

Interview with
SHIRLEY ANN BERG
LOFTHOUSE

An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada
Tonopah
1990

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Shirley Ann Berg Lofthouse with Andre Douchane, manager of the Round Mountain Gold Corporation operation. Ms. Lofthouse is receiving her ten-year service award.
May 1987



Shirley Ann Berg Lofthouse at age 16 in Round Mountain, Nevada, in front of the bottle cellar next to the Bergs' home. Will Berg built both the home and the bottle cellar.
c. 1915



Exterior photograph of the home constructed by Will Berg in Round Mountain, Nevada
March 1915

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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 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 Jodie Hanson, Alice Levine, Mike Green, Cynthia Tremblay, and Jean Stoess. Jared Charney contributed essential word processing skills. Maire Hayes, Michelle Starika, Anita Coryell, Jodie Hanson, Michelle Welsh, Lindsay Schumacher, and Shena Salzmann shouldered the herculean task of proofreading the oral histories. Gretchen Loeffler and Bambi McCracken assisted in numerous secretarial and clerical duties. Phillip Earl of the Nevada Historical Society contributed valuable support and criticism throughout the project, and Tan King at the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada at Reno served as a consulting oral historian. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

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--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
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 1,000 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.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Shirley Ann Lofthouse at her home in Round Mountain, Nevada, January 14, 1990.

CHAPTER ONE

Robert McCracken: What would you like me to call you - Shirley Ann or Shirley?

Shirley Ann Lofthouse: Either way. People that I've grown up with call me Shirley Ann.

RM: OK. Could you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

SL: My name reads Shirley Ann Berg. My birth certificate [is dated] 7/7/32.

RM: And where were you born?

SL: Tonopah.

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

SL: William Henry Berg.

RM: Do you know where and when he was born?

SL: He was born back in Ohio someplace, but I don't know the town. His birthday was February 24 and he was 77 when he died in '45.

RM: Then he was probably born in Ohio in 1868. And what was your mother's full name?

SL: Lillian Gladys Yeager.

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

SL: She was born in Leavenworth, Kansas.

RM: And could you tell me a little bit about your mother's family?

SL: Well, she came out here with her mother and a stepdad in the early 1900s. I think he ran a restaurant there in Round Mountain and both in and her mother worked in that restaurant. Her mother passed away at the age of 36.

RM: Here in Round Mountain?

SL: Yes; she's buried in the cemetery up there. And then the stepfather took her under his wing. She was a young girl and he was just going to make her his charge, but she didn't want to have anything to do with him. So my dad, who was considerably older than my mom, took her and sent her to Oakland or over in the San Francisco area to a Catholic school and let her finish high school. When she finished high school she came back here and he married her. He was 42 and she was 19, or something like that.

RM: Could you tell me a little bit about your father's family?

SL: Well, they all came out from Ohio. Uncle Karl, my dad, Uncle John and another brother and then 3 sisters: Aunt Fannie, Aunt Jessie, and Aunt Georgetta. The 3 sisters all went to the L.A. area; 3 of the brothers stayed here and the one brother went to northern California. My dad and Uncle Karl and Uncle John stayed right here in Round Mountain.

RM: They kind of established a major family in the area, didn't they?

SL: Yes. My dad eventually put in all the waterworks in Round Mountain. And Uncle Karl had kind of a mercantile store up there at one time, which was before my time. When I was growing up Daddy had the water company, Uncle John had the garage and Uncle Karl had the butcher shop.

RM: So your father was quite an enterprising man. Could you describe him to me?

SL: He was small - had a slight build; I forget about how much he weighed. He always would tell me "soakin' wet" he only weighed so much, but . . . And he never drank, never smoked, but he didn't care who did it in the house as long as they didn't bother him. He was very open-minded in that way. All he wanted was a family, so he married Ma and raised 5 kids.

RM: And they spent all their lives here in Round Mountain?

SL: Well, he took one boy and sent him off to school, and he never did come back here and live; he still lives in California.

RM: And what's his name?

SL: William E. Berg. He was a professor at the university in Berkeley for many years until he retired.

RM: Could you tell me a little bit about what brought your father and his brothers to the area?

SL: Well, they all liked the West and the country. Daddy and Uncle John had been up in Alaska for quite a few years. My dad came down through Oregon from the Yukon - he was up there during the Klondike Rush. Now that I think of it, somebody that you ought to talk to is my sister. Has her name been mentioned?

RM: What's her name?

SL: Getta; she lives in Sparks. She has the photo album my dad fixed up when he was up in Alaska.

RM: Well, it sounds like he was an adventurer.

SL: Yes, and he [wasn't in it] for the money. As I say, he didn't drink or smoke, and I don't know if he even came back with any gold. He just liked [the adventure].

RM: What was his occupation in Alaska?

SL: I don't know. I know he had a dog team, but that's all I know.

RM: What was he? How would you describe his occupation when you were growing up?

SL: Oh, he did a little bit of everything. Like with the water company [he was sort of a plumber], putting in new pipeline as the town grew. Now, I never had anything to do with the mines; never knew anything about them. But he bought the ranch in the early teens just for his kids to grow up on.

RM: How big was the ranch?

SL: You'll have to get that from Rene, but I know it was good size. He wanted his kids to grow up in that type of life. But his real occupation and his real life was growing things - growing vegetables. He could grow anything.

RM: And he bought the ranch in the teens, you say?

SL: Yes. Getta and Dan were born in '16 and '17, and he had bought the ranch by then.

RM: Where is the ranch?

SL: It's about 4 miles up the road here.

RM: Which ranches would border it?

SL: Oh, the Darrough ranch is on the south, because first is Carver's ranch; the next is Roger's ranch, which is where Rene grew up - she was a Rogers. Then the Darroughs - the Hot Springs we always called it - and then the next ranch is the Berg ranch.

RM: Who did he purchase it from?

SL: He bought it from the Logans. Katie Logan was raised on that ranch and she married one of the Darrough boys and then moved into Tonopah and raised her family.

RM: Which Darrough did she marry?

SL: She married Ray Darrough, one of the twins; Ray and Lawrence (Larry) Darrough were twins.

RM: Did she own the ranch?

SL: Well, I imagine her folks did. About all I know is that he [Will Berg] bought it from the Logans.

RM: Tell me about his gardening.

SL: Oh, I can tell you lots about his gardening; I worked with him. I was about the only one he'd let in the garden because Mom'd get in there and pull things that she thought were weeds and they wouldn't be weeds. Through the Second World War we made our living by peddling vegetables and fruit in Tonopah and Manhattan and Northumberland and all through the valley.

RM: And what vegetables did you grow?

SL: Oh, peas and carrots and beets and turnips - you name it and he grew it. Some were things that people said couldn't be grown here. He had his strawberry patch, and we had pumpkins and winter squash. . . . It was the same with the fruit. We had crabapples and apples and cherries, peaches, pears, just about anything that you could have.

RM: And he planted all these things himself including the fruit trees?

SL: Right. He did it all right from the start. And that's how we made our living through the war.

RM: If people said that these things couldn't be grown here, what do you think his secret was?

SL: He had a green thumb, I think. I can remember that he'd experiment with raspberries and blackberries, and we had gooseberries. Of course we had corn and potatoes, tomatoes . . . he grew everything.

RM: And he was the main source of labor, with some help from you?

SL: Yes. Then I had a nephew who is just a year younger than I am. In the summers when he'd stay with us, he'd help us peddle . . .

RM: What was his name?

SL: Franklin Farrington. He was my sister's child. Getta is quite a older than me.

RM: Did he hire Indians or anyone for labor?

SL: No. I can remember Mom telling me that when she had the first couple of kids, an Indian in Round Mountain - I think she called her "Old Jenny" - used to come down and help with the washing and ironing. But other than that we never had any help.

RM: Approximately how large was this garden, would you say?

SL: We had 3 of them. One was right below the house, and one was over Cy what we called the pond. He had a big pond of artesian water from 2 artesian wells there. Then there was what he called the "farthest garden," which he cultivated after I was a little older (the other 2 were established from . . . I can just remember them being there always). But there were springs at that farthest garden, and the older boys dug them out to get good drainage and then he put in a big potato garden over there. And he would plant corn between the trees in his orchard once in a while. He'd put the tomato plants down in alongside of them to keep them from freezing.

RM: About how much area did the garden cover?

SL: Well, he probably had an acre at the house, maybe a little more, and probably a couple acres over at the pond. And then the orchard was every bit as big as 2-1/2 acres [we have now at Carver's].

RM: Did he have a flood irrigation system or a ditch?

SL: He had a ditch. We had a big tank both at the ranch and at the orchard.

RM: So during the war he basically made his living from the garden?

SL: Strictly off his vegetables. We went door to door in Tonopah. We'd leave the ranch about 4:00 or 4:30 in the morning. Of course, it was dirt road until we got to what we call the 3-mile - right where you turn go up to Round Mountain or continue to come this way. That's where the pavement ended. We had a dirt road from the ranch that came along and went along the road and then went back up, so we had dirt road all that way and then into Tonopah.

RM: But from Round Mountain to U.S. Highway 6 it was paved?

SL: Yes.

RM: And you went door to door?

SL: Yes, and we stopped at the hospitals. At that time there were 2 of -them - the County Hospital and the Miner's Hospital. We'd go to the hospitals first, peddle there, and then just go door to door.

RM: And people paid you cash?

SL: Yes.

RM: Did you go to every door, or did you have kind of a route?

SL: Oh, we kind of cultivated a route. They'd get to know that we would be coming on a certain day and be waiting for us. I remember 3 pounds of apples for 2 bits. And the beets and carrots and turnips were 10 cents a bunch. They were beautiful big things.

RM: And you would go with him.

SL: Oh, you bet. One time he got the shingles and had to go to L.A. to he doctor. I knew how to do it and where to go, so my younger brother Skook helped me fix up a load, and he drove, and I told him where to go and we peddled our vegetables anyway so they wouldn't spoil.

RM: What was the status of the garden before World War II? Did he make a living on it then?

SL: It was his hobby, for his family. He always had the garden below the house. And in that garden over at the pond we also had asparagus, I can remember. We always had plenty of vegetables. He'd always send . . . for instance, he'd send a box full down to the Darroughs every week to Grandma Darrough, and then as kids, we never paid to go swimming

RM: But everybody else did?

SL: Yes. But we exchanged, you know. When everybody'd get in for a big haying season, they'd exchange. Rene's brother and so forth would come up and help hay, and Dan and the boys would go help somebody hay. And people up the valley would call up and say, "Will, send me a box of assorted vegetables. Oh, the \$5 size," or the \$10 size or whatever, and we'd ship it on the stage that went through.

