las Vegas? What kinds of challenges did you face, or, what kinds of joys did you experience?

DJ: Well, it was . . . To me, it was kind of like going back to my childhood, because I was going back to what my mother did. We canned and I milked goats. We sold goat's milk, I had 100 chickens, and I sold eggs. It was like reverting back to the way I was raised and it was refreshing. After working at Caesar's and being in that kind of a scene - somewhat glamorous, you felt almost like you were a contract studio starlet because you were always on stage at Caesar's. You had your picture taken 30 times a day with the customers. You were always up. You had to be. And you had to have your best foot forward, and the smiles, and after awhile I think that - of course, with age, too - it gets to be a little superficial and phony. It was good to me to get back to the basics and get my hands in the dirt and into that type of life. Which is the best, anyway.

RM: But, what about the distance, and the heat?

DJ: Well, it isn't any hotter here than in Las Vegas. We always say, "We've got to go to town," and it's 100 miles away. But we would go in maybe once every 2 weeks and make a list of all the places we had to go. We'd do everything, and couldn't wait to get back home. We wouldn't go into the casinos, or anything.

RM: So you just kind of cut that old life off?

DJ: I cut it off. And I was very glad to do it. I got involved in a whole different scene out here. I joined the quilting club and the AVIA, which is Amargosa Valley Improvement Association, and we had a little bowling league. We went to Mercury and bowled [chuckles]. At the Test Site. In the winter. And you did a little more reading, and you made things, like baby quilts. You find that you help your neighbor a lot. We had horses, so we rode every day. In the winter, we would put cattle in the fields. We got, I think, \$15 a head a month for that. So you were always on horseback. It was that kind of life. And then we started putting on gymkhanas out here.

RM: What's that?

DJ: It's like a horse exercise. Where they have barrels . . .

RM: Oh. Yes.

DJ: And then, eventually, I got an arena built, in Amargosa Valley - went through the Parks and Recreation and got money, got a lot of volunteer help - and then we put shows on here, and put state shows on, all-silver shows. We had contestants all the way from 3 years old up to Pete Peterson, who was about 70. All the way through. And we had good shows.

RM: Is there a nice social network here with some of the other women, or the families?

DJ: Yes. When I was on the ranch it seemed like most of my friends were from that end of the valley. There seem to be 2 parts to the valley.

RM: Describe that a little bit, Doris.

DJ: Well, when I had the ranch, the people I associated with all had property, grew alfalfa or onions or something, and had been out here for quite a while - since the '60s. And they kind of took me in, under their wing.

RM Can you mention some names of people who have been here a long time at that end?

DJ: Well, of course there were Dutch and Irwin Schultz. Because they stayed out here. They only moved a mile away. Helen and Charley Holtz; they were here quite awhile. Irene and Mel Fowler, and Tammy and Mary Nickells. Okie and his wife (I can't remember what her name is) - Okie Spears. The Dansbys had a little country store at that end of the valley. And the Selbachs - Neva and Earl Selbaoh

.

RM: Are most of those people still here?

DJ: Yes. And Theo Selbach. I think Theo Selbach was one of the first ones to put his irrigation well in.

RM: And were they all early Desert Entry people, or . . .

DJ: Yes, Desert Entry. And some had come out, I think, even before that. When the Desert Entry Act opened up in '63 Allen Drilling Company from Las Vegas can out, and he ended up with a lot of property out here. They drilled the wells as did Cook Drilling Company. Most of the wells were 350 feet. They all proved up on land.

But then you had other people that came out that had never lived here. But they proved up on the land and got the land. And then they just sat on it. And just pay taxes on it. And it's still there.

CHAPTER THREE

DJ: I was trying to remember a man's name who had an orchestra - his first name was Bobby. He played the trumpet, and when I lived in Las Vegas in the middle '60s he bought the Torch Club out on Paradise Road, and that was the big hangout for everybody. After work we'd go out there, and jazz musicians like Maynard Ferguson came out there. Everybody got up and played - Judy Garland sat on the edge of the stage and sang. We would all leave there and go to Gelo's and eat Chinese food and then we would go home. Gelo's is still there, but . . . Everything changed after that, but it was a big night spot. And the Flame was a hangout where everybody went.

RM: Was there anything else that comes to mind?

DJ: One of the things for me, personally, is this: we're sitting in a small casino that I own a hundred percent of. I'm the only woman in the world who has a nonrestricted gaming license and owns a hundred percent of a casino. If I still lived in Las Vegas, that wouldn't happen. I wouldn't even have the courage or the initiative to start a program like I have, feeling that people out here wanted live gaming, and the expense of it, and I wouldn't have thought I could do it. But when you live in Amargosa Valley and - maybe - in Nevada, you have a feeling you can do anything that you want to do. You're not restricted in any way. You're not restricted by other people intimidating you. You feel like maybe you have more control and . . . I could do anything I wanted to do out here. I know it wouldn't have happened if I'd stayed in Las Vegas.

RM: Why do you think that is? (I have the same feeling about Nevada.) This feeling of openness

DJ: It seems that we do become open. And we become our own person here.

RM: Why is that? Why do you think it happens here and not somewhere else?

DJ: It seems to me that back east - even when I go back to Michigan now - your horizon . . . The way I grew up, my horizon was the woods surrounding our farm, where you probably could see a mile and a half - maybe up on something you could see 3 or 4 miles. We used to look down the road and we would see somebody walking down the road about a mile and a half away. That was our limit. That was our little world. People who live in that little world - as a lot of them do - become as small as their area. It seems like they become small people, they become pinch nosed - like nosy neighbors - they're concerned with everybody else's problems. Here they're not. Out my back door there's nothing that I can see between me and Mt. Charleston, which is probably 70 miles away. There's nothing in between except sagebrush. Not a light pole, a railroad track, or . . . there are roads, but I can't see them. Out my kitchen window, I see all the way to Eagle Mountain, which is about 12 or 15 miles away. There's nothing in between. You're not inhibited by anything. It has to be expansion of the mind.

RM: The mind expands in the open spaces.

DJ: And it makes you open. And it makes you above being critical of your neighbor. You don't even waste your time . . . you don't talk about other people and what they do, because all you say is, "They're living their life." And, "They're doing what they want to do - more power to them." No matter what it is. Other than being a crook or anything. But at least out here it's small enough that you know who all the people are [chuckles]. The good and the bad. And there's good and bad in all of us.

In Las Vegas I think that was part of the gambling business and -because of the expanse of that valley, and the way it used to be. There are too many people for me now, but, still, the people who come there and live, I'm sure, get the same feeling that you can do anything you want to do. Back east, you're in those small communities without mountains, mainly; without the desert. And you have a feeling that you have to have somebody's approval to do . . . your family, or somebody's approval, or somebody's going to disapprove. And out here, you don't find this. People don't disapprove. Nor approve. They just let you live your life. But if you do something, they take pride in it. I get a catalog from the gaming. One [issue] lists every legal gaming establishment in the world. From South Africa, and England, and Germany and . . . all the live gaming - all the race tracks and dog tracks and the off-track betting like they have in New York. And it lists who owns them; who owns what percent in them, including all their corporate offices. I looked through all of it. There are only about 140 or 150 legal gaming establishments in the whole state of Nevada. People think there are a lot more, but there's not. In the world, legal gaming establishments like casinos [number] only about 1500.

RM: And you're the only woman with an unrestricted license.

DJ: There was one who had the Pioneer Club, years ago, but she sold. Now she has a part interest in something in Laughlin.

RM: How does it make you feel, knowing that you're the only woman?

DJ: I didn't realize it until I went and got my gaming [license] in Carson. When we got to Reno we had to rent a car, and there were 2 gentlemen who rode with us; my CPA was with me. One of them was the gentleman who owns the Golden Gate, downtown Las Vegas. Don Ashworth. Caning back, riding in the car, he said, "Doris - you're the only one. Because I know everybody who owns the casinos. And percentages and so on, but nobody owns 100 percent of one of them. But it stated on the agenda that I did. The Gaming Commission has to know if you have any partners, silent or otherwise. The next day, he put an article in the Review Journal about it.

RM: Do you still have the article?

DJ: No, I never even saw it. I just heard about it. People called me and told me about it, but I never did read it.

RM: What you've just said touches on a question I had from reviewing the tape. You mentioned in passing that you had felt bound in Michigan, and that's the reason - you think - that you came west. That this wide open environment attracted you from the very beginning.

DJ: I'm sure it was. And I'm sure that, deep-seeded, that was why I left Michigan, because of too many family ties, too many people running my life; I needed the freedom. I think a lot of people who moved to Las Vegas and people I knew when I lived in Las Vegas came for the same reasons - to get away from the restrictions. No matter what it was: a job, or family, or weather, or what.

RM: Do you think it's still the same? The people who are moving into Vegas now?

DJ: Well, the people moving in now, to me, seem to be more retired, older people, getting away from, mostly, the weather. And because we have low taxes, and no income tax. Taxes are fairly low compared to what they pay. And they like to travel, and it's nice weather here pretty much year-round. At least 10 months out of the year you have gorgeous weather. You can't beat that anywhere.

RM: Did anything else occur to you that you would like to add?

DJ: I think the people who came to work in Las Vegas are a little bit in a mold - the young people who want to be dealers, and cocktail waitresses, and that. They have a different feeling about Las Vegas. It seems like money attracts them. With that amount of money flowing around, some of it's going to rub off on them. A lot of them come with the idea that they're going to make a lot of money. And then they find out they just make a living. But still, as a dealer, you make a good living. And a cocktail waitress makes a fair living. You have to like people in order to work in it. It doesn't seem to me now that a lot of people there like people [chuckles]. A lot of the dealers and such.

RM: Yes; you sure get that feeling, don't you?

DJ: It seems a lot colder now than it was. But on the other hand, some of the casinos don't want you smiling and talking.

RM: They actually tell you not to?

DJ: Yes. As you said, "Dummy up and deal" kind of thing.

RM: [laughs] Yes. Was there anything else that you thought of that we might have left out, or something you'd like to emphasize?

DJ: I think, if you want to get into opportunities in Nevada, it's pretty wide open. It's still the last frontier. It's the only frontier in the United States other than Alaska. I think you could do just about anything you wanted to do out here.

RM: Yes, I've always said that you could do anything in Nevada you're big enough to do.

DJ: Yes; just about.

RM: A little less than it used to be, but it's still there.

DJ: It's more expensive now.

RM: There are more restrictions, too. I went through the last tapes and I have a few short questions. You said that you could remember 32 drinks when you were working at the Showboat. Well, actually you were remembering 64 drinks, weren't you? Because you gave your order and you had to lam where those were, and meanwhile you were picking up the previous order, and that had 32 in it. So you were remembering 64. Is that right?

DJ: Once you called them in then you forgot them. Then when you picked up your tray of drinks that were full . . . say it went to one section of 21. On the 21 table maybe there, was a glass of beer, or a glass with a cherry in it, so you knew the beer went there, and the Tom Collins went there. After you took one order, you remembered what the person drank. Because that was your job.

And you carried a big tray - the biggest tray that you could carry. The big square tray.

RM: I was talking to a cocktail waitress at the Holiday one time, and she was telling me how tired her left arm would get and how, at the end of the shift it would almost be paralyzed. Is that . . . ?

DJ: Yes. It seemed like the tray became part of your arm. You walked fast with it, and you could swing your arm, and nothing ever spilled.

RM: Did you have trouble with your arm being tired, or did it get used to the tray?

DJ: You had a lot of muscle built up in that arm. But one time when I was working at the Showboat, one of the girls worked in the bingo room. A few people in the bingo room drank, but not very many. She took a vacation, and I pulled her shift. You served coffee. Each session lasted one hour and then you had a hour off - and then another session lasted a hour. So you took your coffee - it was in Styrofoam cups - and stacked it in 3 tiers, with big trays. On the top tier you had sugar and little creamers and stir sticks and so on. You went out the door and the bartender poured the coffee, and then you stacked them up - 3 tiers - and out you went. As you went along, the customers had a quarter up there, and you set their coffee down. As you got to know them, you knew they took 2 sugars, you'd put that down and a stir stick, pick up the quarter, go to the next person . . . And if you could, if you had time, you went back and gave refills.

One of the girls, Irene, who worked at Showboat - she was a pretty heavysset girl and she usually worked graveyard - pulled this bingo shift. When she got through with the main floor, then she had to go up a few steps to a balcony where the bingo players were. She was tired [chuckles] because she couldn't quite get through it. So she started up the steps, and she said, "Anybody up here want coffee?" They all raised their hand, and everybody cleared their bingo

boards [laughs] and she didn't work in there anymore [laughs]. So you never said - "Does anybody want coffee?" Because they all said, "Yes!" and everybody cleared their boards. That was hilarious [laughs]. But you made good money working in there, just picking up quarters. If you had 10 cents for every drink that you served, you sure would make a lot of money - a lot of money.

RM: When did the union stop giving gold cards?

DJ: I don't know when they started it, or when they stopped. I would imagine when I had mine they were probably still giving them out, but when I went back to work and she said they only had 15 left, I knew they hadn't given any out for a long time. I think probably they stopped it in the real early '70s.

RM: Do you know where the term "juice" came from?

DJ: Somewhere in the back of my mind I heard it one time, but I've forgotten.

RM: OK. Now, on the last tape you were living on the farm here in the Amargosa Valley. You mentioned that you first saw the valley in 1965 when you came out here to look at a bentonite mine?

DJ: Right.

RM: Did you come back to the valley before you moved out here in '73? DJ: I think I came back one time. After '65, we sold the mining claim. It went into litigation and come to find out that several percentages - too many percentages - had been sold to too many different people. So it went into court. Eventually we sold our 10 percent - of course, the sales could not go through - back to Tex McCall, the man who had discovered the mine in the first place. Then with our percentage, we gave him control, which we felt was only fair. He took it to court and won control back of the bentonite mine. And about 2 months later he died and left it to his brother Vern. I think his brother Vern sold it to Industrial Mineral Ventures. And they're still there.

Most of it started in the early '70s. And the gentleman who runs it -Mr. Hansen - came out here in '73. They experimented with all the different uses for the clay, even to the point that they were going to spray it lightly over tomatoes, because when they grow hybrid tomatoes they don't have enough leaves and it would keep the sunburn off them. It was called something - Bell something - because Charlie Bell invented that. So they were having a lot of inventions, and building the mill. Probably their biggest product turned out to be the sea mud and the drilling mud, because it's a swelling clay. The bentonite here was so pure that one barrel swelled to 9 barrels, which is phenomenal.

RM: Where is the mine?

DJ: From the Stateline here it's about 7 miles - 2 miles north and then about 5 miles east.

RM: So it was a good mine from the beginning.

DJ: Yes. Of course, they added many more claims.

RM: Is that their primary source of clay now?

DJ: Oh, yes. They sell a lot of it to the Test Site. The Test Site, before, was getting all their bentonite out of Wyoming, so it was pretty marketable when they had the gates 40 miles away.

RM: Then you moved out here to the farm, and meanwhile you'd thought about it for a long time, hadn't you?

DJ: Oh, yes.

RM: How long did you stay on the farm?