RM: How did he plow his garden?

SL: Well, Uncle Little Kelsay, who lived on our ranch . . . he'd come to live on our ranch, and he raised registered quarter horses for the government for the cavalry at that time. In fact in one of my sacks here I have his papers on the registered horses. He handled all the stock on the ranch. My dad had absolutely no patience with animals whatsoever.

RM: Is that right?

SL: He had patience for his kids and his garden, but not for animals. And they knew it. They could just tell when he walked in the corral, "Don't go near that guy." But Uncle Little would take his team of horses and go plow the garden for Daddy.

RM: What was Kelsay's full name?

SL: His real name is Fulton Little Kelsay, but he went by Little.

RM: And he was a man who just showed up here?

SL: He lived over in Little Fish Lake Valley, over around Stone Cabin, and raised horses. He tried to make a living and his mother and dad were getting older and Uncle Little had had infantile paralysis. When he got to where he could walk - one leg was shorter than the other - he came to the ranch looking for work, and my dad took him and his mom and dad in and took care of them until they died. And then Uncle Little stayed there on the ranch and raised horses.

RM: Did he kind of abandon his place over in Little Fish Lake?

SL: Well, some of his relatives . . . there were brothers and sisters in on that, too. And then, Warren Lerude in Reno was a relation of Uncle Little's, and they still own in on the property over there. There was, Like, an upper ranch and a lower ranch. I don't know if you'd really want to call it a ranch in the terms that we would call it a ranch now, because I don't know how much acreage it had.

RM: Was it north of Stone Cabin?

SL: You know, I don't know. In all my years I've only been over there one time.

RM: OK. How did he till his garden?

SL: Just with an old plow pulled by a team of horses. It was big enough and then it was ringed on the north and south sides with a big wind block - with trees on the north and south. That was to help keep the frost down and so forth, and there was plenty of room in there; that team of horses could get in there and he'd always leave a good walkway around it so that you wouldn't walk on his [plants].

RM: Where did he get his seed?

SL: Oh, he pored over the catalogs - Burpees and Gurneys. In one room in the house he had a huge bin and he had jars of seeds stuck in there and he'd start . . . he had a hot bed. He started them in wagon beds, little old wagon beds like a kid's wagon. He'd start them and have them hanging in the kitchen window when the sun came in. They'd get up so high, and then he would take them and transplant them into this hotbed he had dug down into the ground - so far dawn. In the daytime he had old-fashioned windows; the kind with all the panes in them - 6 and 8

panes. He had a frame, and he'd pull those down and the sun would go through that. Then at night he covered it with his canvas.

RM: Where did he get his knowledge of gardening like that?

SL: Daddy was a self-taught man on everything. He'd read a lot . . . he even did a little bit of pharmacy when he came through Oregon. I don't know where in Oregon, I just remember him telling me that he worked in a pharmacy at one time. I can always remember him telling the druggist, "You fix them up with a . . ." (some thing that he wanted for us kids if we had a cold).

To show you Daddy's patience with his garden . . . he'd always start the vegetables early. Well, there's always a frost somewhere along the way, and he'd plant his tomato plants and his pepper plants and other things that would freeze easily. And it was our job as kids to go to the dumps and find all the good sized cans that we could find. He'd cut out the ends of them if they weren't cut completely out, and it was our job at night to go out and cover up those plants so they didn't freeze. Then in the morning he'd go along and kick them off. But at night it was our job to go back in and cover all those plants up. And if they froze he would start them over again and go through the whole process and get them out.

RM: Is that right? Did he always have extra seedbeds behind in case something froze?

SL: Always.

RM: Were there any rules of thumb about when to put your plants out?

SL: I don't remember him going by the Almanac or going by the moon or any of that. He just planted.

RM: When would he actually put them out?

SL: Well, [it's hard to say], starting them in his hot bed and all. And the seeds that could be planted underground and were underground crops - like beets and carrots and turnips and so forth - he planted them just as early . . . Our seasons in those days were a lot different than they are now. We actually had springs.

RM: Oh really?

SL: And we had good winters. I can remember going in snowdrifts .

RM: So you feel that the weather has changed.

SL: Oh, terrible. There's no moisture now. I can remember going to school and going through snowdrifts (probably on purpose a little) and you almost couldn't get through them. When Little Kelsay lived on our ranch he kept a diary. It tells about the blizzards and getting snowed in at the ranch, and nobody could come in or out. The mail stage couldn't come in. They didn't see anybody for 2 and 3 and 4 days because nobody could come in. I can remember as a kid, too, the people up there in Pablo Canyon getting snowed in. The mine took their equipment and plowed them out. We don't have that anymore.

RM: And then there was more of a transition to summer, you say; you had spring.

SL: Yes. You had your winter when you were supposed to have winter; it started in October, then November and December and January. Then you'd start your thaw and get nicer weather and you'd have springs. Nowadays, it seems like one day is winter and you're using your furnace, and the next day is summer and you're using your air conditioner. We had a nicer spring in those days. In the orchard our fruit depended on it.

RM: Did you lose many fruit crops?

SL: Not until later years. That was more towards when I was in high school; as I got older. I don't remember losing them when I was younger.

RM: So you would describe the winters now as milder.

SL: Oh very mild. And we have cold weather, but I can remember it getting down to 20 below when my dad was around.

RM: Where did your father get his seedlings for the fruit trees?

SL: I don't know if he ordered them through the mail, which he did a lot of, or if he went out someplace. I do know that in later years when he'd want to experiment and try something, we'd go to Fallon to Kent's and pick up something. He always had a rosebush on the side of his garden, too.

RM: Did he? But he didn't grow that many flowers?

SL: No, just a couple rose bushes.

RM: Did he grow alfalfa or anything like that?

SL: Well, that's where my brother Dan came in. Dan had the pasture and the cows. We had wild hay and alfalfa.

RM: Did you feed your alfalfa to the cows?

SL: Yes; through the winter. We didn't bale our hay in those days, we'd just stack it, and Dan would feed the cattle.

RM: Did you have milk cows or feeder cows?

SL: We had both. We had the milk cows for ourselves.

RM: So you were producing milk for the family. Did you have any other stock, like sheep or goats?

SL: Oh, we had a few sheep. My brother Dan ran a few head of sheep he liked for . . .

RM: He didn't raise them for wool?

SL: Oh, yes, Dan sheared them. Somebody would come through the valley and pick the wool up; there were several other ranchers that had a few sheep. I can remember, as a kid, Uncle Little and another guy who lived on our ranch, for a few years - Claude Mealman. He helped do

chores and was just a handyman around. They all pitched in and helped, like on the shearing. Our ranch was the only one that had any scales that cattle or stock could be weighed on and it was always a treat when they did that. I can remember that they sheared the sheep in the weighhouse.

RM: Was he into gardening before he got the ranch?

SL: I'm sure he always had a garden and he always puttered with it.

RM: Did the family live there then on the ranch?

SL: In the summertime. We'd go back to Round Mountain in the winter.

RM: When did he build that stone house there?

SL: In Round Mountain? I think he built it before the first kid was even born because [I have a picture of] Mom and Daddy, and she's pregnant with Dan, the first child.

RM: So he probably built it for her.

SL: Yes, and he built it with the block maker in the back yard.

RM: Yes; he made it out of real cement blocks.

SL: And one of my nephews still has it; he was making cement blocks himself out of that same one.

RM: What happened to the ranch after the kids grew up?

SL: When my dad died in '45 my oldest brother, Dan, took the ranch over. And my youngest brother took over the water company in Round Mountain.

RM: Oh, and that's how Skook got the water company.

SL: Right, because he knew the water end of it. He knew the lines and all that business. Dan was strictly the animals and raising the cattle and stuff.

RM: Is the farm still in the family?

SL: Yes. My brother Dan died in '56 at the age of 40, and his oldest boy now runs the ranch. But Rene still lives there; has her house there.

RM: What's Dan's oldest boy's name?

SL: He goes by Jim, but his real name is Russell William.

RM: Do they raise cattle?

SL: Yes. He still has a few cattle and his Down hay, just about in the same area. But it's harder to do it these days, it seems.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: Now, can we talk about the mercantile store that your father . . .

SL: Well, I don't think Daddy was in on that. That's why I think you ought to talk to my sister Getta on this - I think she could tell you more about it. I think Uncle Karl and . . . I don't know who all was in on that. I just vaguely even remember seeing the building.

RM: So it wasn't there when you were growing up?

SL: No. In fact, when they had the big flood in Round Mountain it went through the mercantile buildings and the old hotel and I think that was the last of it.

RM: Do you know when that flood was?

SL: I think it was in '31. I don't remember the flood, but I can remember the damages it did. It went through that building, and I can remember as a kid traipsing through there and it was all deserted. I can remember going into the old hotel and going back into where the old kitchen was, and into a building on the side of it. Then they cleaned out the bottom floor and old Frank Clark had a little soda fountain and the guys used to play cards in there.

RM: And that was probably the end of the mercantile, then? Do you know when it began?

SL: No.

RM: Did your father have other enterprising activities besides the farm and the garden and the water company?

SL: Well, at one time when I was very young I remember he owned quite a few cabins up on Round Mountain on the east side. But he sold them instead of having to worry about renting them. But the water company -plumbing - was mainly his thing; thawing out frozen lines. That and the ranch.

RM: How far was the ranch from the house in Round Mountain?

SL: I think it's 12 miles.

RM: Well, they probably had cars when they bought it.

SL: Yes. My first recollection of trying to learn how to drive was in an old Model-A Ford sedan, and then he got a '41 Ford pickup and I learned how to drive in that.

RM: Your father was clearly an enterprising man and from what I've gathered he must have had incredible energy.

SL: He was a little guy, he paced himself. He never overdid, he always just paced himself. I mean, when he shoveled, he had a steady [pace]; he'd do things steadily.

RM: Tell me some more about your mother.

SL: Mom had quite a job raising a bunch of kids. And we always had extra kids in our house. George Sopp was at our house, and the Darrough kids. I have a picture of a Darrough who was one of Skook's chums. He was Travis Darrough's son.

RM: So your house and family were kind of a magnet for other children in the area.

SL: Always. Do you know Barbara Vucanovich?

RM: Yes.

SL: Her husband George and Skook grew up together. I don't remember a summer or anything without George Vucanovich being around.

RM: We should mention that he is [the husband of] Representative Barbara Vucanovich, the U.S. Representative from the northern Nevada district.

SL: Right. And then there's Bob Warren, who's been very heavily into mining. He was head of the Nevada Mining Association for years. He was born and raised in Round Mountain and he and Skook grew up together; I always remember him in the background.