DJ: About 3 years. And then sold the farm; sold the ranch. I stayed out here for a little while. And at that time I had talked to the previous owners here, Joe and Micki Cohan, about buying this bar. But I felt like they wanted too much money. They wanted cash. They wanted this and that. So I kind of backed out. I stayed out here a while, and then I moved back to Las Vegas.

RM: Oh. Where did you stay? Did you buy another farm?

DJ: Oh, my mother lived out here then.

RM: When did she move out here?

DJ: When I had the ranch. She came out and lived with me, and then she got her own place. I stayed with her a little while, and then I went back to Las Vegas and worked a couple of years at the Silver Bird. I didn't even look for any really good job because of my age. Silver Bird was hiring, so I went there. And it was a fair job.

Micki Cohan kept calling me, asking me to come out and manage it, and I told her I didn't feel like she could pay me enough money to manage it. But then I thought about it, and then she called and she was crying, and they had had it about 8 years at the time and she said that they weren't making any money, and there was another man down the road 5 miles who had bought that bar and turned it into a brothel, and he was taking all their business . .

RM: That was Ash Meadows?

DJ: That was the Amargosa Club, but the name of it was Crystal Palace.

RM: Who was that man?

DJ: That was Gene Ritchie. His wife's name was Sherry.

RM: When did they come in here?

DJ: They must've come in '79 or '80.

RM: That was after Hank Records had owned it.

DJ: Did he own it?

RM: I think at one time, yes. He called it the Mecca Club. Is that the same place?

DJ: Yes. It was the Mecca Club for years. Billie Bettles and her husband Gordon built it.

RM: Who built this? Did the Cohans?

DJ: No; no. There were 2 men in partners that built this. They both had nicknames - Slim Thurman and Okie somebody. And they built it; there was hardly anything here. There was just desert. Dirt.

RM: When did they build it?

DJ: 1963.

RM: I wonder where they expected to get their business.

DJ: I guess just from tourists. There weren't too many people living out here at the time. When I moved out in '73, there were 450 people living in the Amargosa Valley.

RM: Including Ash Meadows.

DJ: Yes. And there were 52 lights - security lights. So you knew there was 52 homes. Now, of course, there are lots of them.

Oh, I'll tell you a little story about . . . This place was just one big open room. Although they probably had bathrooms - I'm not even sure About that. The bar went all the way from the front door to the back door, and by the back door was a range and a grill, where they could cook. They had fish fries and things in here. After they had it, Norine Rooker and her husband, John, came to run it.

RM: Not buy it, but run it?

DJ: I'm not really sure, because you don't get deeds with all the previous owners on them. Some people say they owned it, but you don't know if they worked there, or managed it, or what they did. While Norine was working here . . . Now, the building was 30 feet wide by 50 feet long - cement block building. Norine was near the cash register, and a car came right

through the wall [laughs]. And it came right up to the bar and broke the bar in 2 and pushed the bar right up by the cash register. A young man in an Air Force uniform got out, and he said, "Well, long as I'm here, I might as well have a drink." [laughter] I'm not sure when that happened; it was probably in the '60s.

RM: Did his brakes fail, or something? Was he drunk?

DJ: e was just going about 80 miles an hour. Went right through that wall. You can still see on the other side where they replaced the cement block. Norine never forgets that. She tells everybody about that. And they repaired the bar, and hooked it back together. I have a new bar in here, now.

Then Lee McGowan had Ash Meadows. And then when her - the gentleman - I'm really not sure if it was her husband or not . . . they got caught flying dope into Ash Meadows. So he went to a federal penitentiary. Then Lee McGowan and Charlie Van Camp came over and opened up this bar - they bought it. They must've had it somewhere before 1972.

So they closed Ash Meadows because a bunch of bikers came in and they had a terrible night over there. And the sheriff out here, our lieutenant, went out there with shotguns and shot the place up. So they closed Ash Meadows. Lee came over here - she's the one who put in all the cedar, and made the partition, shortened the bar, made a kitchen, made a storeroom, put cedar around the walls, and she probably painted the outside. And it was called Diamond Lee's.

RM: This place.

DJ: Yes. There was a little neon sign up on top - it had a little diamond - and it said Lee's.

RM: Now, did the McGowans live in the valley, or did they come in from somewhere else?

DJ: Oh, they lived in Ash Meadows. I think Lee had been at Ash Meadows, running it, for a long time. Ash Meadows and the Mustang Ranch are the two oldest brothels in the state. They go 'way back.

RM: When did it begin as a brothel?

DJ: Probably back in the '30s, until the late '60s. Then Lee and Charley Van Camp started having problems, and Lee finally got disgusted and just closed this bar. Stateline. Then Fran York - she owns Fran's Star Ranch in Beatty - bought it for her daughter, Michelle Cohan, and her son-in-law Joe. They must have bought it in '72 or 3. They had it for 8 years and then I managed it for a year, so they owned it 9 years. I think that she paid something like \$10,000 for it.

RM: Who was it who called you up?

DJ: Micki Cohan, Fran's daughter. She wanted me to come out and manage it.

RM: What did you say?

DJ: Well, when I was on the ranch, she called me one time and she was short of help, and I came down and worked a shift for her on a Monday night, I think. But they used to close at 11:00. She came over, and she rang out the cash register and said, 'Where did all this money come from? I never had such a big shift.'

I said, "Well, there were quite a few people in here." Somehow that impressed her, that one shift. That's why she kept calling me. So I wrote an agreement that I would come out. They had leased the place out for six months, before this, to a guy named Nick, who had worked down at Crystal Palace with Gene Ritchie. That is now the Amargosa Club. e came up here for 6 months and he was dealing a little dope, and he was an ex-felon, so I don't think he ever could have got a liquor license anyway. And so he said that he wanted to buy it, but then he never did come up with the money. So they finally took it back. Of course, it cost them money, because they had to redo all their inventory and everything. So I made an agreement with them when I came out that I would manage it with option to buy in 6 months at such a price because their gross was down so low. I said, "I'm not going to come out and work" - because I was on salary - so that I would work as many hours as I needed to. And I didn't feel like working hard and building up their gross and then having them sell it to me for more money. We set a figure, had an agreement. And I came out and worked. That was '81. I came out in February. And about 2 months later I tripled their gross.

RM: What was the secret of your tripling their gross?

DJ: Staying open. They had a day bartender, and a cook, and they would come to work at 10:00 'till 6:00, and then I came in and 'worked 6:00 to 2:00. So when they came in, they wouldn't open the front door 'till 11:30 - 'till the lunch crowd. And I lived behind the bar, and so I would see cars pulling up, and pulling away. I had a lot of trouble with the help, because they resented me. They resented the fact that Micki brought me from town. I didn't know any of them . . . because I didn't know a lot of people in this end of the valley. I would come in at 6:00 and then I would have people who didn't even get done working 'till 1:30. They wanted to come over and party, and I was here till 6:00 and 7:00 in the morning. So then I went and talked to them about staying open 24 hours a day. One part of it was so that I could work an 8-hour shift and have 3 bartenders. They had a grill in the kitchen that they had never had turned on. And it was a \$15,000 unit. I got that fixed, and then I started serving breakfast. So then all the truck drivers and people that went to work at 4:00 in the morning could come over and have breakfast. And I just started building from there.

RM: And tripled it.

DJ: And had dances, a wet T-shirt contest, and a happy hour, and just kept things going. It tripled their gross. They had a restricted gaming license, and they were in slots with a partner in Las Vegas. I think they had 3 slots in here. So then their slot business went up, because I kept change. You cannot have slot players if you don't provide them with change. It was just things like that that. Micki said, "I learned more from you in 2 months than I did in 9 years, Doris."

RM: How did you know all this? From your experience?

DJ: Oh, yes. From experience. And knowing people.

RM: But a lot of people could have all that experience and wouldn't know it.

DJ: But I was always interested in people. And knowing what they want and when they wanted it. And how they wanted to be treated. I've sat on this side of the bar lots of times, too. And I know how I want to be treated. And I don't want to go in there and sit and not get waited on, or not be acknowledged, or not have any fun, or not feel like you're even there. You've got to include everybody. So I did. And then I just started building from there. Then I started staying open 24 hours, that June. filed for my liquor license and my restricted gaming license.

RM: You must've bought it by now, or you knew you were going to.

DJ: Well, I didn't buy it, but then I began to see where I was going to get my money for the down payment, and - if I wanted it - because at first I said, "Well, I'm not going to buy it if I don't think I'm going to be successful out here." Also, at the time, Preferred Equities owned Spring Meadows Ranch. They were supposed to build 10,000 homes. All these things were supposed to happen. So I could see a lot of things for the future. When I went for my licensing it took a long time; for that.

RM: Both liquor and gaming.

DJ: They just told me, "When the gaming approves you, then you're automatically approved by the county," because really, the gaming people do all the investigation, and the county let them do it.

RM: Tell us about what was involved in getting a gaming license.

DJ: It's a lot of paper work. For your nonrestricted, you put up some front money, for them to investigate you. They do a lot of telephone checking and do it by letters. You have to put down there every place you've worked since you were 18 years old, and every place you've lived. You can't leave out anything. And then all your family, even your brother-in-laws, your sister-in-laws, and their family, where they came from, what they do for a living . . . It really is to be sure that there aren't any illegal monies involved. You have to disclose where you get all your money, where your money comes from, how you're going to operate, what capital, and so on.

RM: What made you go for an unrestricted?

DJ: Well, I went for restricted first. Restricted is not more than 15 slot machines. I thought that's all I wanted. I just had this little place here. I had 5 tables, and chairs, and 1 pool table, 4 slots, and a bar. Because the building, you see, was so small. So I bought it, and escrow closed -

almost to the day - from when I came up to manage it. So escrow closed February 5, 1982. So I've had it 5 years, now.

RM: When did you get your restricted license?

DJ: Oh, I got that before escrow closed. Because I really didn't want the bar if I couldn't have gaming. Even restricted gaming. Then in the first year - I got it in February - I knocked out that wall in July, and then by August '82 I had a room where I could use it. I had to have the room. I had to move. I was getting too many people, and I had to 86 a lot of people out of here. But when you have more room, you have less problems. They've got to have some space. I had in mind a lot of things that I wanted to do, and I had to have the room. So I did that the first year.

RM: What were some of the things you wanted to do?

DJ: Oh, like have dances, and I had Tex Williams out here, and I had horseshoe contests, and big Easter egg hunts, and then I began to put on the dinners and banquets for American Borate, and I would have, like, 100 people in here for dinner. Cook steaks for all of them. I have bus tours. They come from Los Angeles and stay at Death Valley. Then they oome up here and have dinner.

RM: How often do they come?

DJ: In the winter about 2 times a month.

The next year I put in for my nonrestricted gaming license. My CPA had at one time been an auditor for the Gaming Commission, which was kind of a stroke of luck. I net him through an attorney Micki and I picked out of the phone book to do our contract because we didn't have any real estate people involved. So we went in to an attorney and had him draw up our contract to buy and sell the business. The attorney introduced me to Jeff Jollcover, and he's still my CPA. e helped me fill out all the papers And then when I went for my nonrestricted, it was more like making a copy of everything I did for my restricted. But I had to pay more money, because then they flew to all the places where I had lived.

RM: They physically checked it out.

DJ: Florida, Michigan, and so forth. They talk to your neighbors, and go through all your financial records, and bank statements, for all the years that you have them. Which I had their back seat full [chuckles]. They go through everything.

RM: And by this time you'd decided that you wanted to go for more than just slots.

DJ: Yes. I wanted live 21. Because a lot of my customers had to go to Beatty or Pahrump. Then, the DUI laws started becoming a little more strict. And I thought, 'Gee, they're going all the way up to Beatty and they're drinking, and they've got that far to drive home. Why not have it right

here - where they can walk home?' From here to the trailer park. My customers encouraged me to have it, too. So I went for it, and got my license with no problem.

CHAPTER FOUR

DJ: The first night that I opened live gaming was July 1, 1983 (because you have to do it on a quarter - you should - because it costs you money if you don't). The people were lined up to play. I had one table.

RM: You were dealing?

DJ: Oh, yes.

RM: Meanwhile, you had to learn to deal, didn't you?

DJ: Yes. I had worked around it a lot, but I had never really actually dealt. I just knew more about what the pit was doing. So I went into Las Vegas and I went to the Lady Luck School of Dealing. But I didn't go very long [chuckles]. And then I came home and took roulette chips and then I taught all my employees, and my sons, how to deal out here, back in the corner, because you couldn't put the table on the floor or near the floor until you had your license. It was in the back. So then, the Gaming Commission came out and checked all of my book work, and my stiff sheets, and my credit slips, to be sure that all my paperwork and all my cameras worked.

RM: You have to have cameras?

DJ: I had to put in the same type of surveillance that Caesar's Palace does. We have a monitor, and I spot check.

RM: And then do they check your films?

DJ: They can. Or they can come out and watch the monitor. It's like a little TV camera. Then you have a monitor, and then you have a switcher, and you switch from one camera to another. In my office. The cameras are in the count room, and your 21 tables, the poker tables . . . The funny thing about your poker table is, the cameras are on the players, not on the dealer, and not on the rack. They're on the players. Because they're more concerned with who's playing poker than the amount of money. But of course, it's their money more than house money, anyway, that's handled. Where on the 21 table it must show the rack, it must show the dealer's hands at all times. But not the players. Not their faces. Just the money. And chips. And there are cameras in the count room and cameras on your cage.

RM: So you've got count room, cage, and everything?

DJ: Yes. And that's all part of the gaming restrictions. But they all make sense. It's just as easy to do it their way as my way. The Gaming Commission have a lot of authority, and a lot of rights. At any time when they walk in here, they can look and see anything that I have that deals with gaming. But everything passed all right. They come out - oh, once or twice a year, counting my slot machines. And I pay my taxes every month, and . . . So I don't have any problems.

RM: You mentioned that you have 3 children.

DJ: Yes, 2 boys and a girl. Both the boys live here. My daughter lives in San Diego, because she likes to live near water. But we're very close. I'm close to all my children.

RM: Are you? How old are they?

DJ: [chuckles] My daughter will be 30 in May. And .

RM: Is she married?

DJ: Yes. She had 3 children. And I have a son that's 37 - born in '49 he'll be 38 in October. Isn't that awful? When your kids get older than you are. Terrible. And then another son will be [laughter] 34 in August. Oh, lord.

RM: And they both are involved in the gaming end of the business?

DJ: One of my sons - Winn, the oldest one - worked some security in town.

RM: In Vegas.

DJ: In Las Vegas. And he's very good with people, and he's big. I taught him how to deal. And I taught my other son, Boonie, how to deal. And he also is a good poker dealer. But they could not handle it. They would deal - because it was, like, their mother's money. And if the tables lost they'd go home, and they'd walk the floor, and they couldn't sleep. And I told them, "You're going to get ulcers. You can't do that." It's a gamble for me, as well as it is the customer sitting there. And I tell them, "If you don't have winners, you're not going to have any players." But they just couldn't - maybe because I'd been around it so many years that I knew if people win, they'll come back. You hold your percentage. That's all. You don't hold all of it. If somebody buys in, you can't possibly hold it all. And you don't expect to. Some of them win, some of them lose . . .

RM: So gambling . . . It's very different for you, as opposed to somebody at Caesar's, isn't it. Even one of the executives. But in this case, it's your money, isn't it?

DJ: Yes. It's my money.

RM: It doesn't bother you?

DJ: Oh, no.

RM: Because you didn't used to gamble a lot, did you?

DJ: No. I used to play a little bit of 21, once in a while. More to relax than anything. I could play it for a long time and have fun doing it. I never gambled to make money, or to really lose a lot of money. But the gambling industry is fascinating. It kind of gets ahold of you. You wouldn't want to do anything else. I wouldn't ever have a business if I didn't have gaming involved in it. A bar or anything. But, it's true that it is my money. And it comes right out of my vault [chuckles] to their hands.

RM: Profit and loss.

DJ: Right [chuckling]. You're supposed to hold somewhere around 23 percent, and at the end of the month, that's when you really worry about it, and you add everything up, and most of the time I would hold upwards to 35 percent. In fact, my CPA asked me, he said, "How do you hold such a big percentage?"

And I said, "I think it's because I'm there. All the time."

RM: You're not being cheated, you mean, or . . .

DJ: Well, no, it's not that I'm being cheated, but the people are a little hesitant to just pick up their winnings and walk out. Because I'm there. It makes them feel a little guilty, I think. They're more apt to stay a little longer.

RM: They're a little less likely to quit when they're really ahead.

DJ: Yes. Because most of the casinos are very impersonal. They don't think about it being anybody's money. But here they know it's mine.

They'll look at me and say, like, "Well, Doris, I'm ahead, but I'm going to quit."

And I'll say, "Go ahead." But, it's like they need my permission, almost. I say, "Go ahead. That makes up for the \$200 or \$300 that you dropped a month ago." And just try to have a good attitude about it, even if you're losing. Because I think a bad attitude leaves everybody out in the cold. And attitude has a lot to do with it. Knowing some of the things that I learned about gaming was just from working cocktails in the pit, and watching the people's attitude, and also how they wanted to be treated.

When people lose, I've told them, "Hey, you're having a bad streak of luck. Go on home. Come back in a couple of days. Your luck might change." It's not your job to sit there and take their paycheck. You don't want to do that. And they know you don't want to. And in town, it's just more impersonal.

RM: What do you think about luck? How do you look at luck?

DJ: You make your own luck.

RM: Even in cards?

DJ: Well, some nights, everything you do is good, and other nights, everything you do is bad. Now, whether that's luck or not, I don't know. But you just get out of there. You don't have to sit there and play. If the cards are coming to you, sit there. But that's the deal of the cards, and the shuffle of the cards, and the way the cards come out, and who knows what that is. That's probably just odds.

RM: But you feel, in life, you make your luck.

DJ: Oh, yes.

RM: Can you elaborate a little bit?

DJ: Sometimes I always felt it was a fault of mine. But I would never stay in a circumstance where I was unhappy. I would just pick up and move. Because I felt, life is too precious and short. I'm not going to spend it unhappy. And when I was married, I was unhappy. That's why I'm not married. It seems to me that the men in my life have always held me back. And I've not been able to do the things I want to do. They want me to do what they want to do. And I lose my individuality, and so I find that maybe I'm not the happiest person, but I'm the most contented one I know. Because I can do what I want to do. That's important to me. I hear people complain about that they're unhappy with this person and I look at them like, "Why don't you do something about it?" You know, "Change your life! Change your lifestyle." Because it seemed, to me, always fairly easy to do. You just change it. And I tried to instill that in my kids: Don't ever stay anywhere where you're miserable. Don't ever do it, because the grass is greener sometimes. And if you don't like your circumstance, do something else. Because nobody has to say you have to stay the way you are. You have to grow, and the only way you're going to grow, in your life, and change, and go through with your normal, natural changes that we go through, is by moving with it. Go with the flow. And I try to go with the flow. And it's kept me, I think, with a better outlook. I never wanted to be bitter, or look back and feel like somebody did me wrong. Nobody does me wrong. I do it to myself. Because I let that happen. So you can't blame other people for it.

RM: Have you always had this, or did you kind of come to this way of thought?

DJ: No, I think I've always had that. I think so. I have kind of an analytical mind. 'Things are pretty much black and white to me (sorry to say, but I don't have very many shadows - it's either one way or the other). And the same way with people. I either like people, or - I have a few people that I dislike. You have to accept people for what they are, and try to understand them, and try not to self-analyze yourself very much. Because you get confused [laughs].

RM: You can think too much, can't you.

DJ: Oh, yes. You try not to.

RM: Could you give me a history of the clay business in the valley as you understand it?

DJ: Of the bentonite?

RM: The bentonite and the other clays.

DJ: Well, mostly that's the bentonite mine. There are some other clays in there. There are, I think, 100-and-some different types of clay. And bentonite's one of them. But American Borate mined colemanite, which is in the borite family.

RM: That's borax, isn't it?

DJ: Yes. And then that made Corning Ware dishes. And then the other mineral that they mined - I can't think of the name of it -

RM: ABC.

DJ: American Borate. It makes Pink Panther insulation. Makes like a fiberglass. That's mined in Death Valley at the Billy Mine.

RM: The Billy Mine. And then they brought it over here, because laws are more liberal in Nevada

DJ: Yes.

RM: Did they do the colemanite here, too?

DJ: Oh, only colemanite.

RM: The colemanite. But what about the Pink Panther?

DJ: Well, that was just separated. It's all sand.

RM: It was all in the same rock.

DJ: Some of it, yes. Sometimes they would hit a vein that had more than others.

RM: What do you know about the history of that operation?

DJ: Well, Tenneco had it first in the early '70s.

RM: Did Tenneco buy it?

DJ: I think they built it. But it was a small operation.

RM: They built the mill.

DJ: They built the mill, yes. And they open-pit mined in Death Valley. At first they open-pit mined. Then they had some Act of Congress that made them stop because it was in a National Monument. So they had to go underground. They hired Centennial - a company that just sinks shafts - hard miners. Hard drinking, hard living, hard everything. Hardworking. They were here in - probably in '77, '78, something in that area. And they sank the shaft. For many years they worked above ground, and had to revert all that open-pit mining back into its natural state. They even had to bring in colored rock to put on it, and everything. Cost them a lot of money to make it look just as natural as they could.

RM: Now, where is the Billy Mine? Do you know? Have you ever been to it?

DJ: Oh, yes. I've been underground. When you leave here, you go 7 miles south, and then you go about 20 miles. Down into Death Valley.

RM: You take that Death Valley road that goes to Furnace Creek?

DJ: Out of Death Valley Junction. Now it's underground, I don't know about 1800 feet, maybe 2100 feet. It's huge.

RM: OK, Tenneco came in the early '70s. And initially it was open-pit, and then they had to go underground. Then, what was the next step?

DJ: Well, I was trying to think when they sold it to American Borate. They had it 5 years. Because that would be under 5 years - their tax write off. RM: Oh, that's the reason Tenneco had it. The tax stuff.

DJ: American Borate had it 5 years. They closed it last June. '86.

RM: So Tenneco must've sold it about '81?

DJ: Yes. They must've. American Borate was here, though, when I came out to manage the bar.

RM: So they had already bought it from Tenneco. Tenneco was gone when you came.

DJ: Yes.

RM: Was American Borate a subsidiary of any big company, or were they a company in themselves?

DJ: Well, Owens Corning owns 51 percent of American Borate. So Owens Corning is the head, I guess. In Virginia.

RM: When you came here, how many people was ABC working?

DJ: Well, I think probably about 300. And then in about the next 2 years they went up to almost 500. And a lot of the people lived here.

RM: And they closed down in '86 and went down to nothing, right?

DJ: Yes. They closed the mine in April of '86 and they closed the mill in June '86.

RM: Where did all these workers live?

DJ: They lived at Stateline Trailer Park and they had a big mobile home park in California at the 3,000 foot level, between here and the mine, called Valley Crest. They must have had - oh, 100 mobile homes down there. Some of them lived in Furnace Creek, and some lived in Pahrump. A few even came from Beatty. And worked.

RM: How many lived here in Stateline Trailer Park?

DJ: There probably were about 150 mobile homes there. And then the people began to move out, and buy a piece of land, and put a well in it, and buy 5 acres, or an acre and a quarter, or this and that. And have animals. RM: Did the people here, in Stateline, work primarily at the mill?

DJ: Yes. The ones who could. Most of the ones who lived at Valley Crest worked at the mine. Because they were closer to work.

RM: What type of people were they?

DJ: Well, the people reminded me of the factory workers back in Michigan, when I was young. Like some of my uncles and that. They lived paycheck-to-paycheck. They were fairly heavy drinkers. If they had \$100 left over at the end of the month, they went and bought something that had a \$100 payment on it. And they bought anything and everything they could. Motorcycles, and VCRs, and video cameras and . . . They spent money, they gambled.

RM: Were they heavy gamblers?

DJ: Oh, yes. They got paid on Thursday; by Monday they were broke. And I cashed big checks. For some of them, for 2 weeks, their take-home pay would be like \$1400. They made a lot of money.

RM: How would you describe the social life? What kinds of things went on socially - churches, schools, organizations? And what did the women do?

DJ: Oh, we had softball teams, and I used to have aerobics classes over here. A lot of the women got together - the ones who had little kids - kind of had their thing. And the older women who didn't have kids kind of had theirs. But most of the warren worked.

RM: Where did they work?

DJ: At the mine and the mill.

RM: So there wasn't any sex discrimination, as far as working at the mine.

DJ: No. Because it went Teamsters Union. Because you had women driving heavy equipment, and muckers.

RM: Did the majority of families have 2 incomes, then?

DJ: Yes.

RM: The jobs with Teamsters must have been pretty good pay.

DJ: Oh, yes. They all had 4-wheel drives, jeeps, and cars.

RM: Was there a church, or anything, in the area? Any church activity?

DJ: Not in this immediate area. There are churches in the valley. And they did put up a Catholic church.

RM: The kids went to school over at the valley school, didn't they?

DJ: Yes.

RM: And then for high school they went to Beatty?

DJ: Right. So we had 240 kids enrolled in our little school here, and now it's down to 87. It's a big drop. We're losing another teacher this year already because of the enrollment. It's had a big effect on the valley.

RM: How did you see the closure of the mine personally, and how did it affect you as a business woman?

DJ: Well, at first I was devastated. Because they talked . . . Everybody would say, "Well, don't worry, Doris. There's 30 years of ore down there. It will never close. It may cut back some of the time, but you will never see it close." And so I felt very secure; stable in my little business here. I had 13 employees. And I didn't pull a shift behind the bar. I pulled the shifts overseeing the pit and did mostly promotional work, and did a lot more advertising. So when the mine closed I had to, of course, cut back on the help. And now I'm down to 3 employees, and I don't advertise, and I don't do a lot of things, because I don't have the money to do it. So I thought, "Well, I'll just tuck in my tail and try to keep it open, and . . . keep it going." And then the only other thing that I thought about doing would be, close graveyard.

RM: You're still open 24 hours.

DJ: I'm open 24 hours, but it's more security than anything. Because Mary Nichols next door has been broken into 5 or 6 times, and they break open the slots, and in the bar I have about \$76,000 worth - with the bar and the slots. So if they ruin them - they're \$8500 apiece, for those slot machines. So there's over \$100,000 in here in slots.

RM: And you don't have insurance.

DJ: Not when you're closed.

RM: Oh, so when you're open, your insurance is good?

DJ: Yes. But when you're closed, you're not. Because you're too far. It takes 30 minutes for a deputy to get out here. And it's a volunteer fire department. And they just will not insure you against theft. They said, "If the Sheriff's Department made a round" - like, every half hour they drove by, or something - they would insure it. But, they don't. Because a lot of times they don't even have anyone working graveyard.

RM: So you just stay open all the time.

DJ: Yes. And the graveyard people - it's security, and they do a lot of cleaning. If somebody is here, you're not pushing them out the door and closing. I have no locks on my doors. None. I couldn't close if I wanted to. So it keeps me from closing, and it's probably a good thing. I lost 80 percent of my business. My gross went down 80 percent. So I pay my bills.

RM: But your profit hadn't gone down that much.

DJ: No. Bottom line is still about the same. But it's the slot machines that mainly keep me going.

RM: If it wasn't for them, you'd be in trouble.

DJ: Yes. In the winter, I get some tourists going into Death Valley. Summer is your hardest time, because business drops off real bad. I think I've only had maybe 2 or 3 graveyard shifts that didn't ring up anything on the cash register. Sometimes it's \$7 or \$8. Or \$20, or \$30. But it's something. In the summer, of course it's hot, and the tourists who do come through are a lot of French people and Europeans, and it's people on very low budgets. They do not spend any money. None. And then, the local people. They go on vacations, they have their children home, they spend a lot of time out at the lake, they go camping, they do things, but they don't come to bars.

RM: What kind of a lake?

DJ: We have a little lake back here called Crystal Lake. It's a man-made lake at Spring Meadows.

RM: How do you see the future of borax? Do you think it'll ever come back?

DJ: Well, they had it for sale for \$65 million. And now they say it's not for sale, and being that they're getting the product in Turkey . .

RM: They buy it in Turkey now.

DJ: Yes. Because they get it in Turkey cheaper. And I think that it will reopen. Maybe on not such a major scale, but it will reopen. The valley has always kind of gone up and down, and seen good times, then it kind of comes back. But it still has that little bit of growth that stays, always. And now I think there are still about 800 people out here. Something like that. We were up to a little over 1100 in that last census that was taken.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: So that they're importing the colemanite - or whatever - from Turkey?

DJ: From Turkey. As I understand it, General Electric went to Turkey and put several million dollars into building them a big mill. Then, when they couldn't pay General Electric back, General Electric took the product in lieu of money and sold it to Owens Corning. I don't know all the other angles of it, because I don't go to their meetings [laughs]. A lot of that is just hearsay - what comes in the bar and goes out of the bar.

RM: Yes. Well, what about . . . Could you give me a review of the history of clay in the valley? You've mentioned a little bit about how you were kind of involved in one of those mines. I guess it's the big mine?

DJ: Yes, the bentonite.

RM: Could you give me kind of a sweeping view - in as much detail as you know - of the mining of clay in the valley. When it began, kind of where it's going, and how you see it.

DJ: Tex McCall discovered the bentonite mine. He lived in Nevada for a long time. When I knew him he was probably in his 70s. Just a nice man. And all he did was prospect. But he never had anything.

RM: Did he live in the valley?

DJ: He lived in Las Vegas in a little tiny shack. And all he ever wanted to do was be out in the field and prospect. I've known quite a few prospectors and they're kind of a breed all unto themselves. One man I know, named Jack, is a full-blooded Indian. That's all he's ever done, is prospect. But he can give you a lot of ideas. On how to prospect, and everything. They're very colorful people. But somehow Tex had sold it. They always sell them, they never get any money, and then other people stall them and they end up with nothing.

RM: It's an age-old story, isn't it?

DJ: Yes.