RM: Tell me what family life was like growing up here.

SL: I wouldn't've had it any different.

RM: Your mother took care of the house . . .

SL: Right. And cooked. I can remember cooking. When I grew up I peeled more apples and ground more meat for mincemeat . . . She made her own chow-chow, piccalilli, and we made our own mincemeat. When they'd go deer hunting, we always took the necks and part of the meat for the mincemeat and made our own - with apples. And she did a lot of canning. We had a big, big step-down cellar at the house and that thing would always be lined with food.

RM: She was canning food from the garden and the farm, I imagine.

SL: Always. I can remember cutting the corn off the cobs and we put it out on the shed - it had a corrugated tin roof - and we'd pepper it to keep the flies away and everything, and put it on sheets and dry it and bag it and put it down in the cellar.

RM: Was she the kind of woman that was always cooking in the kitchen?

SL: In those days, a lot.

RM: Did she made bread?

SL: Always. That's where I learned how to make bread.. I still do. We always had fruits so we always had some kind of a fruit pie or applesauce or something around. She was very, very busy that way.

RM: She had helped in the restaurant, hadn't she? She probably learned a lot about food preparation and that kind of thing.

SL: I'm sure she did. Mom was a good cook. But when she got older she just hated to cook. If somebody came in and stayed for supper, she said it would just make her nervous cooking. I think she'd just had her share of it. So she always enjoyed coming to one of us kids' houses and having us cook.

RM: Did she sew or anything like that?

SL: No. She knit edgings for scarves and pillowcases, and crocheted a little bit, but not an awful lot. She just didn't get into that end of it. She had friends who used to do that. She had a schoolteacher friend who used to sew and crochet and knit a lot.

PM: There wasn't a church in Round Mountain at that time, was there?

SL: I don't remember one. The only thing I ever remember in Round Mountain was Bible School in the summertime. They'd have that for 2 weeks. And there was a Reverend Schriver who used to come in there all the time. I think he was out of Carson. I was never inside a church until after I was married and had kids.

RM: Would you describe your family as not being religious?

SL: No. Mom was so-called Presbyterian; that's what she always said. And my dad (I've often talked about this to the kids) didn't smoke and didn't drink and I don't remember Daddy ever cussing. I don't ever remember him having to holler at me or really getting mad. If he told you to do something, you just knew you were supposed to go do it. And if he told you a second time, you'd better really move. But I always remember that when my aunts would come up from L.A., they'd get into these discussions, because Aunt Jessie and Aunt Fanny were religious, although I don't know what kind. But he'd always say, "Well, there's something up there. There's something almighty up there that's bigger than any of us." And that was about his religion. And he made us feel that just because we weren't of any special religion that didn't mean that anybody was any better than we were. If you just did good and lived the best you could . . . we were never preached to.

RM: What were big important occasions in your family?

SL: Oh, always birthdays. We always had a birthday cake. There weren't a lot of gifts because we didn't go where you could buy things, because there were times that there were no stores in Round Mountain. So it really wasn't big on the gifts, but we were a great family for playing cards and games.

RM: What were some of the card games you played?

SL: Oh, as kids we played spoons and rummy and fish and so on. And then as you got older there was the game called "pan." I don't know if you're familiar with it.

RM: I've heard of it.

SL: Panguingue is the real name. They'd get together and they'd play that all night long and then just get in and cook up a big breakfast. There wouldn't be any drinking or whatever, just playing cards and making homemade fudge and homemade candies, which fell to my job when I got older. And my dad loved to play bridge. He taught everybody - especially Skook and me - how to play bridge. We'd play that with him; he loved that.

RM: Did he play with other people besides family members?

SL: Well, this schoolteacher friend that I mentioned, Bessie L. Holts, is still alive and lives in Las Vegas. I correspond with her. She's like one of the family. The first year she came here she taught down at Darrough's Hot Springs. Have you been down to Darrough's?

RM: Oh, sure.

SL: She taught in the long building down there.

RM: When would that have been?

SL: Well, she taught Dan and Rene and my sister Getta, and they're in their 70s.

RM: OK. So we're talking a long time ago.

SL: I think Miss Holts is 86. And then she went on to teach me. I still call her Miss Holts; I can't call her by her first name.

RM: And she taught in the Round Mountain School up in Round Mountain?

SL: Yes. She also taught Skook. She taught all of us.

RM: What do you remember about going to school in Round Mountain?

SL: That school was new the first year I went to school there in 1937. I graduated from that same high school. I graduated in 1950 and they only had high school one more year, in 1951. I went to school in that school all my life.

RM: The school building is still there, isn't it?

SL: Oh yes. It's still being utilized. You walk in, you have your hallway, and the door to the right was high school; that was the upper class.

RM: Was it in 2 rooms?

SL: No, actually, you could have 4 rooms. There was a room to your left, and they would generally have 3 rooms for grade school. They split it up. There was one big long room with folding doors across the center. With those folding doors they could have a class in each room. And then, when we'd have our Christmas programs or something they'd open those doors up and we had a stage with 3 entries.

RM: Was the first room on the left for the lower grades?

SL: Well, it varied from year to year depending on how many kids were in a grade. Sometimes a teacher would only take the first, second and third grades, another teacher fourth and fifth, and another one sixth, seventh and eighth. They divided them up by the amount of kids.

RM: But it went through the twelfth grade while you were there?

SL: Yes. In fact, when I was going through this sack of things, I found 3 report cards from when I went to high school there. I only went to high school 3 years but I had enough credits to graduate.

RM: About how many kids were in the high school when you were going there?

SL: Well, in my freshman year I was the only kid of high school age, because the Second World War broke out and the mine shut down, so people moved out of here. Mrs. Earl Carl taught me. She still lives in Fallon. She was raised in this valley, too. But she was a grade school teacher; she really wasn't an accredited high school teacher, but the school board agreed to let her teach me the basic subjects. Then I missed a year because my dad wouldn't let me go to Tonopah and board out; he [wanted to] keep me at home. Then the second year I went to school in Manhattan, and there were 3 of us in the high school over there. Then I missed another year, and then I started at Round Mountain again because the mine had started up. There were 12 of us in the whole high school, but only 3 of us in the graduating class. There was Jack Manley, who was born and raised here, and a girl by the name of Rachel Antoniazzi who was from Tonopah (her dad had just come out here to work) and myself. That was in '50.

RM: About how many were in the lower grades then?

SL: That's hard to say. I think there were only 2 other teachers, so there wouldn't have been too many.

RM: What was it like, going to a school like that?

SL: I liked school. I liked the fact that when I raised my kids they went to a smaller school like this.

RM: Your children went to school here, too?

SL: Every one of them graduated from Tonopah.

RM: How did the teacher handle 3 seniors?

SL: Well, she had the whole high school - the freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors - she would kind of combine some of the classes. RM: She was teaching everything, wasn't she - English, science, math. SL: Right. She was a young gal, 21 years old, out from New York. Jewel Livingston was her name. And she taught for just my senior year I guess.

I like the idea of the smaller schools because you get more attention. I think it's more thorough and you're [exposed] more to your basics. I think they'd better get back to the basics of reading, writing and arithmetic like we had in those days.

RM: Did you have a lot of homework?

SL: No. I mean, I always had homework, but I liked school so I didn't mind it. I think that in the grade school, where you're combined with other grades, lots of times the competition is good in there and the lower grades learn from the upper grades, too.

RM: Yes, I went to a school like that, that's true.

SL: For instance, in my freshman year Mrs. Carl (again, I can't call her by her first name although I've known her all my life, because she was my school teacher) would give me my lessons and I would go off and do them. And I'd find myself listening to the little kids or wanting to help them. And I had no competition. It was hard, as a high school student.

RM: How was the building heated?

SL: We had a big old furnace downstairs and radiators - steam heat. RM: So it was a nice building.

SL: Oh, it was. Very nice.

RM: How did Round Mountain afford it?

SL: You know, I don't know. My sis or Skook might be able to tell you. I know that one of the Michels who was raised in Round Mountain went to school with Skook. I think his brother was in on the designing of this school. And then his man, Mrs. Michels, was on the school board and I think that they really pushed to get it through.

RM: And at that time it was a local school board, not a county-wide thing?

SL: No, it was a local school board.

RM: I wonder how they financed it?

SL: I don't know. But that was a nice school. I can remember the old building, but I don't really remember any of them going to school there; that's where my sister and brothers would have gone.

RM: Where was it located?

SL: Just right adjacent. If you were facing the school like this and you just came right around this way, there was a long building right there - a big long frame building. And we used it to play "Ante-I-Over." The kids [would yell], "Ante-I-Over," and, "Pigs Tail," when it didn't go over and you were running around the other side. Oh!

RM: What happened to that building when they started school in the new one?

SL: You know, I don't know. I guess it was torn down or moved out. I graduated from high school in '50 and got married in '50, and then in '52 I moved to Ely, so it could have been torn down or moved out about that

time.

RM: How long did you live in Ely?

SL: Oh, 6 years. Two of my kids were born in Ely.

RM: You were living in Ely when I went to high school there.

SL: Oh for gosh sakes.

RM: I went to high school there in '53.

SL: And I moved to Ely in '53 and left in '58. I'll bet you know some of the people that I know there.

RM: I'll bet. Well, tell me about childhood in rural Nevada during this era.

SL: It was the only way to go; you were never bored. We didn't have TV. On the ranch we didn't have electricity.

RM: But you did have electricity in town.

SL: Right. But we didn't have propane. We didn't have a propane stove in the kitchen until my senior year; we had a wood and coal stove. That was what we all were raised on. I loved it. I bought that coal oil lamp on the table as a [reminder of those days].

RM: Is that an Alladin?

SL: That's an Alladin with that mantel in there. We didn't have one of those; Rene and Dan always had that kind. We had the old Coleman lanterns like I have in the window.

RM: Did you always have electricity in Round Mountain when you were growing up?

SL: Yes. But they never got electricity on the ranch until after I was up and gone.

RM: What kinds of things did kids do and what kind of world did they live in?

SL: We just played and we worked; we always had work.

RM: Did you have to work quite a bit?

SL: Oh, we weren't overworked, I'm sure. But we always had to help. I can remember stacking hay and as I said, helping my dad peddle vegetables. And then my brother Dan had the cattle. And I loved to ride, so I always went with him buckarooing. I've been all over those hills, all back up in here.

RM: Mount Jefferson and all up in there?

SL: Right.

RM: You let your cattle graze in open range, then?