RM: Initially Tex McCall discovered this mine. Then what happened? DJ: Well, then, through the years it was probably bought and sold, and then Norman Kaye got involved with it with several other people in Las Vegas. And then they would all try to sell pieces of it - for money. Any time they needed money, they'd sell a piece of a mine. People still do it today. And then it ended up in court. Tex McCall got it back, and - I suppose his brother must have been the one to sell it to Industrial Mineral Ventures.

But as far as the clay families, there's a lot of talc out here. I really can't go into the minerals. Over by Ash Meadows, now (what's the name of that company?) Anaconda was in

there, and then they sold it to another company in there now, from Australia. They are mining some rare earths out there. So there's a lot of different things. And bentonite is used for anything from cosmetics to the base of toothpaste and paint, to the sea mud, and drilling mud.

RM: Cherry pies? [laughs]

DJ: Yes. Cherry pies and candy bars! [laughs] It sure swells up nice.

RM: When you first bought your farm out here, what was the status of the mine?

DJ: It was just beginning.

RM: Was that IMV then?

DJ: That was IMV. That always has been. But they make a profit there. It's a real good company. But they keep employees at a minimum.

RM: Well, how many workers do you think they had when you first moved out here?

DJ: Oh, probably 30. They probably have 65 now, something like that.

RM: Sixty-five now. Are they cut down a little bit from where they were because of the oil, or are they pretty much where they were?

DJ: Well, there for awhile they hit a slump, but then they did something else, which I really don't know enough about to talk about. But they take some steroids or something and they mix it. They take animal fat and bring that from Chicago and they mix it with the bentonite and it makes a product that will not absorb water. But that throws water off. So it's a whole new system, now. And they sell that by the pound. It's real expensive. They just kind of hit a reverse on it, so now they sell both.

RM: Flipped the coin.

DJ: Yes. But that really saved the company and made it very profitable. I went underground at the Billy Mine and spent 8 hours, just so I could know what my customers are talking about. What a jack-leg was, and a mucker. From a "dasco" to the "alpine" to a lot of terms and phrases that they use that I wanted to know.

RM: Sure. So you really have made an effort to get to know your customers, in the sense of seeing where they work and everything.

DJ: And then, when they said that they worked hard all day, I could call them a liar. Because I'd say, "Oh, you didn't work hard. You were doing that. [laughter] I know what you were doing! You were in that drift, sleeping!" [laughter]

RM: Well, in terms of employment, then, they're not near the impact on the valley that the ABC was.

DJ: Well, it seems like people get a job there and they stay. They have very little turnover. They don't pay a great deal of money, but the working conditions aren't bad, and the people just stay there.

RM: Yes. Where do most of the clay mine people live? Do they live in the valley?

DJ: They live in the valley. All of them. The Industrial Mineral Ventures bought some property so that they could acquire water rights, and then they built a trailer park, where they put their people. Eventually they sold them the land, so that they all have their own land now, and mobile homes.

RM: Where is that?

DJ: It's down the Mecca Road about 5 miles. That's where most of them live. And then they have other mining property: some of it back up in here west of the bar and they have some mining properties up in there - claims. But there's a lot of prospecting and a lot of mining goes on in this area. RM: What other mines do you know about that seem to have an impact on the valley?

DJ: Well, there's the Little Vanderbilt Mine over here, and they employ about 6 people.

RM: And that's over in the Funerals?

DJ: Yes. Right at the base of it. It's a clay mine. I think clay and talc.

RM: Do they process their own?

DJ: Not here. I'm not even sure where they ship it. But they take it all out.

RM: Are there any other clay mines that you know about?

DJ: No, not in this area.

RM: So those are the only 2 clay operations.

DJ: Yes.

RM: How about any gold mines, or silver mines, or anything like that. Do you know anything about those?

DJ: No. They're all up by Beatty. Saga is the nearest one to us. Then up in Round Mountain . . . all over.

RM: How do you see the agricultural picture in the valley?

DJ: Well, alfalfa grows wonderful out here. And it's real high in protein, and it is so rich that they have to mix it with other things to feed. Because it's just too good. But you can't afford to grow it because of the cost of the water. And your power. You just can't do it. So now, a lot of people out here are going into pistachios and fruit trees because they take less water. And I see alfalfa just going out, entirely. And we used to be a big producer. It's because of the power.

RM: Oh. I heard that the water is closer to surface here than it is in a lot of places.

DJ: Well, the water is - because of the underground river, Amargosa River -there's plenty of water. But most of the irrigation wells are 350 feet deep, and even on our little ranch we had a 30 horsepower motor to bring that water up and give you pressure. But it runs continuously. Twenty-four hours a day you have to water. At one spot or another. If you're doing several hundred acres like the Stewart Ranch, their power bill is over \$10,000 a month.

RM: Where's the Stewart Ranch?

DJ: It's down at the end of the farm road. Marv Stewart was a Canadian who came down and built that ranch. e had cattle on it. He raised exotic cattle and did all artificial insemination and sold sperm all over the world, from his bulls. Then he went into raising his own feed. Because before that, he bought it. But that was when power was cheaper, and you had a minimum amount that you paid, and then you paid it all year 'round. But then when they went per kilowatt, it just killed the farmer. And so now if you want to farm, and keep your water rights, you're going to have to plant something that doesn't take much water.

RM: Can you lose your water rights here?

DJ: Yes.

RM: Is that what they're saying?

DJ: Yes. You can lose them. And the State Water Resources people have a lot of power. They made this area a designated area, meaning that we don't have any water. And there can be no more water rights given. Ever.

RM: Why? Apparently there's a lot of water in the valley, isn't there?

DJ: There's plenty of water. And in Ash Meadows, there's two aquifers, one in the Amargosa Valley side, and one in the Ash Meadows side.

RM: It's 2 different water systems.

DJ: It's 2. But they claim that it's one, and that there isn't any water. And they have to go on their say-so. So that's why, after they closed the Desert Entry Act, they won't reopen it. And sometimes . . .

RM: Are they really trying to get the water for Las Vegas, do you think?

DJ: That I don't know. A lot of people say yes; that that's where it's going. And other people say they want all of the people out of the valley, here. Either the Test Site wants it, or somebody wants our valley, and they want us out of here. And the way to get us out is to take our water. Then they give you so many months, or, like, by such a time, if you don't have a crop, they're going to take your water rights. And it's caning to that now.

RM: The whole pupfish thing hurt you, didn't it? Because there could have been a whole community over there. And now, it's just fish.

DJ: Yes. It hurt the whole valley. Because of the tax rate. When we built our buildings, we based that on a tax base, and that was when Preferred Equities was still there. And then, when it went by the wayside and U.S. Fish & Wildlife came in - when it's a government entity, they have to only pay 75 percent (usually 75 to 90 percent) in lieu of taxes. And if they don't have the money, they can pay less. So it's nothing . . . It's not a tax base that you can really rely on. And it varies year-to-year.

RM: So in losing that tax base, then your taxes went up.

DJ: 'Way up.

RM: So in effect you're subsidizing the pupfish.

DJ: Yes. In a way, we are.

RM: Did your taxes double? And are you talking county taxes or local taxes?

DJ: Local. When I bought this bar, the taxes were, I think, somewhere around \$460 a year. And last year, they were \$2600. And this year they're going to go up a lot. So this year they'll probably be close to \$4000. Just for this bar.

RM: That's just the local taxes.

DJ: Yes. That's what I have to pay the county.

RM: Wow. So you have to sell a lot of beer, just to pay. . .

DJ: Yes. It hurts, especially now. So, all the assessed valuation - it went down about 3 million dollars in our area this year. So our budget went down - to run our town on. It went down a lot.

RM: What do the town taxes pay?

DJ: We take care of the multi-purpose building, and the library, and the clinic - right now, the Rural Health Consortium, take care of that. But we pay the debt on the building. But the Rural Health Consortium pays the supplies and the salaries and things. But we pay 3-1/2 employees. Out of that money. And buy all the supplies, and pay the bills, and pay the debt. Which is a lot of money. And when they put up the bonds to build the building, the people voted on having a 10-year debt, instead of 20, because of the amount of interest that you had to pay. So it made the payments higher.

But I think that the valley will be here, and as for the people who are here now - a few more will leave, but a few move in. We've had a couple families move in who work at the Test Site, which is encouraging. And I think it will come back same way.

RM: You said that there's about 800 in the valley now?

DJ: Yes.

RM: And there were 1200?

DJ: Yes. Close to 1200, when we did the census.

RM: Actually the drop has not been that much, considering the huge employer that went under.

DJ: Yes, except that it seemed like the people that we lost were the people who supported the businesses, and the people who had the kids in school. The people who are retired, and who don't come out and eat or gamble or drink . . . They stayed. So that's where we lost.

RM: Yes. So you lost the high economic segment of the valley.

DJ: Yes. We lost the auto parts store, and the laundromat, and the grocery store - those are things we lost. And money for the school, money for the library.

CHAPTER SIX

RM: You had same questions, material, that you'd thought of.

DJ: Well, I want to talk a little bit about the housing in this whole area. People come out here and ask why there are no homes, and how came there are so many mobile homes. It's because of no financing. Because you're too far from the city. It took Eleanor Van Patton about 7 years to finally get an approved FHA loan. Her husband worked at the Test Site for many years and they had good credit. They finally got a loan, and built a home out here.

RM: On the valley side?

DJ: Yes. On the valley side. And built a nice home with a swimming pool, and it was one of the first real houses that other people just hadn't kind of thrown together. It's a nice house, with air conditioning and so on.

Back in World War II, down in Death Valley they had the American Japanese Prisoner of War Barracks. After the war they sold all those barracks. You could go down and buy one for two or three hundred dollars. A lot of the people here went down and moved them up here, so a lot of permanent buildings here are made out of those barracks buildings. In fact, the Coach House bar was an old barracks building, and the Shamrock brothel had been a schoolhouse in Death Valley Junction, and at one time it served as a church. And he bought the building and moved it up here, and now it's a brothel. And that was about in 1948, I think, when Bill Martin opened that Shamrock brothel. And that was the only one between Las Vegas and Beatty for a long time. Now there's a couple more.

But that's why you see all the mobile homes. It's just all because of financing. When they repossess their mobile homes it's very difficult to get any financing. Even a hundred miles from town. It really is.

RM: You can't even finance a mobile home.

DJ: Well, you can. Because they can always come out and take them back. Then they resell them and everything. But it's hard.

RM: What's the status of the ABC trailers up here?

DJ: About 6 of them are occupied. And there's probably still about 50 or 60 mobile homes in there. But that land that that mobile home park is on is a mining claim. And they got the rights to put housing on there for their employees. But it has to be part of the mill.

RM: Who owns the houses now? Are they just going to leave them there?

DJ: Oh, no, they'll sell it. When they sell the mine, or reopen the mine, they'll use them again. Then the other thing that I wanted to touch on a little bit was the original Amargosa. The town of Amargosa was up on Highway 95 and Highway 160 just north of Johnnie about 10 miles. And

Johnnie - they had a post office. I don't know if Amargosa was there long enough to have a post office or not, because some of those towns would have a post office for about 6 weeks. Then they would go bust and it would be gone. Then when they put in Highway 95 - when they expanded it somewhat, and the shoulders and everything - that's when they knocked out all the foundations and everything that was there.

RM: So that Amargosa was on the old LV&T Railroad?

DJ: Well, it probably was, because it was on that side of the road. Because the Tonopah Tidewater - T&T - came down from Beatty all the way through this valley from the northwest.

RM: Whereas the one from Vegas . . . I think it cut through that pass where the road is right now. The road - 95 - cuts over and goes past Mercury.

DJ: Well, sometimes as you're going into Las Vegas it's there on the right hand side - the railroad space. You go along it for miles, and you can see it. In fact, the people built houses and floors and everything out here out of the old railroad ties. And on the ranch, when I was clearing that 40 acres, I found big railroad spikes all over. Right on the back end of it.

And also, this valley - it's only been about 10,000 years that it hasn't been covered with water. So on the ranch, I used to find clam shells - whole, complete, still together. The land is so untouched out here. And that's why it has so many minerals in it. It's full of minerals. It's never been soured, like land back in the East that you have to rotate crops on to try and put something back in your soil. Here, there's never been anything taken out of it. The only problem we have here is aeration because you don't have any angle worms or anything to aerate your soil for you. So your main problem is that everything doesn't get root bound.

But then, this whole area was just a large Amargosa Desert. It wasn't called Amargosa Valley. It was all Amargosa Desert. And that extended down into California, and into Shoshone. Shoshone still has "Amargosa Days" because they're part of the Amargosa Desert.

RM: Have you been to those?

DJ: Oh, yes. It's a yearly celebration, and they have a good art show, street dancing, a tailgate swap meet, barbecues, and a driller's contest.

And I used to have them here, too, when the mine was open. You get this huge rock, and then you mark it off into squares. Then you take a jack-leg, which is about 6 feet long. And then they have to start their own hole, and then when they say "Go!" you have to see how deep a hole you can penetrate in that rock, in such a length of time; like, they give you about 3 minutes. And they're real heavy and awkward to operate. You have to be real strong to operate them. They just straddle them and ride them -right into that rock. It's fascinating. And it's a good contest. I always thought it was one that should have been on "Real People." You don't see it anywhere else. I never had, till I came out here.

RM: Where did you get the rock?

DJ: Oh, they get it out of the desert or near the mine, but it has to be a real solid rock. It's real hard to drill into. They're smooth on the outside, so they have a hard time getting started. Once they get started, of course, they go right through it.

RM: On the Amargosa Days in Shoshone. What part of the year does it usually occur?

DJ: I think it's in the fall, sometime in October.

RM: Is it mainly attended by local people, or does it get a lot of tourists from Southern California?

DJ: Well, some tourists are on their way to Death Valley at that time. But it's a lot of local people. All of Amargosa goes down there. And Pahrump. It's a big day for them. They raise money for one thing or another. But our water, and our desert, extend down into there. And then when we went from Amargosa Desert to Amargosa Valley, in 1981, when we became an unincorporated town, and changed our name from Lathrop Wells to Amargosa Valley, most of the population in Amargosa Valley at that time lived on this end of the valley. And it is 16 miles for me to go to Lathrop Wells to get my mail. So it's a 32 mile trip for me.

RM: Just to get the mail.

DJ: And we felt like we were so far away from Lathrop Wells, we were pretty much divorced from it. So we wanted to change the name. And it has a brothel up there. When you went to Las Vegas, and to a shop, and you went to buy a dress, and you told them you were from Lathrop Wells, they immediately thought that you worked in the brothel, were a madam, or had some connection: "Ah, Lathrop Wells." And their eyebrows went up. A lot of the women here didn't like that.

RM: So that was one of the motives behind the change?

DJ: Yes. One of them.

RM: Were you involved in that name change?

DJ: No, I wasn't at the time. Susan Jones and several women out here were doing it, but they just asked what you wanted the name to be. Did you want to leave it Lathrop Wells, or Amargosa Valley? And then we signed petitions to get it changed. I really wasn't involved in it - in doing the paper work or anything on it.

RM: Well, is Lathrop Wells still called Lathrop Wells?