SL: Yes. You had a certain place to put them. Dan would take his up Jefferson [with] Pete Rogers and then back over here at Moores Creek and then gather them up in the fall and part them out down below the fields. RM: Were girls involved in playing dolls and house and things like that in those days?

SL: Oh, I'm sure. [I'd play with] this nephew of mine who's just a year younger than I am, and if I would play soldier with him, then he would go play something that I wanted to play. In fact, my dad moved a little old tin building over for us to use as a playhouse, and I'm sure it's still on the ranch there - out behind. It had a window in the back and he put a screen door on it. It was one

of these old tin buildings embossed with a pattern in it. We would fix up lemonade out there and go invite my mum and Rene and everybody to come out. And then we had trails all over the ranch that we would take, in the buck brush and clearing. We'd crawl in through there and play some wild game. We never lacked for anything to do.

RM: What kind of toys did you have in your family?

SL: Well, Skook's my youngest brother and he's 9 years older than I am. When I was small and growing up he was in high school and he was too [old] . . . he used to fix these carts - probably nowadays they would be called a dune buggy type thing - and they were real easy to pull.

RM: What did it look like?

SL: It was more or less a frame with 4 wheels on it.

RM: Like tricycle wheels?

SL: Well, it wasn't that big, they were smaller type wheels. We'd pull each other on those, or one would ride the bike and pull the other. And then we always had a game - and this is where the grownups would get in on it - with guns. We made our own rubber guns. You took the end of an apple carton and made your own gun; put a clothespin on the end of it and wound rubber around it and then took an old inner tube and cut it so that . . . you hooked it in this piece where the clothespin was, brought it up and stuck it over a wire or nail. And then you'd shoot. I mean, the grownups got into this, let me tell you. My brother could shoot and load it before you'd ever get over there to shoot it back. Skook was the master. And then in the summertime, especially, we'd have water fights. And there again, the grownups were in it.

RM: What did you use?

SL: Anything you could get your hands on. You had a faucet at the front gate and 3 entrances to the house (because you could sneak in through the cellar) and there was a well at the back of the house and water was always draining down. We were just always looking for a water fight - throw it once and that was it, the whole place was involved.

RM: What about winter type games? Were there any special games or activities?

SL: No. As I said, we always played a lot of card games and ð ..

Was there much sledding?

SL: Oh yes.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: I'd like you to think back to when you were a fairly young child - let's say 10 or something like that. Describe for me what the town of Round Mountain looked like.

SL: Well, there was a guy by the name of Charlie Zuzallo, and he had rentals. Rene would know exactly how to spell the name, because Ruby, the daughter, is a real good friend of hers. Anyway, he had these little cabins for rent all over the town. They were always painted white and they were sometimes only 2 rooms, sometimes 3 rooms, maybe one room. And if you put a bathtub in them, sometimes he made the bathtubs just out of cement. But I can remember that there were some nice houses. Some of them were up on a hillside, and then across the street from where he lived, and down the next block, and . . . he had a lot of little rentals that he'd fix up.

RM: What were they - old miner's cabins that he'd fixed up?

SL: Yes. A lot of the people would live there - [mainly singles] or couples. But as far as stores, my Uncle Karl had what we always called the butcher shop, which was right next door to our house. All I had to do was go out through my yard up 3 steps. He and my Aunt Katie had a grocery store there. They had fresh meat - he had a fresh meat counter and a big walk-in box.

RM: Where was that located?

SL: Next door to the big old stone house there in Round Mountain. It's still there.

RM: OK. And he was your father's brother?

SL: Yes - Uncle Karl. And then Uncle John had the garage across the street.

RM: How long did Karl have the butcher shop?

SL: He moved out of there, I'm sure, after the Second World War broke out, and he moved to Mina and had a grocery store there for years.

RM: Did he have a butcher shop as far back as you can remember?

SL: Yes. That's my first recollection.

RM: And it was there till after the war?

SL: I would say after the war. That's another thing that Rene would probably remember because of the fact that Uncle Karl was her uncle by marriage to my brother Dan, but Aunt Katie was already her blood aunt, because Aunt Katie was a Rogers when she married my uncle and Rene was a Rogers. Rene married my brother, and his uncle was Uncle Karl and then his wife was Aunt Katie, so she became Rene's aunt by marriage. But she was already Rene's aunt before she ever married my brother because of the fact that she was a blood aunt on her side of the family.

RM: I see. And how long was he in Mina?

SL: I don't really know. He was over there and he became ill. I don't really know what was wrong with Uncle Karl outside of the fact that he seemed to become like a young kid; that is, childish in his mind. Nowadays when they talk about Alzheimer's disease, I just wonder if that isn't what happened with Uncle Karl, because Aunt Katie had to take care of him like a baby. They eventually moved back to Round Mountain and she just had to physically take care of him every which way. And he could become violent, like at night or something. She had a young gentleman come and stay there to help her take care of him until he died.

RM: When did they finally move back?

SL: Well, I was over in Ely in this time. It was after I was married.

RM: And you got married when?

SL: In 1950. I married John Lofthouse.

RM: Was he from Round Mountain?

SL: No. He was born and raised in Fallon.

RM: OK. And when did your Uncle Karl finally pass away?

SL: I couldn't tell you the year - I'd have to go look at the cemetery. But I'm sure it happened while I was in Ely, because I know when I was in high school Aunt Katie wanted me to come over and stay nights with her and my dad wouldn't let me because he said that was no place for a young girl. If Uncle Karl became violent, what could I do?

RM: Right.

SL: So that's when she got a guy to come in.

RM: What happened to Aunt Katie then?

SL: Well, she lived a good life here. There again, Rene could tell you more. She drove her little old Ford pickup around and visited. Danny and Rosie Daniels, Deanna Klapper's mom and dad, had the bar out here for many, many years, and Aunt Katie used to go down and visit with them and so forth. She ended up going into the hospital in Tonopah and staying there until she passed away.

RM: When did she finally pass away?

SL: I don't even know that.

RM: And then, how long did your Uncle John have that garage? Was it there at your earliest memory?

SL: Yes, I can remember going over and pumping the gas for him; I loved to do that.

RM: And it was across the street from the house, right?

SL: Yes. And then Lucille moved Aunt Blanche and Uncle John to Reno; I think doctoring was probably one of the reasons.

RM: Lucille was the one who went to college and wrote the thesis on the history of Round Mountain'

SL: Right. She's a daughter of Uncle John - their only child. She's around my sister's age - they all grew up together.

RM: OK. Did Uncle Karl have any children?

SL: They had 2 girls but they died when they were very young, something like a couple of years apart.

RM: Do you remember what they died of?

SL: The only story that I could remember was that the one girl ate grapes. Now whether she choked on them, or whatever, I don't know. And I don't really know with the other one.

RM: So they didn't have children that survived to adulthood.

SL: Oh, no.

RM: And then Uncle John had the one daughter.

SL: Right.

RM: And how long did he have the garage?

SL: I don't know what year he came to Round Mountain. My dad came there in 1906, and . . . Skook might be able to tell you more on this because he eventually bought the garage from Uncle John and he's had it ever since.

RM: But then Lucille moved them to Reno?

SL: Yes. And there was work up there. There again, after the Second World War the town just went down to nothing so there was no work here, and Uncle John was getting older and everything. Lucille was a bookkeeper - she also taught me one year when I was in the third grade. She had her teacher's credentials, but she wasn't good with children. She had the knowledge but she couldn't get it across.

RM: Do you remember anything about Lucille writing her thesis and interviewing people in town?

SL: No, I don't. You see, Lucille is, what - 74, 75 - and I'm 57, so that's quite a difference.

RM: What kind of homes were there in town besides yours?

SL: They were mostly just frame . . .

RM: Name some of the other homes.

SL: The Julia and Ben Morrin home. That might be a source for some pictures and a little bit of history of Gold Hill, because Ben Morrin was some kind of a boss out at Gold Hill. Frank Jakowatz could tell you the history on Gold Hill because Ben and Julia were raising a granddaughter of theirs by the name of Connie who was my age. We started first grade together in Round Mountain and Connie lives in Reno. It was her Granddad Morrin who worked out there.

RM: What was happening out at Gold Hill?

SL: Well, they were digging gold.

RM: Now Gold Hill is north of Round Mountain, isn't it?

SL: Yes. But they've burnt down the headframe now and everything; there's absolutely nothing out there anymore.

RM: Does Echo Bay own Gold Hill?

SL: Yes, they're in on it. Homestake has a part in Echo Bay - Echo Bay and Homestake and Case Pomeroy. Of course, Echo Bay is the big shareholder. They've been doing drilling out there and they burned the headframes down and everything.

RM: So there was a garage and then there was a butcher shop when you were growing up?

SL: And we had a town hall and they used to have dances down there all the time and my sister played for all of the dances.

RM: Where was the town hall located?

SL: Just across the street from where the grocery store is now on the main street. And the town hall was later moved to Tonopah. They had it as a bar at one time, and then they made it into the bowling alley. But we had the town hall and they used to have shows come in there - entertainment. I can remember them taking us kids down there to see some kind of a comedy show or tricks or a magician type thing, but that's about all.

RM: Did they ever show movies at the town hall?

SL: I was trying to think. I think they must have. I can remember vaguely in my mind, but I can't remember any show. I think that was all the entertainment there was for kids outside of just normal play things. We did an awful lot of sleigh riding in the wintertime. We always had so much snow and we could go up and start at the end of town and slide all the way down the highway.

RM: How far down would you go?

SL: Oh, probably down to the curve at times. We'd have somebody pick us up and take us back into town.

RM: Was there much swimming up at Darrough's?

SL: Always - a lot, especially from the ranch. But we always were picnicking and camping. Always, just on the spur of the moment, somebody'd say, "Well, I've got a pot of beans, why don't you make a salad. Let's go to the hills." We're gone.

RM: Was there a hotel in town when you were growing up?

SL: Yes.

RM: What was it called?

SL: I don't know that it had a name. We always just called it the Hotel. I think the Darroughs were in on the cooking end of it or something. It seems to me that Billy Darrough's mom, Lila, did cooking there.

RM: Was she Laura's daughter?

SL: No, daughter-in-law. Lila would be married to her son. She did cooking in there if I'm not mistaken. There again, Getta could tell you because they're all around her age bracket.

RM: About how many rooms did the Hotel have, do you think?

SL: I couldn't even say.

RM: And was it the one that was destroyed in the flood?

SL: Right.

RM: Do you know when that flood was?

SL: 1931, I think; the year before I was born.

RM: OK. The Carvers got their bar (the bar at Carvers) from the Hotel. They dug it up after it had been out in the flood.

SL: Oh, I can believe that. When I was going to high school the Hotel was still there and I have a picture of Rene and Mom and myself - we'd been for a walk (that's another thing we used to do a lot, is walk). We had stopped and were sitting on the south side of the Hotel in the sun, and at that time we weren't married, but the kids' dad, John, was working on his car and he took a picture of us sitting over there in the sun. (His mom and dad owned the Palace Club at that time.)

RM: The Palace Club was not the Hotel.

SL: Oh no. When you went into Round Mountain the Hotel was on your left and the Palace Club was on the right. The Palace Club was moved over here from Manhattan by the kids' granddad - John's dad - Al Lofthouse. RM: When did he do that?

SL: In about '49.

RM: What was located where the Palace is now before it was moved in from Manhattan?

SL: That's a good question. You know, I can't remember. The building next to it has always been there. It's a church now but it was a bar many years ago. In fact, George Vucanovich's dad had that bar to begin with.

RM: Do you know what it was called when it was a bar?

SL: No, but Getta and Frank can tell you. I remember Kirby's as a kid; when I was real small there was a guy who ran it by the name of Kirby, so it was called Kirby's. Getta, my sister, can tell you about him, too.

RM: Now, a flood came along and damaged the Hotel in what, '31, right?

SL: It had to be '31.

RM: What did it do - just sit there for all those years?

SL: Just sit there and deteriorate. I can remember that we kids were warned, "Don't go upstairs because those ceilings . . ." and everything, and you could see them drooping and falling down.

RM: I don't understand why it wasn't fixed up, because the mines were going in 1930.

SL: Was there a date on that picture I gave you?

RM: Yes, I think there was. "After the flood, August 12, 1930." And then it just sat there.

SL: Right. And they just fixed up the lower floor, like I said, and made a little soda fountain and gathering place.

RM: What eventually happened to it?

SL: I don't know; it happened when I was over in Ely. I had all those years raising the kids . . .

RM: What other business establishments were there in town? Was there a barber shop?

SL: Oh, sure. Bob Belcher had a barber shop directly across the street from the Palace Club and the building that's there is still part of the original building. It's been added on and all . . .

RM: You mean going east across the street.

SL: As you're going straight into town, instead of turning right, if you just go straight, it's right there on that corner.

RM: Was there a dry goods store or anything like that?

SL: No. After that mercantile . .

RM: Yes. That was in the Berg Mercantile. Was there a grocery store?

SL: Well, just Uncle Karl's butcher shop. They had everything in there. I'm sure when people went to Fallon they'd buy, but . . .

RM: Now, let's clarify when the Berg Mercantile was. That was before your time, wasn't it?

SL: Yes. And it was ruined in 1930 by that flood also.

RM: Oh, and where was it located?

SL: Right where the fire station is now, on that whole big corner. I remember going through the building; I remember the silt on the floor and some old empty shelves.

RM: What about some other bars? What was the one next to the Palace?

SL: Kirby's.

RM: Were there other ones?

SL: There might have been but I don't know. I just vaguely remember a big row of buildings all the way down that street, like past the store. I'll tell you something that my dad had there, and there again, I just vaguely remember. But down the street, when you go into town and make a right and go on clear down the block and make another right, off to the left he had a dairy.

RM: And how many cows did he have?

SL: There again, I don't know; it's just vague in my mind. I can remember going in there and the smell and eating the grain and hearing the cows, but I don't know any more about it.

RM: Did he milk all those cows himself?

SL: Yes. He was a good little milker.

RM: And did he sell the milk locally?

SL: Yes.

RM: When did the dairy open, do you know?

SL: No. Again, you might talk to Getta and Skook on that. He had to have closed it up and got rid of it before I started first grade because I don't really remember it.

RM: Did he sell the milk through your uncle's meat market?

SL: He could have sold it right through there, because in those days you could do that. You didn't have your pasteurized .

RM: Right.

SL: Another business that he had was what we called the ice business. I don't know if there's a picture that exists of this, but behind the butcher shop he had a great big tall structure and there was a motor or an engine or something. There again, Skook would have to tell you because he's the mechanically minded one. He made ice blocks on the back porch of the butcher shop, and this was called the ice house. I have a picture - or somebody in my family has a picture - of

Daddy in his boots up to his knees and he's got a sled and he's delivering this ice block to somebody's house for their refrigerator.

RM: He was an enterprising man, wasn't he?

SL: Yes he was. I always said he was self-taught because he always would . . .

RM: He saw a need and he started businesses, from a dairy to an ice house to a garden to a

SL: But the thing of it is, everybody always said, "Oh, I wish't I had Will Berg's sock. I wish't I had Will Berg's sock." But by the time he got through raising all these kids plus how many other kids he helped . . . For instance, I don't know what happened to George Vucanovich's dad, but there was just his mom and he, and Daddy always helped out and sent over boxes of vegetables. And George Sopp never had a dad that I knew of. Mrs. Sopp might have been . . . George Sopp's sister, Vera, lives in Reno. She was raised in Round Mountain. She'd probably have some tales to tell you. But by the time he got through with all of his extra little things, my dad never had a sock.

RM: I wish I had your dad's energy.

SL: He had that! He went strong until he was 77. When he died he had walked up to his water tank, which was where the water tank is in Round Mountain. He put that whole water system in, except he had a big old wooden tank up there. He would walk up there and do his digging . . . well, the winter of '49 and '50 was a real bad winter and he couldn't drive his pickup up there so he would walk it. Well, he over exerted himself and got a cold virus and didn't feel good. But Daddy's therapy and reasoning was, "Just do a little bit each day. Don't try to overdo it. But just do a little bit and work it out." But then, after all, the man's 77 years old and he had to tramp through that drifted snow and he probably got too hot and then got cold or chilled; anyway, it hit him in the respiratory system. One morning I was getting ready to go to school when he called me in and said, "Shirley Ann, go over and get Uncle" (he called him Jack, I called him Uncle John). "Go get Jack, I'm a sick man." So I went and got Uncle John and he took Daddy to the hospital. He was gone by noon. He'd just overdone; but up until that time that man went deer hunting every year. Never rode a horse, but he got his deer every year.

RM: And you were a senior in high school?

SL: Yes. It was 2 months before I graduated; he died in April. He always, as I said, paced himself. Always. But he always walked.

RM: How did your mother, being quite a big younger than he was, adjust to his passing then?

SL: Well, I started to tell you a little bit ago that in 1945 on the ranch Mom had a terrible, terrible attack. I thought she was having a heart attack. That was in '45 and we didn't find out for many, many years that she would have convulsions. She would go months and never had them, and then all of a sudden have a convulsion. There was one time when Daddy took her to Tonopah, and they operated on her, or supposedly opened her up, and said that she was pregnant.

He said, "I've got a daughter and I don't know how many daughter-in-laws out there that could swear that this woman isn't pregnant." So he took her to L.A. and they operated on her and she had a tumor, and that's what they thought was causing these convulsions.

RM: Oh, I see. A uterine tumor.

SL: But that was not it. The convulsions went on and on and on for many years until after I was married. She had epilepsy.

RM: That's what I was wondering.

SL: And that was still back in the days when epilepsy was a no-no.

RM: Yes, it was a taboo disease.

SL: I was married and had 2 kids and I was over in Ely and Dr. Smirnoff was my doctor. Mom came over to stay with me and I [took her to see him] because I was scared to death to leave her alone for fear she'd have a convulsion and fall and hit her head. I said, "Tell him everything, how you feel." And he's the one who found out that she had epilepsy. So she lived with that for the rest of her life.

RM: Did he give her something?

SL: Oh yes. She took pills the rest of her life. It was controlled but she had 3 different kinds of epilepsy. She had petite mal and grand mal and one other kind. So she took her pills, though she still had convulsions at times, or the spells. You could tell when she was having them. But that took an awful lot out of Mom from '45 on. She first started in '45, but we never found out what it was until '53 - darned near 8 years later.

RM: Then, how did she adjust to life with her husband gone, being a relatively young woman?

SL: Fine. She remarried once for a year, I think it was.

RM: Who did she marry?

SL: She married a guy by the name of C. B. Weddell, who was nicknamed Slim. But he went looking for work one time and that was the end of it; he was a roamer. He was a nice guy, I really liked him and enjoyed him. But I think he was kind of overwhelmed by all the kids and the grandkids, though he got along well with all of us. So she went back and took her name Berg back again.

RM: Where did they live?

SL: They lived up over in a canyon there for a while.

RM: Oh, they didn't stay in the house?

SL: Well, he was doing some mining up Ophir, and he had a little trailer and they went up there and more or less camped out and would come back on the weekends and so forth.

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: So you got married and left the area . . .

SL: Yes. I got married in 1950 and left here in '53.

RM: And how long did you live in Ely?

SL: Till 1958; then I moved into the Tonopah area.

RM: Then how long were you in Tonopah?

SL: I came back out here in '66 for 2 years; then went back to Tonopah in October of '68, then came back out here in '74 and I've been here ever since.

RM: Many of the Bergs have stayed in the area, haven't they?

SL: They've gone and come back. I have a lot of nephews who have gone and come back.

RM: What do you make of that?

SL: I think one of the reasons they left is because at the time there was nothing here for them. And now, with the mining and everything . . . Of course I do have a couple of nephews who are still in the ranching business and everything, but they, at times, have had to go to the mine for work.

RM: Now, let's go through the Berg family. There were the brothers - Will, your father, Karl - who was the oldest?

SL: I don't know how the age grouping went, but I know Uncle Karl was younger than either Daddy or Uncle John.

RM: OK, then John had one daughter and Karl didn't have any surviving children, so the replenishing of the Berg family, so to speak, was left to Will.

SL: That's right.

RM: OK, would you name Will's children in birth order?

SL: There was Daniel Sanford Berg, the oldest, and Georgetta Louise and William Eugene and Karl Ward and then myself.

RM: OK. Now, would, you list who they married and their children, starting with Dan.

SL: Dan married, I think, Katherine Irene Rogers.

RM: And she was of the Rogers clan of the Rogers' ranch.

SL: Right. The Wine Glass Ranch. And Jim is their oldest (his name is Russell William) and then there's Roger Daniel and then Kenneth Ward is their third one - that's their 3 kids.

RM: Are they all in the area?

SL: Oh Lord, yes. And I could go on. Jim married and has 3 kids and they're grown and have kids of their own.

RM: In the area?

SL: Right.

RM: OK, now the next one was Getta. And who did Getta marry?

SL: Well, she was married first to a Lister Farrington and had my nephew Frank Farrington, and they were divorced and then she later married Frank Jakowatz and they had no children. Frank's her only one. And she lives in Sparks.