DJ: It took us about 4 years to even get any signs put up on Highway 95 and take the Lathrop Wells signs down. The state said they wanted to leave the Lathrop Wells signs there, because it was a site on the map. A point where the road turned. It was on all the maps. So it took that

probably about a total of 5 years, and now when you buy a map, Lathrop Wells is not on there. Now it's Amargosa Valley. But they still leave the Lathrop Wells Rest Area signs, because that still is a landmark. And that really should be left there. Some of the townspeople, when they come to the town meetings, ask that that sign be taken down, but we've never pushed it, because it is a landmark. If people have been out here before, then they know where they're at. If you completely take away the name they get very confused. They really don't know where they are.

RM: What is the post office in Lathrop Wells called? Is it called Amargosa Valley?

DJ: Yes. It's Amargosa Valley. That got changed right away. They came and took the sign down and then they had articles in the paper, how Lathrop Wells died and Amargosa Valley was reborn - or, was born - all in one night. And they put up the sign. Now the people in Lathrop Wells, who live there, resented the fact that we changed the name. And some of them still say, "Well, when it's all said and done, we're going to change our name back."

RM: Because they're within the town's limits, aren't they.

DJ: Yes. They're in our town limits. So it legally probably has to stay Amargosa Valley, but still, the people say, "Well, I've got to go up to Lathrop." We still say that.

RM: So people here still call it Lathrop.

DJ: Yes. But they also call this area down here Stateline. And it really isn't, other than the saloon and the trailer park. But it is a different area of the valley.

RM: Another area of the valley would be Ash Meadows. What do they call that area over there?

DJ: They call it the farm area.

RM: Are there any other areas that are singled out by name?

DJ: Well, only like the sand dunes. It's a landmark. You say, well, "You go past the sand dunes," or, "You go near the sand dunes." And the Amargosa River. "Over near the river," or, "We're going to go across the river."

RM: Where is the river? Does it run . . . ?

DJ: It's right over there. Can you see that line of bush? That's the underground river.

RM: Can you follow it across the valley?

DJ: Sure.

DJ: Down here, you see, it goes under the road, and so at certain times of the year, when there's water in it, a lot of people go down there and pan for gold.

RM: Is there much gold there?

DJ: I don't know if anyone's ever found any. But they try, and they have fun. And there's a lot of Apache tears out here. There were a lot of them on the ranch.

RM: Where does Crystal fit into the picture? Do you know much about Crystal?

DJ: Well, that's fairly new. There were some people who came out there and bought some land. Or, they may have gotten it on Desert Entry. I don't really know. I know David Rau went out there, and they subdivided it and put roads in, and it was called the Top 40 Ranch. Then he started selling lots. He sold enough lots that people started moving in there. Some of them that work at the Test Site. And about 5 years ago, a woman built a little bar there for her daughter, called the Short Branch Saloon.

RM: Who was the woman?

DJ: She was from Pahrump. I don't know.

RM: But she built it for her daughter.

DJ: Yes. But it was unsuccessful and they sold it, and then it was sold 2 or 3 times, because there weren't really enough people over there to really support it like it should've been. And then Joe Richards came out and built a brothel - The Cherry Patch. Then they got enough people there. And they named it Crystal.

RM: I wonder why they named it that.

DJ: I don't know; it's a nice name, though. It's a real nice name. And the other name that I liked was a little town between here and Las Vegas - before you get to Indian Springs - up in the mountains on the right-hand side, and that was named Sterling.

RM: Is it a new town, or a ghost town?

DJ: It's a ghost town. But you can still see a little bit of it from Highway 95, because it's up in a foothill, and they had to get the water from the other side. And it was there - oh, probably - just a few years. But I thought Sterling was a nice name.

RM: Was it a mining camp?

DJ: Yes. They mined silver. Nice name, because most of the names here are - even though the Mormons settled a lot of this area, it still has the Spanish and Mexican names. More, even, than

Indian names. I think Pahrump's is Indian But Amargosa is Mexican. And that means "bitter." Las Vegas is a Mexican name. And Tonopah is probably, what, Indian, because pah. means "water." So it always has to do with water. And Beatty - I don't know where that name comes from.

RM: Comes from old man Beatty - one of the first settlers in the valley. Settled there in about 1896.

DJ: That's like Lathrop Wells - a man called Lathrop had wells there. But a lot of Mexican and Spanish had to be in this area. A lot of Indian names, too. Moapa must be an Indian name.

RM: Yes, must be. Do you have anything else that you wanted to bring up?

DJ: No, that's all the notes I took.

RM: You mentioned the miners who lived in the valley when the ABC was really going, and you said that they were a hard-living group, and I just wondered if you could talk a little bit about that.

DJ: Well, I think the hardest group of people - in fact, it was just before I came out here to manage the bar - was the drillers and miners who worked for Centennial. And they were just hard - even the women - and they frequented this bar every day when and Joe and Micki Cohan owned the bar. But when they were here, other people in the valley wouldn't even come near the bar because they were so rough, and their language was rough. But they spent almost their whole paycheck in this bar. So they let them in here. But they would pick up stools and throw them at the mirrors, and it was hard to work here and hard to maintain. Joe and Micki didn't have much gaming, and they did close at 10:00 or 10:30 at night. So they didn't have them when they got off work (they probably worked 2 shifts). But they got paid good money, and it was dangerous work. Putting in shafts.

RM: Centennial was the company that put in the shaft down at the Billy. DJ: Right, at the Billy Mine. Once that was done, the ABC employees went in. But I think it goes along with the type of work. There was a lot of dope in the valley, and a lot of heavy drinking, and fights, and that type of people, who just blow their money, and know tomorrow they'd get some more. And then we'd have a lot of what they call tramp miners. They go here, they stay awhile, and then they don't like it: "I'm not going to work under there, in all that loose material." Which it is - in the Billy Mine.

RM: The Billy's loose ground?

DJ: Very loose. It's reminds you of shale. So they take a steel mesh and they use this jack leg - that 6-foot long jack leg - and drill. They put 8-foot long rods up in there, with plates on the ends of them, to hold that steel mesh up and to keep everything from caving in. It's on the side walls, and on the top. Every once in awhile it does cave in and people get killed. But sometimes

one rock would fall down. One weighed 3 tons, and it squished them. And some of them just narrowly missed them. They had a company called Hanna Mining Company. I believe they're based in Michigan. They came out to manage this mine and mill operation. They had a man who had worked for them and retired, but he wanted to stay out here. So he just transferred over and went to work for American Borate Company. And then 3 weeks later he got - "slabbed," they call it.

RM: They called it "slabbing?"

DJ: A big slab of rock came down and buried him; killed him instantly. It was dangerous. They lived hard, they drank, they stayed up a lot of hours, they spent money fast, as though they wouldn't be here tomorrow. Some of them said that they never went down in the mine if they were straight; that they always had to take some form of dope, I guess to give them nerve enough to go to work. For some of them, I know they had to fear for their life. And then they were real conscious of having a good buddy. Because you have to have somebody who would help, and knew how to save your life, if something happened. If you got cut off, you had to have somebody there, with you. So they really buddied up to their partners. And some nights if their partner didn't go to work, they wouldn't go to work either. Because they didn't want to be with somebody else. And this information is mostly what I pick up in the bar, from listening to them talk, and understanding. That's why I went down in the mine, so I could understand what they were talking about, and how working conditions were.

RM: Did they tend to be younger men, or were they just all ages?

DJ: They were all ages. A lot of younger men, and I think some older men who wanted to get out of mining but sometimes it's impossible to get out of what you're in. And they knew that they were a little old, and that the reflexes slow down. But they still didn't really have any choice, because the money's good, and then as soon as this one closed down, they went to work at other mines.

RM: What was their hourly wage? Do you know?

DJ: Well, I'm not sure, but underground, I would say it probably averaged about \$14 an hour. Anywhere from - oh, say \$11 for laborers, up to \$16. And then supervisors - they called them shift bosses or shift walkers - were all on salary. If they went 30 days or something without having any major accidents, then ABC would put on a big banquet for them. They'd buy them all steak dinners. They did a lot for their employees, a lot for their morale and everything. Apparently morale in most mines - understandably - could be a little low. But women worked underground as well as the men. A lot of warren. There was no discrimination there. And if a woman wanted to learn how to drive big equipment, they would teach them. Underground. And then they would move a step up in their pay. RM: Were the majority of them single, or did they have families? DJ: Gee. I think the majority of them were single. When I stop and think about them, there were some that lived with somebody else - usually they worked at the mine, too. And it seemed most of the married people who lived out here had their wife working in the

office, or in the lab. But I think most of the women that worked underground were single, and most of the men.

RM: Did they tend to care from any particular part of the country?

DJ: Well, a lot of them came from Michigan. But the rest of them came from all over. Once it closed, they really scattered. Anywhere from Idaho and Iowa and Chicago and . . . Vermont, Florida, Texas. They just scattered.

RM: Could you say a little bit about the use of drugs in the area during this period?

DJ: Well, I think there was a lot of pills and, of course, marijuana. I think marijuana's around all the time. But there was a lot of what they call black beauties - a lot of uppers. And white crosses. I don't know all the names of them, but I know people would take it in their lunch buckets. And instead of taking a thermos of coffee, it was a thermos of booze.

RM: So they were drinking on the job.

DJ: And - you know - not all of them, I can't say that, but enough of them that . . . that I know about; enough of them that they caught.

RM: How about cocaine?

DJ: Well, I never heard too much about that. I think it's too expensive. If you have that type of habit, it's a \$100-a-day habit. A working man can't be that. Even if you're making \$700 a week, I don't think so. I don't think there was that. There was some, but not that much. But I think it was more pills and amphetamines and things. And then one time they took a whole crew that was going to go underground, and took them to, I think Pahrump, to the clinic, or somewhere, and had them all checked out and they were all stoned on marijuana. So they let them all go. Fired them all.

RM: Did they use the polygraph?

DJ: Not that I know of. No.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: Let's discuss the evolution of the business community in the Amargosa Valley since you first arrived in the valley.

DJ: Well, when I came, there was Lavada's Market.

RM: Is that that little store down at the end of Farm Road?

DJ: Right. But her mother and dad had built that store. And their names were Dansbys. Lavada (she was kind of a funny woman, matter of fact) had lived up in Washington. And she was married several times, and had several children. Her kids were young when she came back to the valley. But she got a job driving a school bus - bussing the kids from here to Beatty. And then one time they caught her taking the bus to Las Vegas. So they said, "You cannot take the bus to Las Vegas."

And she said, "I had to go get groceries." [laughter]

She had to go do some things in Las Vegas, she didn't have a car, so she took the school bus. [laughter] Then she married a man named Clyde Parmer. They had a nice little store there. He was a real comical fellow.

RM: Now, the store was there when you came?

DJ: Yes. It was a trailer - just a trailer. And then, after Lavada married Clyde, they added on and kind of enclosed it and made it look a little like a building, even though it's only 2 trailers side by side. But they kind of opened them up, and did a lot of work. He'd go in town to Safeway, and buy a package of hamburger for, say, \$1.85, and just cross it out and mark \$4.50 on it, and bring it out and sell it. And people knew. I mean they really did gouge the people. And then they let all the Mexicans run a tab, because they only got paid every so often. And they made a living. And they fed their kids.

Then there was Okie's - Okie Welch's - hardware store. He had a reputation for being real high-priced, too. But, people used to think, well, 'If I don't buy it here, I've got to go 100 miles to buy it, so I'll go ahead and pay the extra.'

RM: Is that the same hardware that's up here now?

DJ: Yes, it's the same one. We did get the Ace franchise in there. And his prices did come down. But they're real nice people.

RM: So that was there when you came, too?

DJ: Yes. And Okie was the auctioneer. Any time we had auctions to raise money, he would be our auctioneer, and it was a lot of fun. And then up at Lathrop Wells, the brothel and the Coach House Bar, and the gas station, and the Watering Hole . . . that was all there. And the post office. Then, down at this end of the valley, this bar was there. And the Mecca Club was there.

One side of the Mecca Club was a cafe, and the other side was a bar. Well, they had some food here. They didn't have hamburgers and things.

RM: Was it also a brothel at one time?

DJ: Yes. But that must've been about '79. When Gene Ritchie bought it, and Sherry. When they closed the brothels in Lincoln County, Sherry came over. She married a man named Gene Ritchie, and they bought the Mecca Club from Billie Bettles, and then Billie moved to Pahrump. And then they turned it into a brothel. The townspeople didn't like it, because they said, "We don't want a brothel right in the center of our valley. Right in the middle of it." Gene and Sherry got divorced, and she left. So when she left, the license went with her. And then eventually he disappeared and it was a big scene. And then it was just closed for a long time.

RM: What's the general feeling in the valley, do you think, regarding legalized prostitution?

DJ: Well, if they had a vote on it, it would pass. Mast of the people are in favor of it.

RM: Why do you think they are here, when in other parts of the country they're not?

DJ: Oh, I don't think they understand them. Here, it's just such a part of our life, and we feel like the local people use them - and they do - and the tourists. It brings money into the county. They pay their share of taxes on it. And, when you talk to people, like at a town meeting, if you said, "We're going to close them up." Immediately, they would say, you know, "My . . . my daughters are going to get raped."

RM: Do you think that argument is valid?

DJ: No.

RM: No. It doesn't cut down on rape or anything like that?

DJ: Well, I don't think so. I think the rapists are a whole different type of person, that . . . they get more out of it than just sex.

RM: So, those were the businesses in the area . . . ?

DJ: Yes. That was about all.

RM: Did it change through the years?

DJ: Oh, yes. It didn't really change until American Borate hired so many people, and we had so many people out here. Then a man who worked at American Borate built a small cafe in the Stateline area.

RM: The building just north?

DJ: North of this building. Yes. Then Valley Bank put a branch out here.

RM: Oh. Where's that located?

DJ: Right next to the Stateline Bar And the Mecca Club had by now changed names to the Amargosa Club. It was open. And then Nary Nickells had a small trailer parked next to the bar, and she began to sell milk; like a little 7-11 store. And then when they closed it up, or raised her rent, or did something, that's when she moved up to Stateline. And she put in a gas station - she and Tommy - and a small convenience store which is still operating on this side of me, just south of the bar. That's Mary and Tommy Nickells, that you met last night.

RM: Oh, yes.

DJ: Then American Borate had to have some more housing, because everything in the valley - every trailer - had somebody living in it. So they built single-dwelling apartment buildings. Those are like small studio apartments for one person. And they charged them about \$325 a month.

RM: Is that up there on Mecca Road?

DJ: On the Mecca Road and Highway 373. That filled up immediately. But it was nice and convenient. Then they built the shopping center, and put a laundromat in there and a grocery store. When that was being built a man named Edenfield - Bruce Edenfield, from Pahrump - came and got American Borate to back his loan of several million dollars - about 3 million dollars. Then he had a partner, name of Bob Bieganski. And Bieganski and his wife Joan, had a grocery store in Pahrump. So then when they built the shopping center, as they were building it, they had some problems. But as partners they bought the Amargosa Club and opened it. Bieganski daughters ran it. I was managing this when that happened. Then Bieganski put in the grocery store on the corner, a nice grocery store. But in the meantime, Bieganski and Edenfield had had a falling out. It was in their contract that Bieganski would put that store in. So he put it in, but immediately it went up for sale. And then a Napa Auto Parts moved in there, and about 75 percent of their ordering, or their parts and everything, came from American Borate.