And then my brother Bill, who's William Eugene, was married when he was young (and I don't even remember the girl's name) and he just had one daughter, by the name of Doran. I had the pleasant surprise, a couple of years ago, of going and visiting my brother, who lived in Oakland. She heard that I was coming and she came over. I hadn't seen her since she was 16 years old and she was then, I think, about 39, and so I've gotten reacquainted with her.

RM: But they didn't stay in the area.

SL: No, he had always lived in the Oakland-Berkeley area. He and his wife were divorced and he remarried. He's retired now and living down out of Placerville someplace - they just moved there.

RM: And then what was the next child's name?

SL: Then the next one is my brother Skook, and his real name is Karl Ward. He married Arleen Lofthouse, who was my husband's sister. She already had one child, William Albert, who my brother adopted.

PM: What is his last name?

SL: Now it's Berg. He's William Albert Berg, and then they went on and had 4 children of their own. And they all live in this area - Larry and Robert and Ronnie and Karla.

RM: And then you're the next?

SL: Yes. There was one little girl born before me by the name of Betty Jane; she died when she was 11 months old. She'd just gotten real sick, congested and everything, and by the time they got to Tonopah . . .

RM: Sure.

SL: Then I was born after her.

RM: And then you married John Lofthouse, and your children in birth order are . . .

SL: I have Dianne Marie, Carol Ann, Shirley Arleen, Getta Louise and Johnnie Irene.

RM: Five girls?

SL: Right. My Johnnie's name is spelled J-O-H-N-N-I-E. It's ironic - she was born on Rene's birthday so I named her Irene. So Johnnie's named after her.

RM: Rene was married to . . .

SL: My oldest brother Dan.

RM: Oh, OK. Rene Rogers.

SL: Right. I'm going to have to draw you a family tree.

RM: I need a tree, don't I? Tell me where your children are.

SL: Dianne Marie is married to Larry Goldie; (they have a home in Cambria, California, on the coast up north of Santa Barbara - the coast of San Simeon.

RM: Not a bad place to live, is it?

SL: No. But there's not much of a living out there. They're both down in L.A., working. And Dianne has been in the car business ever since she has been out of school. She can tell you inside and outside whether a car is worth it. She's picked out both of the cars out here.

RM: But they have the home on the coast.

SL: Yes. And Carol Ann is married to Jim Shilling and they have 4 children. John L. (John Lawrence) and Caritta and Jimmy and Lisha. And then there's Shirley Arleen, who I never could call Shirley; her name is Tinker to everybody that knows her. She's the one you net the other night.

RM: Oh yes. She drives the big truck.

SL: Right. Not afraid of man nor beast, that kid. And she has Chad, who is 12. She was married to a Gene Bernard and they had Chad and now she's married to Mike Fannin and they have Sean.

My Getta Louise was married to Jim Chivers and they are now divorced and she lives in Reno and she has Melissa Rose Chivers, who is 6 (she'll be 7 in April). And then I have my Johnnie Irene who is not married but lives in Battle Mountain, working at the mine up there. That's it.

RM: And those children were all raised in Tonopah?

SL: Every one of them graduated from Tonopah High School. And to me, they've done very well. Dianne's gone on, she's been an office manager, does books, she can sell cars. Carol worked in the bank in Tonopah and the computer system at the FIB in Reno for years. And Tinker's just been more or less a homemaker; but if you're raising kids and a homemaker you do a heck of a lot of other things.

RM: That's right. It's a big job. Actually, the most important job. SL: Yes. Very. If you dedicate your life to it it's a full time 24- hour-a-day job. And then Getta started at the mine up here and was Don Simpson's secretary, and when he went to Reno he coaxed her into coming over there, so she's been his secretary . . . of course he's gone on to Denver, but she still works in the main office.

RM: For Echo Bay.

SL: Right. And Johnnie's been a blaster. She worked on the blasting crew out here for 4 or 5 years, so when the blasting supervisor would leave, she was in charge. She was his lead person.

RM: Now, there was a brother who became a biologist, wasn't there?

SL: That's my brother Bill - William Eugene. He's the one who had the daughter named Doran.

RM: Now when you came out here you went to work for the mine, didn't you?

SL: Yes. When we came out to work here I cooked at Carver's for about a year or so in '74 and '75.

RM: Tell me about cooking at Carver's. What was that like?

SL: That was a great experience. Jean can tell you this because she was my boss. She was officially the boss, but at that time she was breaking her son Gary and Bertie into running it, because Gary took it over after that. But there were 2 of you on shift and [the other person] was generally a guy because it was a 24-hour truck stop, so they would have to go out and fuel up those trucks. When you worked there you answered the phone, you took the orders, you cooked the food, you served it, you washed the dishes and then if somebody wanted a drink at the bar you tended bar.

And on the graveyard shift Dick Carver was always my partner. He can tell you some tales. He would hay all day long and he'd go to bed at night and when I'd go in on graveyard, I wouldn't call him until a truck came in. The minute a truck'd come in I'd call him up and say, "I got one." So over he'd come. And if you got swamped and they didn't have any trucks or anybody out at the service station to help, they would help pick up the tables or serve the drinks or whatever.

RM: Did you work the graveyard shift most of the time you were there?

SL: No. I worked relief. Jean was phasing herself out, and her shift was swing shift. So I'd work Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday swings. Thursday night I relieved the graveyard gal. Friday I didn't work because naturally I'd worked graveyard the night before. So Friday to me was always a lost day. And I would work Saturday to relieve Rene; that was always her day off.

RM: So you were working an odd schedule, to say the least.

SL: Yes. And when they went on vacation I would work the 2 weeks straight for whoever it was. But, you know, you got mass experience there. And if you ran out of ham, which they were very famous for, you went back and cut ham. They were very, very famous for their rib steak dinners, so if you ran out of steaks you went back there and sawed your rib steaks up.

RM: Why were they so famous for their ham?

SL: Because they serve a generous portion and it's thick, and they get good ham. People would come from Vegas for their ham and eggs.

RM: We used to come out from Tonopah, my dad and I.

SL: You bet. And the same goes for Rosie and Danny's place - that's Rosie and Danny Daniels, Deanna Klapper's mom and dad. They owned the Palace Club in Round Mountain for years. If you ever get a chance, go talk to Danny - he has a multitude of stories and his vocabulary will astound you. He's from Missouri (or possibly Tennessee), but he came out here and met Rosie in Manhattan. Rosie plays the piano too. She and my sister used to play . . . when Rosie wanted to go dance my sister would play, and vice versa. My sister would go to Manhattan and Rosie played for all the dances over there. There are no people any dearer than those people, I'll tell you. But I cooked for Danny and he'd say, "Honey, if it's something that you wouldn't eat yourself, don't you put it on the table." And you always put plenty.

RM: So they were well known for their food too.

SL: Oh, very.

RM: Now what years did you work there?

SL: I was at the Palace Club in '76 and '77.

RM: And they were famous for their food?

SL: And their soups.' Danny started the soup the night before, when they were closing the place up. He would put his broth on and put his celery and some seasonings in this big pot and leave it on the stove on a low grill, and then start adding things the next night. And nobody makes clam chowder any better. He was famous clear back to New York on things like that. And Rosie, too, for her meals - both of them were very good cooks.

RM: What else were they famous for?

SL: Well, their hospitality. You could walk in there to say "hi" to somebody and as you walked out the door Danny'd say, "Thank you honey, come again," or whatever. And he kept it strictly a family place. If you got a guy who was using foul language and whatever (and Danny could be no slouch himself when it came to cussing), when there were families there, he would say, "Out, if you're going to talk like that." Or if there was going to be a fight he'd say, "Take it out in the middle of the street. Not in here." And he never minced any words.

RM: Carver's was famous for rib steaks, you say? What was special about that?

SL: For one thing, they were thick; and they would cover a platter. You'd have to put your potatoes on the side. And they always had this yellow bread that they toasted that went with it and they always had bowls full of jelly. They'd buy jelly in gallon cans and you always had a big old bowl of jelly on the table. They served very generous portions.

RM: What did you do after you worked at the Palace?

SL: In May of '77 I went to work at the mine. But the thing of it is, I only went there as a temp. I would go to work at the mine at 7:00 and work till 10:00. The cafe opened at 10:00 and I would run over to Round Mountain and cook from 10:00 till 3:00 because Rosie hated the lunch hours. I would run back to the mine . . . At one time all of the books -the ledgers and journals and so forth - were kept back in White Pine, Michigan. They had shipped them out here, so they were trying to catch up. So I had to work until 7:00 or 8:00 at night.

RM: So you were working long days.

SL: But that was the first year that John and I were divorced. We divorced in May of '77 and I had 2 teenagers at home and it was a little õ .

RM: Were you living in Round Mountain?

SL: Yes; I had a trailer up there.

RM: And so, you started off there as a bookkeeper.

SL: Yes, I was helping with journals and things like that. And then very shortly I went into payroll and did payroll for about a year-and-a-half and then went over into accounts payable for about a year-and-a-half or so, more or less just to learn. I loved payroll. I would have rather stayed there. But I wanted to learn more bookkeeping because everything I'd ever had was just learning on the job. I went into accounts payable to learn more. And then in '80 I went down to the maintenance shop. RM: And you're still there.

SL: Right.

RM: So you've been down there 10 years. Could you explain a bit about your job there?

SL: Well, we keep track of all of the hours on all of the equipment. If somebody wants to know how many hours a certain truck has on it total, we have that. We have hours on an engine, on all the major components, on the D-mags, warranties . . .

RM: What's a D-mag?

SL: A D-mag is the biggest excavator shovel you've ever seen in your life. They're made in Germany; it's a German name. We have 4 of them -241s and 285s. We keep track of all that, and then we keep the hours for the men for their time cards, which goes down to payroll. And we do all of the electrical work, the general maintenance work on all the buildings, company grounds, company housing. We have ADR maintenance and the crusher maintenance crew. And also, in between, when somebody doesn't know what to do or where to go or how to find it, they call maintenance. If all else fails . . .

RM: Call maintenance?

SL: That's what they do. You'd be surprised. Even if they can't find a phone number, sometimes they call maintenance.

RM: When you were growing up, do you remember boardinghouses where the miners boarded?

SL: Well, yes. I think Mrs. Goldback up on the corner had a boarding-house - I think guys ate there. And it's funny - I never thought of this - but before my senior year, in '48 and '49 when I didn't go to school, the company had a boardinghouse. Mary Rogers was the cook and I helped her get things ready, set tables, do dishes, anything that was required of you. So they had a company boardinghouse up there also. And next door to it they fixed up an old house and made it into a shower room for the guys. But other than Mrs. Goldback, that's the only one I remember. RM: Could we talk a little bit about people you remember growing up? People who stand out in your mind in Round Mountain or in the valley or Manhattan and so forth.

SL: I've always said about Manhattan, "I've heard the names and seen the names so much it's almost like I know them." Every now and then I'd go to a reunion over there just for the sake of getting to meet some of these people. There were a lot of people over there I always heard about. And it's kind of that way in Round Mountain. Some of the names . . . I wasn't one to go to other people's houses when I was a kid, it was more that other kids came to our house. Our house was a magnet - we had the piano, the music, the big old house there. We had the fireplace to roast marshmallows and wieners. As I said, Daddy had patience with his kids and his garden and that was why the kids gravitated to him. Even if he went to bed, as long as you didn't take a hammer and pound on the floor or something like that . . . you might make a little bit too much noise some time and he might kind of rap on the wall to let you know it's a little bit late and you're getting a little rowdy or something. But other than that, if you were playing cards and laughing and talking he would never holler at you.

But I remember some of the old-timers around there. There were always old bachelors . . . In fact, I have a picture of a guy by the name of Fred Oliver who was from England, a very well learned man, and he just lived in a little 2-room shack down in the gulch. But he high-graded at night.

RM: And where would go to high-grade?

SL: Oh he knew where to go, I'm sure, and do his little panning and whatever. They always referred to him as "Old Man Oliver." When my brother Skook went overseas, Fred Oliver told him, "If you ever go to England, please walk across the London Bridge for me." Well, Skook was sent to England one time, he stayed with an English family over there and went to school for a while. So I have a letter someplace from Skook saying, "Tell Old Man Oliver I went across the London Bridge for him." And little did we know that the London Bridge would come back to our country.

RM: That's right; it's down in Arizona now.

SL: But I can remember going down to Fred Oliver's place with this nephew of mine, Frank. He always had treats of some sort - these little store-bought cupcakes and things like that. Being a bachelor, he would have the stage man bring them out from Tonopah. He would go and get his sack of things and then he'd tell us kids, "Come on down and I'll give you something." And I was never afraid of Fred. Fred was a gentleman and he always came to our house for Christmas dinner and Thanksgiving dinner. My dad always invited him and he was always at our house for those dinners. And the books he read were always very educational. He'd always be showing us something, and his little old wood stove would be a-going in his 2-room cabin. One room was more or less his kitchen with the sink and everything, and he had the outhouse out back. The other was a longer room and that was his bedroom with his dresser and everything. It was very clean.

RM: But he just high-graded - he didn't work?

SL: Right. Many of them were like that.

RM: Is that right? They knew where to get it?

SL: Old pensioners and that type of thing, yes. But Fred Oliver is the one who definitely stands out. He was very clean and he was . . .

RM: You know, in the early days in Tonopah the miners were very radical with the International Workers of the World and so on. Was there any political radicalism that you ever noted in those old miners?

SL: Oh, I'm sure there was.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Now, we were talking about radicalism of miners.

SL: Yes. I'm sure that Fred Oliver was radical. I know he and my dad used to get into quite some discussions, but in those days kids weren't really allowed to sit around and listen.

RM: They weren't allowed to sit in on those discussions?

SL: No. We just went off . . . and probably, too, we were glad of it because we didn't understand what was going on.

I was going to tell you that I remember at the ranch we didn't have any power. We had radios with batteries and the only thing you were allowed to listen to was the news. And Uncle Little and Daddy used to sit around, and if anybody else wanted to listen they sat around and listened, but instead of saying it was the Russians, it was the "Roosians," you know. It was always the Roosians then. I can remember them getting into their discussions, but they never were really very heated. As I said, Daddy read a lot.

But I do remember when President Roosevelt died because Uncle Little died one or two days before Roosevelt - right in there. It was the 11th, 12th or 13th of April, and I can remember my dad being so upset. I mean, he wasn't all for Roosevelt, but then, how can you be all for one person in politics, whether it's the president or whatever. I mean there's always going to be something that you just figure isn't good. But I can remember him saying, "Boy, we're going to be in a mess now." And he was so upset. This was in the evening and he never went out in the evening - he went and got his coat on and his hat on. (He wore the same kind of hats Dale does up there - the caps. I don't know what they're called, but they're the little caps with the little brims. But that's what my dad always wore.) And over to Uncle John's he went to talk politics for a couple of hours because he was so upset about it.

RM: Was he conservative or leftist - was your dad a Democrat or a Republican?

SL: I would say Democrat. I don't know; I always put myself as a Democrat and I feel that it was just because that's what I heard. But I think Uncle John was a Republican, if I'm not mistaken. Now that you mention it, I think I'm going to delve back and find out what Daddy was, just for the heck of it.

But, for being a man who never smoked, or drank . . . he always said a cigarette never touched his lips. And one Christmas old Dave Coleman, who originally owned Coleman's Grocery Store in Tonopah, gave my dad a bottle of wine at Christmas time. So Daddy decides he's going to have a little taste of wine, and I'm almost having a heart attack because I see him putting this glass to his lips. But it was just a taste and that was all. He never really drank, you know. He just figured if he didn't like the taste of it, why drink it? But I like to have a heart attack! And every time we had Tom and Jerry's he would always have just the batter and hot water, but never the liquor. But for him being that way, as I said, he didn't care who drank or smoked in his house. All his son-in-laws, whatever, as long as they didn't get rowdy . . . and they always respected him.

During the late '40s when the mine was operating and we had that little boom and Morrison Knudson was in there, somebody moved in a little trailer with one gal in it.

RM: Oh, a little brothel.

SL: Right. It didn't bother him a darn bit. Because as he said, they're controlled, they have to have their examinations once a week or whatever . . . The only thing is (I don't know who it was), I'm sure some of the ladies of the town made them pull it off the main drag in Tonopah back behind, like where the General Store is now.

RM: Oh, it was in that part of town. And before that they didn't have a brothel?

SL: Not that I remember. In fact, I never even knew what they were until I was probably in high school - I didn't really have any idea.

RM: So there was this old high-grader, Fred Oliver, who would talk politics with your father too.

SL: Yes. They'd get out there and when he'd go for his mail he'd come by the garage, and Uncle John had a bench out there and a lot of the old-timers would sit out there and he'd sit in the sun and Daddy would stop by. We had another guy - I don't really know his whole name, I just knew him by Browny - and he had a little Model-A of some sort and he would drive it over and visit Uncle John every day. There were quite a few of the older people like that around there. There was Tony Barragage, but he came out of the Tonopah area. He had a bar way down at the end of Tonopah called the Big Casino, or something like that.

RM: Oh, he had the Big Casino? So this bench in front of the garage was kind of a place for the old guys to sit and talk'

SL: A gathering spot; right.

RM: Was gas available at the garage?

SL: Always.

RM: Was there one pump or two?

SL: Just one.

RM: Do you remember the brand?

SL: Oh, I don't know . . . Chevron comes into my mind but I don't really know. There again, Skook could tell you because he's the one who bought it from Uncle John.

RM: Can you remember any other people who stand out in your mind?

SL: Well, Mr. and Mrs. Michels - she ran the post office for years and years, and she's the one who was on the school board and they were instrumental in getting that new school going. I don't really know what Mr. Michels did.

RM: But she was the postmaster.

SL: Yes. She had the post office there for years.

RM: When you were growing up?

SL: Oh, she had it ever since I can remember. And the only telephone then . . . in those days we didn't even have a telephone in our house. If you wanted to make a phone call you went over to

the post office. Mrs. Michels had a switchboard back in her office and you would tell her who you wanted to call and whatever. And then there was a phone booth out in the post office part - in the lobby - and you would step in there and she would put your call through for you. And they had their house in the back so she was always around.

RM: Was this always the way it was when you were growing up, or had it changed by the time you were in high school?

SL: No, because phones didn't come in until after I was married and out.

RM: But you always had lights - electricity?

SL: Yes; always the power.

RM: You were going to tell me about the stage.

SL: Oh. The stage driver was Pete Beko, the father of Bill Beko. He was a big guy. And then of course, Bill . . . well, of course, Bill's gotten heavier as he's gotten older, too. And he's tall. But his mom was a tall-statured, big woman, too. Savita was her name - Savita Beko. Pete drove the stage out there for years. It was a great big old blue truck with the racks on the back. You'd ask him to bring you anything from Tonopah - he would run every day.

RM: Now where did the stage run?

SL: From Tonopah to Round Mountain and back every day except Sunday.

RM: And did it bring the mail?

SL: Yes. That's what we waited for. And it brought supplies or groceries . . . because in later years, this same butcher shop . . . my brother Dan and his wife Rene ran a grocery store in that same little grocery shop when Roger was 3 or 4 and Kenny was about 2.

RM: After your uncle gave it up?

SL: Yes; many years later.

RM: Oh, there was a hiatus there?

SL: Oh, yes; quite a few years. It was after I was in high school, and then after I got married. He and Rene ran it, and Dan went back to Ohio and took a butcher course.

RM: Where did they get their beef?

SL: I don't know. I don't imagine that they could get their own. think it would have to be shipped in.

RM: OK. So Mr. Beko ran the stage?

SL: Yes. And he's the one who would bring old Fred Oliver the goodies from town.

RM: How did that work?

SL: Maybe you'd give an order to him and he'd pick it up in Tonopah, or if there was an order coming in on the stage line to there he could pick it up. The connection went that way.

Speaking of stages, I have to tell you about a stage that used to go through the valley from here to Austin. He'd stay overnight and come back the next day. It was a guy by the name of Snooks Streshley. He had a little pickup and he'd drive it from here to Austin, stay overnight up there and drive back the next day. And if you wanted postage stamps, if you wanted envelopes or if you wanted this, he's the one who would pick it up. In all of the years he was doing this I never saw him write it down once.

RM: Did he charge for that service?

SL: No. But he was an old bachelor with a little cabin in Round Mountain Daddy would send vegetable boxes up to such and such a ranch with Snooks and he loved to gossip. "Oh, did you hear . . ." He was a very quiet, soft-spoken man - very bashful. But he loved to gossip or to tell about something that happened or if somebody was sick.

RM: If he was going to deliver some vegetables for you, would he charge a little bit for it?

SL: No.

RM: How did he make his money, then? From the mail?

SL: Probably from the mail. And I'm sure that people donated or gave to him. Everybody cooked and baked and they'd give him something in a casserole dish or, "You're a little early tonight, Snooks. Stay for supper."