Then they opened a laundromat. Then ABC backed [some] Mexicans for a Mexican restaurant in there, but it didn't last. So there was a Mexican restaurant, a laundromat, an auto parts store, a grocery store, and a video store where you could exchange movies, and even pornographic movies, and kid stuff, and buy tapes, and so on. Because everyone out here - it seemed like everyone out here all of a sudden had a VCR. You can't get in town to movies, and they had a nice - real nice - going little business. Then, in the meantime there was a lot of lawsuits involving Edenfield. He had signed some checks, and - it was a really bad scene.

Then they built another apartment building - townhouses. I think there were 8 of them. And they rented those out immediately.

Well, then ABC, even before the mine closed, began to phase that out, and got rid of all the people in the apartments, and of course everybody in the stores had to close. And they gave them such a length of time. In the meantime, the Amargosa Club - Bieganski'd gone broke in it, so Edenfield took it over, put his kids in there, and they went broke. Eventually it all closed up. A bank in Texas had loaned the money on it. They wanted to repossess it. ABC didn't want to pay the bills, which they had backed. Edenfield wouldn't pay then; he didn't pay them. All the money it took in, he kept. e wasn't paying any of the bills. It fell back on ABC. It went to court. Now, just recently Edenfield went bankrupt in Pahrump. e had a bankruptcy sale in Las Vegas about 30 days ago and one of the pieces of property on that flyer was the old Mecca Club, the Amargosa Club. And so a gentleman that lived out here a long time, Brad Bradbury, had always wanted that bar. And he manages the Water'n' Hole Bar at Lathrop Wells. e bid on it. And he got it for \$5,000.

RM: e got the whole thing for \$5,000?

DJ: Well, he got the Amargosa club and 5 acres. And the house behind it, and 5 acres with a well. That was a bid on there of \$3,000. Bradbury came down and talked to me and they hadn't realized that on that bid they still have to pick up the first and second mortgages, and so on. And they didn't do their paperwork, and they didn't look up to see I much money was even owed on it.

RM: It wasn't such a good deal?

DJ: No. If he could've got it for \$5,000, and went in and renovated the thing . . . I thought it would be nice to have the bar open, and . .

RM: You wouldn't mind if there was that competition?

DJ: No. Brad runs kind of a low-key bar, and he's not a big promoter. He just wants something to do, and talk to people. Another bar will bring people out. And they'll move from one bar to another. Sometimes I might bring them out and they go down there, and he might bring them out and they come down here. So more often than not, it enhances business, even though there's not a lot of people here. But some of them might come out who wouldn't have come out in the first place. That's the way you have to look at it, you know. And there's enough [population]. I think he could still make it, but not if there's \$180,000 owed on it. Then it's not worth it, because it would take a long time to build up your business, and, if there are 800 people here - probably, say 300 of them drink - well, 200 of them drink at home. And maybe 100 of them come out to bars.

Sometimes it's hard for me to understand why people come to bars. Really It's just a social thing. I know that when I drank (and the only reason I don't drink much now is because I don't have time - and I can't afford to have a hangover because I have too much work to do) I didn't drink at home. I never was interested in drinking at hare, I wanted to go out and party, and have fun, and play pool, and listen to music, and get out - away from home. I think, even with just that many people, that it'd be all right. And it wouldn't hurt me.

RM: Then we had a kind of an evolution of a business community here, and now it's been sharply cut back.

DJ: Well, besides that, there was a little hamburger stand between me and Mary Nickells' store, called the Bunanza Burger. And the woman who opened that had worked for me here, graveyard. And she and this gentleman she was living with took a trailer and put it up there. They leased the land from Tommy and put in a hamburger stand and sold hamburgers and french fries, but they also had soft ice cream, and malted milks, and banana splits, and they did well. So, then, when business went bad, they hooked on the trailer and they moved it up to Beatty. So now it's up at Beatty. Well, first the cafe closed. Then the bank pulled out. Oh, and then after Valley Bank pulled out, the Credit Union came in. And they were located in the shopping center. And they were here about a year.

RM: This was after the mine closed?

DJ: No. It was before the mine closed.

RM: Why did the bank pull out before the mine closed?

DJ: It was just the way they ran the bank. It was terrible. I was in business, and it was very convenient for me - especially in gaming, when you're supposed to bank every day - that I could go over there. Well, I had so much problems with them that I had to go in town and open up an account at First Interstate Bank when I had this one right next door. They were terrible. So people got so disgusted, they would pull their accounts out. Finally they lost so much business . . . I was their second biggest account, other than ABC. They'd come over, and say, "Doris, why don't you use the bank?" I said, "You've got to be kidding!" They were terrible.

RM: What would they do?

DJ: They would get things so mixed up. They might deposit your money in someone else's account.

RM: Just incompetent?

DJ: Yes.

RM: What are the special challenges of doing business in, basically, a remote area that's really a pioneering kind of community? What would be the difference doing business here, as, say, opposed to being in Vegas for you if you had the same operation in Vegas?

DJ: Well, the main thing is - it's your privacy. Here, you really don't have anything. Everything is an open book. And here, you have to be very careful.

RM: You mean, how much money you're making?

DJ: Yes, really. Not show how much money you're making. When I added this room on, I did a little at a time. Just a little. So that people didn't say - or didn't think - "Well, look at her. Who does she think she is, come in here and just - whoop! - put that luau up. She must be making a fortune!" And people do think you make a fortune, anyway. So you have to be careful not to flaunt any money. You have to stay at the same level as your customers. And I feel that's very important.

Of course, a lot of times I could have a thousand people in here, and at the end of the night, I might come out \$100 ahead after I pay the music, and all the extra help, and whatever I do. You know, it looks like you're making a lot more money than what you are. And I can have just a normal Saturday night, without music, and have the 21 table going, and the poker table, and I might make \$300. And with a lot less work. Because before, I would have wet t-shirt contests, dance floor olympics, and, I mean, I was just pushing and promoting, and everybody's screaming and having a good time, but the cash register, you know . . . So you have to be careful. I tell everybody: "I work - just the same as you do."

Except that I'm my own boss, but that's the only difference. I work 7 days a week. And so they get the idea, well, if I do make any money, I deserve it. But I do things real slow. So I put the building up - on the inside it had 2 by 4s, even when I had Tex Williams out here with a big shawl it was 2 by 4s.

RM: And it was deliberate - you just didn't want to go fast.

DJ: Right. Then I put the ceiling on.

RM: How did you know how to do that? Was that just intuitive?

DJ: Just understanding people and being careful. You don't want people to feel like you're above them. Because really, you're not. And you don't want people to be afraid to talk to you because you're the owner. Because you're not any different. I tell them, "You make more money than I do. And you don't have the headaches I do." And when I'd see some of their checks, I used to kiddingly say, "Gee, you make all this money and you don't even have a dime invested." That makes them feel good, and that we are equal

RM: So you think that the visibility problem is the biggest thing that the isolation and remoteness gives you.

DJ: Well, you see, out here, if you do make any money, everybody knows it. The people who work for you know how much a shift you take in, where if you were in Las Vegas - nobody knows.

The other thing is, the inconvenience of being out here, when you have to buy your own supplies.

RM: How do you get supplied?

DJ: I go into town and pick them up. I have to buy toilet paper, and salt, and napkins, and all my food.

RM: They don't deliver out here?

DJ: No. When the grocery store was open, [as well as] Nary Nickells and I, I did have bread delivered. But once the big store and some of the other restaurants closed, they quit delivering bread. So I have to pick that up in town.

RM: How often do you have to go in for a supply run?

DJ: Oh, 2 times a week.

RM: Do you buy from big warehouses?

DJ: No, I buy from H & O, the big wholesale houses. The only thing I get delivered is liquor, and beer, and pop.

RM: They deliver out here.

DJ: Yes.

RM: It would be the same in Vegas, wouldn't it, being supplied with your beverages?

DJ: No, in town they call H & O and they can run over food, and they don't have to stock up like I do. I have to have a lot of freezer space. When I made my menu out, I made it so that I don't have the waste. Everything is frozen. And I don't have a lot of fresh things. I used to have a special every day, when I had a lot of lunches. Then that also fed the help - when I had full time cooks. But now I don't even do that. Everything I buy is frozen. I have very little waste.

RM: How- when you were at your peak employment - how was the help problem? Did you find getting help much of a problem?

DJ: Oh, not at all. No. Everyone who worked here made good tips. I had a list of people wanting to work here. And I had 13 employees. But I always had a list.

RM: Would it have been about the same as Vegas, or would Vegas even have had more problems? If you had an operation there?

DJ: Well, I don't know. If you had a casino in Las Vegas, the union would pressure you into joining the union. And then you just have to call them. And of course, then, you can interview, if you need someone permanent. But if you need someone for a day, you call and they send

someone out. It probably would be a problem. And in town, it's very difficult to pay the wages that some of them get now if you have a small place.

RM: You mentioned fights, and things like that. How do you deal with that?

DJ: When I first came out to manage, I worked swing. I came over at 6:00 and worked until 2:00. A lot of the times I was scared. And it takes quite a bit for me to be scared. One reason is because I'm behind the bar, and I have that shield. But I still didn't know what was going to happen. So I talked to the owner. I said, "I'm going to have to get some people out of there. There's 5 or 6 people instigating all the problems." It took me the first year that I was here to clean this place up and get it where I wasn't afraid to come to work. Now, one night I had a bunch of miners in here, and truck drivers. And it was around the time that they were negotiating the union contract. The underground miners felt like they should've had the raise for hazardous pay. But the truck drivers had the automatic raise coming. So I knew there was going to be a big fight. So finally I went to the front door and I opened it up, and I said, "Everybody out." And I think I have this mother image, and somewhat of a bad mouth. And I would treat them like they were my kids, you know. But when I get mad, this big change comes over me. [chuckles] So I just opened the door, and I said, "Everybody out." So they all went out. Well, several of them that lived in California at the trailer park down there, and after they were out on the front porch (and I was locking the door), I heard them say, "Well, we're going to go back in there. Who does . . . She can't kick us out of here. We're going to go back in there." And then one of the truck drivers said, "Well, if you do, you've got to go through me." So then they went out to their car, and they all got on hoods - white hoods - they were the KKK. They were really bad people. One guy's name is Colemanite Carl, and Rick Rose, and . . . They stood around out there around their car. And I wouldn't leave. I was in here.

RM: Why did they do that?

DJ: I don't know. They were going to probably try to rape me, or something. I don't know. Anyway, I locked the bar all up and I stayed in here 'till they left.

RM: Were you pretty scared?

DJ: Yes. So then I told Micki, "There's some people I'm going to get rid of." And that Colemanite Carl was one of them. About a year later, they had a big fracas down at the (I'm trying to think who owned it then) I think, Crystal Palace. Which is now the Amargosa Club. And those 2 men stabbed some Mexicans. And they ended up both going to jail. But that Rick Rose is wanted for murder in Florida. ere they were in here.

RM: Working as miners, or truck drivers, or . . .

DJ: Yes. Miners. So they did eventually go to jail.

RM: Were there a lot of southerners? Were they the KKK?

DJ: I don't know where they were from.

RM: They didn't have southern accents.

DJ: But they opened the trunk, and pulled out all those sheets and hoods. I couldn't believe it. And then somebody else who lived in a trailer back here, they looked out and then the next day they said, "What were those guys doing out there in sheets and hoods?"

Judge Beko called me after that fight at that other club, and the stabbing, when they had to take them into the hospital, and they had to do surgery on them and everything. The next day, they were in this bar.

RM: You mean Rose and so on.

DJ: Yes, Colemanite Carl and Rick Rose. So I told the bartender, "Go over to my trailer and call the law." (Because I only had a phone out there right under the bar.) So she did. But in the meantime, even before she called, the law pulled up. And when it did, they ran out the back door. .

RM: Because they knew they were wanted.

DJ: Yes. In fact, they dropped the knife out back. So when they came around they got them - right here. And then they felt like I had turned them in. So when Beko called me about it later, before he sentenced them, I told him about the KKK thing, and what things that they had said in here. I said, "They shouldn't be out. They should be put away." So - one by one, I had to 86 people like that.

RM: How do you 86 somebody? What do you tell them?

DJ: I tell them to get out, and that they're not allowed in the bar any more, at all. And you have to say it and man it. And then I've had some of them call me, and I've said, "No."

RM: You mean if you'd change your mind?

DJ: Well, sometimes I would give them another chance. But they had to come to me and talk to me when they were sober - off on the side. And then I could talk to them. And one night Carl came in - this was before the stabbing and everything, after I had 86ed him. e had his wife and daughters with him. When he come in the door, he motioned for me, and I went over there. And he said, "Could I just stay, and I'll behave. And I have my wife and daughters with me. And I said, "If you behave, Carl. But if you don't, you're out."

CHAPTER EIGHT

RM: What do people usually do when you tell them they're 86ed? Do they kind of hang their head down sheepishly, or do they get aggressive?

DJ: They get mad, but I never had one of them swing on me, or anything. But one time I had 2 grown men arguing. One of them would have a chip on his shoulder, and he wanted to pick a fight with anybody. So I knew they were about to go into blows. And I happened to be bending over fixing a slot machine. So they didn't even realize I was there because they kind of had their backs to me. I just came right up between them, and told them, that they're both out, and so on, whatever I said - really man. Afterwards, they got laughing about it, and they said, "You looked like the Incredible Hulk coming out behind there!" [chuckles]

I had to get real firm. And mean what I said. When I said, "Hit the door, you're out!" I meant it. And they looked at me, and I said, "Get out." And then they would head for the door. And they'd turn around, and I'd say, "Out!"

The next day, they would care in and talk to me sober, and they'd say, "Well, am I kicked out, Doris?"

And I said, "If you want to act like that, you're out. Go across the street." And here there's not too many places to go. "If you want to come here, if you want to enjoy these dances, and socialize with your fellow employees, and so on, then you've got to behave. Because I'm not running a place where I'm scared to come to work, and where women won't even care in this bar." There were women who lived out here 2 or 3 years who had never ever been in this bar. They were scared to come in. I always felt, if you've got a bar, you've got to have women there, because if you don't, the men won't come. So I pushed and promoted and talked to girls, that nothing would happen to them.

[break to check on the tape recorder.]

RM: How do fights usually start?

DJ: Most of the time it has something to do with what happened at some different time. Somebody owed them money for a long time and never paid it back, and then once they get drinking, they become a little bit more uninhibited, and all of this comes out.

Sometimes you had people that I 86ed who still haven't come into this bar - in 6 years they haven't been in this bar. They would start an argument between a couple of other people and then stand back and watch them fight. But they didn't want to fight. The one that was standing back smiling - he's the one I 86ed; not the ones that got in a fight. Because otherwise it would've never happened.

When I was real busy, and as the evening wore on, and they had more than their share to drink, when you tend bar, you listen for this attitude and this change in pitch of the voice and you pick it up. Right away. You can be at the other end of the bar, and then you go down and pay attention, and see if they're really serious, or if they're just arguing about who can weld better than somebody else. And then, before it comes to blows, what I used to do was just take their drinks, right in front of them, and clear their spot off and say, "You've had enough."

And then, once you do that, their argument kind of: . . . "What do you mean?"

I'll say, "You've had enough. Go on home." But never, ever give it back to them. Once you make up your mind, don't ever say, "Well, OK, you can have another one." Don't go back on it.

But then I got a reputation that I was mean, and pretty strict, but they also began to bring their wives and girlfriends in. So then the atmosphere slowly began to change. If somebody was using real bad language, loud, I went up and told them about it: "Knock it off."

And most of the time they say, "Oh, I didn't realize," you know. And they don't. I just had to clean it up.

Joe and Micki, of course, when I was managing, would call me, and say, "Doris, you don't realize who you 86ed. They spend so much money in there."

I said, "Let them spend it somewhere else." I said, "Because they're in there, you're losing 10 customers." So you've got to get rid of the people that are running other people off. And if they want to be in here, then they can behave. And really, this was their home. This was their spot. So I had an edge. Because then they did behave. There was no other place for them to go.

RM: Did you find that this was a social center?

DJ: Oh, yes. They felt right at home here. This was their bar, and they were very protective of their bar. Other people who went down to the Amargosa Club, or Mecca Club, or whatever it was at the time, found a whole different atmosphere down there. One of the things wrong with it was that the ceiling was too low. It sounds silly, but the height of your ceiling, your lighting, your atmosphere, in a bar, have completely to do with the attitude of people. A low ceiling makes everybody feel closed in. It brings out anger in people, especially if it's a dark ceiling - black, or real dark brown. You have to have a certain amount of light. You don't want too much light. Too much light has this one effect on people, and not enough has another effect. Too much makes people rowdy and loud. Instead of walking, they want to skip, for instance. If it's too dark, they get depressed and surly. And then grudges that they've held in for a long time will come out. At the Mecca Club, that's the way it seemed to be. People were on edge. In Michigan, the Alcoholic Beverage Company - which is ABC - come to your bars to measure light. If you have a dark corner, in a bar, they will tell you, "You need a 40-watt bulb in that area." They realize how important that is. That's really where I learned that.

RM: And then what does the high ceiling do?

DJ: A high ceiling give you a little more space, and you get a better feeling of freedom. You can't close people in. And you want things to be pretty open.

RM: I've observed that there's a difference in Las Vegas in the casinos in the heights of their ceilings. It seems like the better class casinos have a higher ceiling.

DJ: They have high ceilings and chandeliers.

RM: Is that a correct observation, do you think?

DJ: Oh, yes.

RM: And you go into the ones that are directed more toward the rank and file, you know, they have a lower ceiling.

DJ: Right. And also the colors inside. You never use like, green - dark greens. You never use dark browns because that's very depressing.

RM: What colors do you use?

DJ: Well, wood is a good thing, because it's warm. And wood always has a comfortable, warm feeling for people. Probably that's why most bars are wood. [chuckles] And wooden stools. I use gold and red and black for chairs and stuff, but try to pick up as much wood as you can. That has a lot to do with it.

RM: What is and was the role of minorities in the Amargosa Valley?

DJ: Well, when Spring Meadows Ranch was in full swing - and Ray Barnett was the ranch manager down there - there was probably 100 trailers of Mexicans and their families that worked that ranch.

RM: It was Mexican employees on the ranch.

DJ: Mexicans. Yes.

RM: Now, who owned that ranch at the time, and what year are we talking about?

DJ: We're talking about in the late '60s and early '70s.

RM: Who was the owner?

DJ: There were like 5 different men that owned it. One of them was Dr. DeLee, from Las Vegas. And a group of doctors and businessmen from Las Vegas did it probably as an investment and a tax write off. They had all these Mexicans, and they ran cattle, and horses, and they raised alfalfa and all their own feed. It was a big operation. Then the pup fish issue came up. So they went to court, and they were in court 7 years. It went all the way to the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court ruled that, no, they could not use the water. They could not irrigate to grow crops, so therefore they couldn't feed their cattle. This was in the '70s.

Then in '77, probably, they had a bankruptcy sale. They had to close the ranch up, and they had probably a mile of just farm equipment that they auctioned off. They sold all those trailers. A lot of those Mexicans stayed in the valley, but they found other work. A lot of them went to work at Industrial Mineral Ventures - they were beginning to hire at that time. And

they went to work on the Stewart Ranch, and for Hank Records, and all these other ranches. They just kind of scattered.

RM: That was the time when Cal-Vada bought it? After the court decision?

DJ: It sat there for awhile. Then Cal-Vada bought it.

RM: Well, what did Cal-Vada think they were going to do?

DJ: Cal-Vada said that they were going to come over there and put in 10,000 homes. Well, to me 10,000 homes use more water than to irrigate alfalfa fields. So, then it was all of a sudden like a big surprise. I think it was all a little bit of a scam involving Jack Scales. e bought that for 2 1/2 million dollars. And then he held it for 2 years, and at the end of 2 years he sold it for 5 million. Now if I could do that, and double my money in 2 years, without turning a shovel full of dirt over! So I think they knew all along. They had to.

RM: So that Supreme Court decision basically rendered the land of very little value.

DJ: Very little.

RM: That they could use it for grazing, and that was it, right?

DJ: Probably. They couldn't irrigate. They couldn't take the water down at Devil's Hole. From what I know about it, there were 252 pupfish in that hole. Years ago, I think in '63, a couple of divers went in there and never came back up. They used to send divers in there to count the pupfish. The people who owned Spring Meadows gave that land to the government. The government went in and fenced that off, and said, "OK, so we're not going to touch that Devil's Hole area. Where those extinct pupfish are." Then in '75, Spring Meadows was going through the big turmoil with the courts and realizing that they would have to close and everything, so a couple of teenage boys went out and dynamited it, thinking that it would solve the whole town's problem. Sheila Rau even wrote a play about it. It was just a big political issue.

RM: But it didn't kill the pupfish?

DJ: No, it didn't kill the pupfish. I was probation officer out here at the time - juvenile probation officer. Nothing really happened. I mean, it was a federal offense, because the federal government owned that land, but they really didn't pursue it. And the kids didn't really mean any harm. They just thought, we'll go get rid of them and that'll solve the whole problem." So, anyway, it did close the ranch. But the pupfish - are all over Ash Meadows. And on the Tubbs ranch - which Judy Trenary has now, but her dad was Bob Tubbs - they used to plug up the shower heads, there were so many of them. They had to take the shower apart and get the fish out of it. They're like guppies. They just multiply and every stream out there is just full of them. But they act like those 252 are the only ones still alive in the world, see. And they're not. But I think the ones in Devil's Hole don't have eyes, or something, because they don't need them. But

you find fish underground in the mountains in underground rivers back east that don't have eyes.

RM: Do you?

DJ: Whether they're extinct or not.

RM: So it's not that big of a deal.

DJ: No, I don't think so.

RM: There were a large number of Mexican hands working on the ranch. And then when it closed they kind of diffused into the community. What was the community's attitude towards Mexicans?

DJ: They were pretty much accepted. And like I told you, Lavada - she used to let them charge, because the ranches only paid them like once a month. And they didn't have very much money. Jean Garey was a secretary at Spring Meadows Ranch, and she can speak Mexican. She helped them get papers - get a green card. Because most of them were wetbacks. She helped them, if they needed a car, to get a driver's license. And she adopted several of them so that they could become United States citizens. They must've raised 7 or 8 kids.

RM: Did they tend to have families with them, or were they single guys?

DJ: No. Most of them had families. But they kind of kept to themselves. But then in the school, we always had the Mexican dances. At Christmas they sang all the Mexican songs, and dressed Mexican, and we had Mexican food whenever we had any doings at the AVIA Building, and they just fit right into the community.

RM: Were there a lot of Mexican children in the school?

DJ: Yes.

RM: I mean, a high percentage?

DJ: Yes. Still is.

RM: Were there ever any blacks in the community?

DJ: Well, there were 2 that I know of. They both worked at the mine. One man and one woman. But that's all I know.

RM: Were they accepted?

DJ: Yes, they were accepted. The black man was married to an Indian woman and the black girl was married to a white man. But they fit right in.

RM: What about Indians?

DJ: Well, they're Shoshoni. They live on the reservation, down by Death Valley. At first, when they first come in the bar, I was unfamiliar with working around very many Indians, because they still had long hair, and they were big, and I had a hard time making them keep shirts on. But then slowly I would become friends with them, and learn their names, and start calling them by name, and kidding with them, and that. And if I ever had any problem, they're very protective of me. In fact, a lot of people would. I always had somebody that would say, "I'm not going to go home till them people leave. Because I'm not going to leave you here alone." I always had somebody around to protect me, you know. And they'd say, "Well, don't you have a gun." And I'd say, "No."

RM: You don't have a gun.

DJ: No. I do now, but I've never used it.

RM: In those days you didn't.

DJ: No. Because I said, "I'd just have a gun, they'd take it away from me and shoot me with it." I don't think I could pull a trigger anyway. And - hopefully, I would stop anything before it ever came to that point, you know.

RM: Do you know anything about the so-called Jap Ranch?

DJ: No, I don't. I've only heard people talk about it. I don't know where it's located. I've just heard everybody talk about it. But it must've been quite a few years ago.

RM: Could you tell me what you know about this KKK bunch?

DJ: Well, I know that they had tattoos on their arms that said "White Power". Rick Rose had apparently lived in Florida. And I don't know what kind of a miner he was, but I know Colemanite Carl was a miner. And he was well-known. And he was a big, muscular, ugly-looking man. Both of them were. They had all these tattoos all over them. I don't know who they were after, because there were only the 2 black people who even lived out here. But I think they were over anyone who didn't see things their way. And they were always very argumentive; at the bar, they would argue about anything. They thought they should run things like a Gestapo or something, I thought.

RM: Were there just the 2 of them, or were there others? That put on their hoods that time?

DJ: No, there were more. That night there was probably about 6 altogether. I can't remember some of the other ones, because I was new at that time.

RM: Now, this would've been in . . .

DJ: '81.

RM: '81. And did they ever make their presence as the KKK known at a time after that?

DJ: Well, when I talked to people about it, everybody seemed to know. As I say, they lived at Valley Crest, in that trailer park in California. Everyone who lived in that trailer park knew about it. I don't know that they ever did anything, or burned crosses, or anything. They probably did. I don't know where. But it just amazed me. I thought, 'Why would they do that?'

RM: And apparently they didn't like Mexicans?

DJ: Oh, they didn't like anybody that wasn't white.

RM: How did they make it known - that you ever saw?

DJ: Well, they're the ones that stabbed the Mexicans down at the Amargosa Club.

RM: Did you ever hear them make statements in the bar?

DJ: Oh, yes. If anybody came and they were Mexican or something, they would talk about them - loud - so that they would hear it. And swear. Call them 'wet-backs.'

RM: Did anybody ever take offense at that?

DJ: They did, but they would shrug their shoulders and walk away from them. Nobody would say anything back to them.

RM: Nobody ever took them up on it.

DJ: Well, apparently they took them up on it at the Amargosa Club, but I wasn't there. Apparently that night it got too much, and there was gunfire, and stabbing. It was terrible.

RM: When was that?

DJ: Sometime in that summer of '81.

RM: Can you think of anything else on racism, or that type of social attitude at that time?

DJ: There weren't too many Mexicans working in the mine at that time. At least underground. Later on, there were. And the Mexicans - some of them that worked there - put all their money into Valley Bank. One man, Gilbert, went over and drew his savings out, and he had a little over \$30,000. e went back to Mexico. e said he would live the rest of his life and take care of his family on that money. Real nice man. But I always got along very well with them. I don't discriminate. Everybody's human and everybody's equal, in my eyes. I had good clientele - good Mexican clientele. I still do.

RM: Yes. Did you ever see any other evidence of discrimination, or racism, besides from these KKK types?

DJ: Oh, a little bit. But not much. The tramp miners, who don't ever stay. But the people who stay in the valley and become the permanent residents, we're almost the same. Everybody is pretty free out here. Whoever would move in the area, we would accept.

RM: You talk about Glen Henderson.

DJ: Well, Glen Henderson was a very colorful man, and you should've certainly had some tapes on him before he died. e came out here many years ago, and he was a deputy sheriff. And then he eventually became lieutenant. And he was the only law in this whole area between Las Vegas and Beatty. e had been here for probably 20 years when I arrived. e was kind of a big man, and he had a colorful way of talking. When I was juvenile probation officer, I got to know him real well - worked close with him. And he would talk, and tell me all these stories. But when somebody did something bad - like a young man, or something - he might take them out in the desert and beat the hell right out of them, and say, "Now, just shape up." And they would. e didn't have to take a lot of people to jail and stuff. e just handled things his own way.

CHAPTER NINE

DJ: Wherever people lived, he called it a camp. So he'd say, "Well, one time I went out to this camp, and there was a bunch of men around there, and some Mexican people, and some Indian people, and all the men were drunk, and I went in this little trailer that they had, and," he'd say, "there's flies as big as turkeys all over everything. And there was a couple of little kids in there. One was a little baby about 6 months old, and another little girl about a year and a half. So," he said, "I just picked one up under one arm, and one under the other and took 'em home." e said, "They had sores all over them, and they were starving to death, and they were just filthy. And hot, you know, they had no cooling, or air or nothin'." So he'd take them home. And, he said, "Four or five days later," he said, "I went back there, and by God, they'd all just moved. So I kept them kids." e probably raised 20 kids His wife's name is Helen. He was always bringing these kids home. She'd take them in. And one of them, he said, "She's in Hawthorne. I put her up there with a family." Another one he'd put somewhere else. And that's the way he handled things. e said, "Them people didn't want them kids. They had 'em - they didn't want 'em. And I took 'em." And he said, "They never come after 'em." A lot of them, he raised. There was a young man in Las Vegas named Danny who works in a gas station. e raised Danny. Then Danny went into the service. They would all write Glen.

One time there was an accident, on this highway out here. Oh, I can't really remember all the details, but it was like a rollover, and one person was dead and another one was hurt, and Glen had the people out there. e called the ambulance from Indian Springs. Well, on the way, the ambulance was going so fast and there was one man in the back and one driving - and they came around the corner up by the Water'n' Hole. The back door flew open, and the man in the back flew out, and he got killed. Now, the other ambulance came down. Before he got there, another car had come up and run over the one who was still alive. When it was all over, Glen walked out in the desert and he stayed out there about 4 days. The whole thing was a freaky thing to happen, but it started with one death and it ended up with 3 or 4 people getting killed, you know.

But he had a pretty tough reputation. When they had that fracas over in Ash Meadows, he went over there with a shotgun and just straightened everything out with all the bikers.

RM: What fracas was that?

DJ: Oh, they had a bunch of bikers come in and tear the place up. Glen had to go over there.

RM: Was that when you were in the valley?

DJ: I don't think so. I think it was around 1970 - right in there - before Lee McGowan came over here and bought this. But after that night they closed Ash Meadows, and it never opened again, as a brothel or a bar, or anything. That was it. They just closed it up. It's never opened.

RM: A bunch of bikers came in and got tough?

DJ: Yes. Real tough. Like, Hell's Angels type of thing.

RM: Were there a lot of them?

DJ: Apparently. Yes, probably 30 or 40. Just fighting, and breaking things up, and not paying for things. And so they called the police? And he showed up alone?

DJ: Glen. Yes.

RM: Alone?

DJ: Yes.

RM: What did he have, a shotgun?

DJ: Oh, yes. I think he just started shooting people.

RM: Were there several killed, then?

DJ: I don't know. And I don't think anybody will ever know - exactly what happened. It was all like the old west, except it wasn't that long ago. But that's the way he handled this valley. e had some deputies who worked under him, but when he was out here alone, for a lot of years, he did a lot of things. But he did a lot of good things.

RM: Yes. He reminds me a little bit of a sheriff that they had in Las Vegas who patrolled Block 16, there. e was 6'2" - weighed about 240 - and never wore a gun or anything. He'd just punch them out - when people got out of line he'd work them over.

DJ: Yes. Glen did too in his younger days.

RM: Known to be a heavy drinker, himself, but he kept law and order on Block 16 for years. For 20 or 30 years. e was the sheriff of Las Vegas.

DJ: I used to laugh: because Glen was a diabetic, and he used to smoke marijuana. Because he was a diabetic. A lot of people didn't know that, but I knew that he smoked a little pot. I always laughed about his language, because he was something else.

RM: He was a rough talker?

DJ: Yes. Very rough. There was a woman out there that - her name was Virginia - and he'd always say that (every spring she'd have another kid, you know), "Every spring she can outrun a coyote! She'd jump on anything! Every spring she's got to have another kid by something - somebody else. It don't matter who it is." [chuckles] he'd always say stuff like that. Then later, he got mixed up in that arson case of burning down the Chicken Ranch in Pahrump.

RM: He was involved in that?

DJ: He's the one who they said didn't call. They didn't call the deputies out there, and they didn't call the fire department. They stalled it enough and let it burn. e got paid money for that. And it was just before he was getting ready to retire. e died not long after that, really, not long, because that kind of broke him. Because he did get involved, and it was on tape, and they had him, dead to rights.

CHAPTER TEN

RM: Doris, you gave me a note here. Why don't you tell me what it says? DJ: Well, these are the names, or nicknames, of the 2 men that built the Stateline Saloon. I don't even know what they called it back then. They probably just called it Stateline Bar in 1963. They were Slim Thurman and Opie Dyke. And they were partners for a while and then they split up the partnership, and one of them went to Caliente, and had a bar in Caliente, and the other one stayed here for awhile, until they sold the bar.

RM: Were you involved in setting up the town?

DJ: No, I wasn't involved in that. Don Barnett had lived out here quite a while, and his father was the manager at Spring Meadows Ranch. Well, Don was the County Commissioner for our area here. In '76, he got elected. So after he served his term - he didn't get reelected - he got into county government that way, and I think he was partly the one that instigated Amargosa Valley becoming a town site (they call it townships out here) so that we would have a bigger voice in our county government. Because we didn't get any work on the roads, we really didn't have anybody backing us in this area. And then once Don got in there and found out how things worked, and that we could become a town . . .

We felt as though we were pretty far away from, Lathrop Wells, and we really didn't have any connection with Lathrop Wells, other than we had to go there and get our mail. And there was the connotation that Lathrop Wells brings to everyone's mind about the brothel. When they went in town and said they were from Lathrop Wells, they immediately connected everyone here with the brothel. And some of the women kind of, I think, resented that.

So they started with their petitions. First of all, to see if they wanted to form an unincorporated town. Once they got that going, then they talked about changing the name from Lathrop Wells to Amargosa Valley. The only ones who objected to it were the people at Lathrop Wells, but there weren't enough of them. They didn't have a lot of weight. So once that got through, that we would form an incorporated town, and that must've been in '82, maybe '81. But I can't remember . . . if it was in '81, it was late in '81. So then in '83, being good true Americans, the first thing we did was run in debt, [laughter] borrowed a whole bunch of money, and we elected a Town Advisory Council of 5 people.

RM: How are they elected?

DJ: Oh, by the people. They're nominated by people on the floor at a public meeting . . .

RM: At the town meeting. How many do they nominate?

DJ: Probably 10 or 12 people were nominated. A month later, they hold elections. They're voted in by popular vote. So we formed our first Town Advisory Council. They hold a meeting, once a month, and decide what issues they want to take before the County Commissioners. Then at the next County Commissioners' meeting, which is the first Tuesday of each month, Amargosa

Valley is put on the agenda, and you go before the Commissioners, and tell them your problems, and what your needs in the valley are.

Then we formed - under the Town Advisory Council - the first board that we formed was a planning board to try and take care of some of the subdivisions, the roads, to make a map of the area, to see how much land BLM owned, how much land the private people owned, and that took a lot of time. It took several years to complete, including all of our roads now in our township. Our township, was, I think, the second largest township in the United States, because it is comprised of 480 square miles. So it took them a long time to get all of the roads. And one of the women here went through all the records, and has all the names of who owns property, and who's on the tax rolls, in our whole area.

But all of the roads here that the county maintained were still owned by BLM. So once we got all the roads, then we had to take them to the County Commissioners, for the County Commissioners to get that land deeded from BLM to the county, so the county would then be obligated to maintain them.

RM: Are there other boards under the main board?

DJ: After a period of 2 years, the 5 people elected to the first board all went off the board. None of them even chose to run again. One man was nominated, but then when it came time for elections, he declined. So we elected 5 new people. So the 5 people that were elected chose to begin to stagger.

RM: You were one of the next 5.

DJ: I was one of them. Betty Boyd, Joe Cohan, Linda McFarland, and Carl Bailes were the second board. Some of us chose to be on the board 3 years, and part of us 2 years. So we elected to have 3 people for 3 years, and 2 for 2 years. After that, each year you would hold an election, and you always had new people coming on the board, but you also had people on there who knew where you were in the program to keep it going, and then it would run smoothly.

The first year, for all of us who were elected, it was a very tough year. We held an election to build a clinic, a library, and a multi-purpose building. They had already had the bonds working. They began to do construction, and our board had to see through all the construction phases. It was a difficult task. Betty Boyd was chairman, and she did a good job; she had so much to do. We even had the dedication of the library and the multi-purpose building and the clinic. We formed a cemetery board to oversee the cemetery, the records, and the map of the cemetery. The cemetery was new. The county owns it. It's on ELM land, which is deeded in trust to the county. The county owns 3 cemeteries in the county: Pahrump, Amargosa Valley, and Tonopah.

RM: Where did they bury people before the cemetery? They just didn't bury them in the valley.

DJ: In Beatty, or Las Vegas. A lot of Amargosa Valley residents were buried in Beatty, and they didn't really want to be. So we had worked for a long time to get a cemetery here. We were going to have our own, on land that we got from BLM through the Amargosa Valley

Improvement Association. But they never could quite get it through and get the paperwork, and finish it up. So the county put in a cemetery. Before all the records got lost and we didn't know who was buried where, as is the case in Tonopah right now, because all the records got burned. If a marker is gone, or if they never had a marker, they don't know who's there. We didn't want that to happen. So we made a map, and had it recorded. Now we want to put in lot markers, which the county pays for out of a county cemetery fund. That was a lot of work. We formed a board - that was so that they could plant trees, and they could be sure the trees were watered - and when somebody dies, even if it's on a weekend, the people on the board, who are scattered throughout the valley, can open up the cemetery, get the maps, and sell the plot.

RM: If a person dies, do you have to bring him in from Tonopah? Beatty doesn't have a mortuary, does it?

DJ: A few have come from Tonopah. Funeral here. But most of them care from Las Vegas.

RM: But if a person died here, could you just put them in the ground right away?

DJ: The coroner takes them in to Las Vegas from here. And then we bought a cemetery lowering device, because the earth here kind of has a tendency to cave in, and they had an accident somewhere in the county where 2 or 3 men slipped and fell under the casket, because the ground gives way. So we bought this lowering device to help with that little problem. [laughs]

RM: To prevent that from happening again. [laughs]

DJ: Right! Then we formed a parks and recreation board, and a senior citizen board, a library board, - in effect from the old library. But we always put it then on the agenda so that they can give their reports. When you kind of divide it all up, and then each of those entities give its report, and then the people in the valley know what's going on, but it also involves more people in the valley. Now, instead of having 5 people on a town advisory board more or less running everything, you end up, with about 30 people. You have other people that are interested in that area. For instance, Lisle Lowe is a surveyor - he's on the planning board. And well he should be. People that have studied the land, and the roads, and know how to build a road, are on the planning board. So it works. You get more knowledge coming into the advisory board. Now we're trying to build a park. So we formed a parks and recreation board to look into how to build a park - how much it's going to cost, and so on. They went into the University of Las Vegas and got some plans from them, as to what is an effective park, and how do you water it, what kind of trees do you plant, and what size area do you need for X amount of people. It takes a lot of time consuming work off the advisory board. They come and report to the board, and get the vote of the people, and it goes under discussion, and then it goes from there.

RM: Then they vote on it, and then it goes to the county, if you need further action.

DJ: Right. But you accomplish tenfold the things by having all these other boards. The more people who are involved in their own community, the better off you are. And it works. Even

though sometimes things get voted down that I would personally like to have in there, maybe later down the road I can understand why it got voted down. And it is like going back to the village square and having open meetings, which our democracy is built on.

RM: Could you talk a little bit about the values of the community? How would you describe the values that people hold in the area?

DJ: I think if you ask anyone why they choose to live in the area, the first word that comes out of the mouth is freedom. The freedom of being able to do what they want to do, and not having a lot of people tell them what to do. No one out here does. The only people you have out here that would help take away any of your freedom, if you want to call it that, would be our deputy sheriffs, who only maintain law and order. They do a good job because they work with the people, and I don't think people have too much trouble with them. And you have to have somewhere to go if you have a complaint. But they like it - the space of it, and probably more the feeling of freedom than being anymore free from anyone that lives in a city. But there are no fences, and you're not walled in. That's probably a lot of it. We don't have any traffic lights, and things to hold you back from doing anything you want to do.

The other thing is, I think, getting back to mother nature and earth. And you find that with the desert and the soil anything will grow if you water it and nurture it. And here you have such a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment when you grow a tree, or when your grapevines produce, and you have a nice garden. You get much more satisfaction of it than you would anywhere else. Where growing a garden is easy. But here it's such a difficult task, that you take a lot of pride. The more of an oasis you can make you own ranch, the more pride you take in it. I think that's what a lot of people try to do. When I built my trailer park I bought 20 acres of land. That's all it was. It was just bare desert. And then you put in your well, and then you put in your septic system, and then I put in all my wiring underground, and my phones underground, because I don't want to have any poles.

RM: The trailer park is associated with the saloon, here?

DJ: No, the trailer park is mine, it's over in the center of the valley. have 20 acres over there. But everything I put underground - like I said, it's because I don't want unsightly poles. I don't want, and I didn't want, any security lights, because when you sit outside, you can see the stars better, and the sky. Because it's real dark. That's the kind of effect that I wanted people living there to have. I think I have 6 spaces over there and, of course, room for 100 more, if it warrants putting them in. I did that for more my retirement than anything, just to have income. Then as I find the need for it, I put a couple of double-wides on it. They're paid for, and then any rent monies I have, it will just be income for my retirement. If I ever retire. [laughs] It seems like I have to work, because I get too bored if I don't. I have to have a place to go every day.

RM: What other values do you see as dominant in the community? Do you see a lot of strong religious beliefs?

DJ: Well, I'm not in the position to be around the "religious people" because, if they are, and there are a lot of religious people out here, they are Pentecostals, and Catholics, and - I don't know - they have a Church of God, but those are recent things.

RM: The churches are new in the community.

DJ: Yes. Fairly new. They've only been built in the late '70s and early '80s, but the religious people don't come in my saloon because they don't want to be around the people who drink and use bad language. Sometimes when I have a senior citizen party or something special they will come in and will feel at home. Like when I have a wedding reception. And I've had several of coming-out parties for Mexican families when the daughters get to be 15. They'll come in here and feel at ease because I know most of them personally, and that helps. But for the most part, I really can't say what percentage of the population . . . I don't go to church because, while I would feel at ease, I don't want to put other people ill-at-ease. So I don't go.

RM: You mean you would - you think that your presence would make them feel ill-at-ease?

DJ: Yes.

RM: Because you own a saloon?

DJ: Yes.

RM: What about the values of honesty and do . . . like people have to lock their doors in the community?

DJ: Oh, no. You don't lock your doors, and you don't have to take the keys out of your vehicles, and there are a few burglaries, but not very many. I think sometimes, if you lived on a ranch, and you went home, and you saw something was missing, my attitude would be, 'Well, I wasn't using it anyway, and if they can use it they can have it.' And a report is never filed on it. I think 10 years ago it was more that way than it is now because people have moved into the valley who are petty. But still, I have never locked my home. Ever.

RM: How about as a businesswoman? Do you worry about theft, or being an isolated place like this?

DJ: No, I don't here, because I'm open 24 hours. If someone was going to come in here, and rob me, it would have to be an armed robber. And the percentage of armed robbery against breaking and entering or burglary is down quite a bit. I also think that, being on a side road, getting away would be a problem. They really don't have anywhere to go. And most people that are my local customers have at one time or another been in my office and seen the size of my vault, and know that you can't blow it up. The vault I have was made in 1880. Everything of value is in the safe. You can't pick it up and carry it. And you can't open it up.

RM: Is there anymore that you would want to say about community values?

DJ: Well, I think for people out here, like living in olden times, because people care about each other. They are concerned about each other, and their welfare. Even though there's always some minor, petty things, on the most part, everyone in the valley gets along, they all appreciate what other people do. If you increase your business or try to do something for the Valley - to help make the valley grow - everyone appreciates it. And you get a lot of pats on the back.

RM: How about recreation? What do people do for recreation?

DJ: Well, in the summer we have a small lake out here called Crystal Lake, which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife is going to dry up, within the next 2 years, because there's spring water that goes into the lake. And then Spring Meadows Ranch had a manmade lake that they dammed up to use the water for irrigation. So, within the next couple of years we think that U.S. Fish and Wildlife is going to dry that lake up.

RM: Will they dry up the spring?

DJ: No, not the spring. They will break down the dams because they don't want people on any of the land that they bought. Now, some of the land is ELM land, but they have 7 plants on the endangered species list, and I think 3 or 5 animal-life things. They have a hairy-leg mosquito, several others. DJ: They found a hairy-leg mosquito out there. And so the only place they want people on the reserve will be in designated areas. They want it all to revert back like it was back in the 1930s when there was a lot of marshy reeds - part of it was a kind of swamp. Like Carson's Slough and stuff. And there were a lot of ducks, and migratory birds that stayed there, and then they will open it up for duck hunting and so on. But it will take at least 10 years to revert back. So they don't want people in areas where they don't want them. They want it to go back to a natural state.

RM: So it's not even going to do anything for tourist trade?

DJ: Well, they will have camp areas, and picnic areas, and perhaps a Visitor's Center, and they will maybe have tours, to go see where the pup fish . . . and see some of these little plant-life like the Amargosa wort plant, and so on. That they will show the people. But they will be in a controlled area. And that's why they don't want us to use that road from here to Pahrump, because it goes across the area.

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