Mr. Beko drove from Tonopah to Round Mountain and back to Tonopah and Snooks went from Round Mountain to Austin and back. [The route] was divided. And that was when it was an all dirt road. And all of the dirt roads . . . you'd come along and here's a ranch, so he'd come down to the ranch, there's their mailbox, pick it up, go along . . . And you can still follow the route. Every once in a while I still go on the old dirt road just to get the feel of it.

RM: Is that right? And he could get enough business between Round Mountain and Austin to make a living. I'll be darned.

SL: He was quite a colorful character. And you were mentioning the Millett ranch up there . . .

RM: Yes.

SL: This Mrs. Carl that I mentioned the other night who was a school teacher of mine and still lives in Fallon - she and her husband lived on the Millett ranch in the years when I was growing up. And she was a very close friend with Snooks. But that Millett ranch has history in it because there was an old schoolhouse on there, I think. And [going way back] I think it was Kit Carson who came through here, and I'm sure that that's the place where he stayed. And she would probably know the history of this valley.

RM: Did Belmont play any role in your life in those days?

SL: Not really, because I never even got over to Belmont until after I was grown and married. I had never been over in Reese River Valley until I was grown. I never went to the full length of . . . I still hadn't gone the full length of Monitor until after the kids' dad and I were divorced. I finally

went over there, went to Belmont, went up and saw that Diana's Punch Bowl. There are things that I'm exploring now . . . I was too busy raising kids [before]. You talk about dedication.

RM: That's right. What role did Tonopah play in your lives?

SL: Well, peddling vegetables is about it.

RM: And you went there for health care if you had serious health problems.

SL: Very little. I could almost count the times that I went to a doctor in my life on one hand.

RM: How about dentists? What did people do about dentists in those days?

SL: There again, we had a couple of dentists in Tonopah.

RM: Did people go to dentists much or did their teeth just decay or what?

SL: Well, when I went to the dentist - I went a couple of times - it was very painful.

RM: How about your aunts and uncles?

SL: Now that I don't know.

RM: Did your dad have false teeth?

SL: No. My dad just had one bridge; I think there were 2 teeth on one side and one on the other. My dad had excellent teeth; just marvelous teeth.

RM: How about your mum?

SL: Mom got her dentures in Tonopah from Dr. Etter. I can remember when she did it; it was before my dad died. But that's where we went to the dentist.

RM: Do you recall people having dental problems when you were growing up?

SL: No.

RM: Did you hear much about rheumatism or arthritis or other problems of older people?

SL: No, because I never had grandparents. My dad was always in perfect health. If he did hurt, I never heard him say so. And Mom had a bum back all her life.

RM: Lower back?

SL: Yes, the tip of her spine was deformed in some way. She had 6 kids and worked hard in her young life, so . . . But it didn't stop her. Every day that woman had to take a walk, I swear, up until the day she died, even if it was just around the house. She had to get out in any cold weather - she'd take her scarf, her gloves . . . Other than that . . . I was closer to Uncle Little than I was to my other uncles. Uncle Karl was gone and Uncle John was so much older, so I just never had occasion to be with them.

RM: Let's talk about Uncle Little. You know, we've talked about possibly publishing his diaries.

SL: That really tickles me.

RM: Let's get some detail on him. What was his name, again?

SL: Fulton Little Kelsay was his name. I don't even know where the man was born, but he died in '45 and he was 60 years old.

RM: So he would have been born in 1885.

SL: I've been trying to get in touch with that relative of his in Reno to find out where he was born and where he grew up. At one time I was told that he was raised in the San Francisco area and he was raising race horses, which wouldn't surprise me. That man could do anything with a horse.

RM: When did he come to Nye County, do you know?

SL: He came to the ranch in 1923.

RM: And where did he come from, did you say?

SL: From Little Fish Lake Valley. He and all of the relatives had 2 ranches. There was a Warren Lerude and a Les Lerude - one is the father and one is the son.

RM: And one of the Lerudes was his brother?

SL: No, I have to stop and figure this out because he really didn't keep in contact with them at all. But when I talk to lone in Reno she said there was an upper and a lower ranch.

RM: I wonder if they were connected.

SL: I don't think so; I think there was a distance between them.

RM: Those ranches must be north of the Clifford's ranch - Stone Cabin?

SL: Out in that area. Because as I said, he and Joe Clifford were very good friends.

RM: How long had he been there, do you know?

SL: I have no idea.

RM: Then when did he show up at your ranch?

SL: 1923. I think he was just looking for work and Daddy told him he could stay there. And the next thing you know, Daddy told him that if he wanted to raise horses or whatever that was fine. He took and raised registered quarter horses for the cavalry. He always had a registered stallion.

RM: How many head would he have?

SL: Oh, he could have 30 or 40 head at a time. But they didn't all stay in pasture. In the summertime he would let them out and they would go down to what we call below the field and up north, like up to Dry Lake. They would graze out there all summer long. And I'm sure he and Daddy had some kind of an agreement because we had wild hay. I'm sure he paid so much for hay or something - Uncle Little always paid his own way, I'm sure.

RM: And after he came over to your ranch it sounds as if he just never went back to his own.

SL: He didn't. And his nether and dad, as I told you, came with him and lived on the Berg ranch too until they died. But I don't remember them. RM: OK, they were gone before you were born.

SL: Yes. Grandpa Kelsay went first and then Grandma Kelsay.

RM: So you thought of them as grandparents even though you didn't know them.

SL: Yes; not me, but the other kids. I had pictures of Shook with Grandma Kelsay when he was about so high. She smoked a corn cob pipe. Grandpa went first and then Grandma, and they're buried in the Round Mountain cemetery.

RM: For some reason they just abandoned their operation over there in Little Fish Lake?

SL: Yes. As I said, I think Uncle Little was in it as a partner with other people. There was a guy by the name of French and then this Roscoe Vassar. And this Gard Kelsay - one of Uncle Little's brothers - was married and he took off. He was kind of a roamer - he drifted in and out. There was a sister, Angie, and she was married and lived in San Bernardino. There was a sister Elsie, who was down in the Panama Canal area. But Uncle Little was the one who took care of his mom and dad. RM: So he came over here looking for work?

SL: Evidently, yes. Daddy always had extra people - always. Claude Mealman came and stayed at our ranch for about 5 years. Little Kelsay came over in '23 - he would have been 38 then. And it ended up as if he and Daddy were partners. I know several times he said, "Well, my partner, Will Berg," or, "Me and my partner, Will Berg," you know. Uncle Little helped him. I can remember when they were clearing for the orchard - Uncle Little helped him on that.

RM: So he was there early on right after your father purchased that ranch?

SL: Oh, sure. Because Daddy bought it in 1916 or '17. And he worked on clearing the ground for the orchard and he was always hauling the manure and plowing the ground.

RM: Tell me about his having had polio.

SL: That had to have happened before he came to the ranch, because those pictures were from 1920 and '21 and he didn't come to the ranch until '23. On the ranch we always carried and stored our gas in 50-gallon barrels. And you just never threw away a 50-gallon barrel. You always had some use for it. Well, one time Uncle Little was knocking barrels or somebody was bouncing barrels out of the pickup. And with that infantile paralysis Uncle Little's legs were only about . . .

RM: About 3 inches in diameter?

SL: Just skin and bone - no meat on them whatsoever. And one of those 50-gallon barrels, when it bounced down, bounced over and the rim caught him midway in the shins. That poor man! The sores he had on his legs and how long it took for those to heal because he just didn't have any flesh.

RM: How about his thighs? Were they short on flesh?

SL: Oh, he was a small, slender man.

RM: How tall was he, do you think?

SL: He was taller than I am now, and I'm almost 5'5". He was probably about 5'7", 5'8", though as he got older, you know, you could . . .

RM: What do you think he weighed?

SL: Oh, 160, 170. He was slender.

RM: How would you describe his complexion?

SL: Weathered, leathery, because of being outside all the time.

RM: Do you remember what color his eyes were?

SL: They were brown. He had white hair when I knew him. He grayed early. It was dark, but then, when it went gray it went pure white. It happened fast.

RM: Where did he go for his treatment of polio?

SL: Someplace in Missouri. He went there in 1920.

RM: So he would have been 35 years old, when he went down there. When did he get polio? Did he have it as a young man and live with his deformed legs?

SL: I don't think so. I think that he got it when he was older and then went back to Missouri.

RM: We have these pictures of him in which his legs are terribly twisted, aren't they?

SL: Oh, terrible. He had that cane that . . .

RM: Then he went down to Missouri and they straightened his legs out, with braces and, probably, therapy?

SL: I'm sure they did. And springs and warmth and . . .

RM: And apparently he was healed, or greatly rehabilitated.

SL: Yes, compared to what it was. One leg was about one inch shorter than the other but he could walk, though he had that little limp. You could always tell Uncle Little was coming - it was kind of a little shuffle. It didn't stop him from breaking horses.

RM: So he wasn't an invalid in any sense of the word.

SL: No way. He sold many horses through this valley. You ask Luther Darrough. Luther buckarooed with him many a year.

RM: He knew horses. That's the bottom line, isn't it?

SL: Right.

RM: Did he live with his folks on your ranch?

SL: I don't even know where his folks stayed. But in later years, during my lifetime, we had 3 bedrooms there. Uncle Little had one bedroom and Daddy had his own bedroom because he always went to bed with the chickens and he was up with the chickens and he was a very touchy sleeper. He always had his bedroom and he always had to have a big thick pile of quilts. He was so cold-blooded. Mom used to make Levi quilts because they're heavy. She'd cut up the old Levi's and fill them with cotton batting. He always had a couple underneath him too, because the cold would seep up underneath.

CHAPTER SIX

SL: We always made our own quilts. And then we had the cabin and we just always seemed to have plenty of room.

RM: Where was your room?

SL: I slept with Mom in her bedroom.

RM: And you were the baby then, so . . .

SL: Right. And we had another bed in there so that if there were extra kids, that's where they slept. And then we had a front porch and we could always throw up a bed there. There were always extra beds there.

RM: In the winter too?

SL: No, we had a cabin out there with 2 double beds so that's where extra kids slept. But it had no heat. I mean, you'd run out there and crawl in that sack . . . that's why we made our own quilts, I'm sure.

Uncle Little was a fine cook and a good baker. He could bake cakes, bread, pies - you name it, he was good. But his sister Angie (I call her Aunt Angie) did all kinds of crocheting and made him quilts and such and I inherited those. I have a bedspread made by her. I still have some of his things that made up my hope chest, you might say. He gave them to me. But I can remember that big old crocheted bedspread in Uncle Little's bedroom. Oh, it's heavy! I don't know how many pounds it weighs.

Uncle Little's was the room that had the big bay window in it with the window that looked out toward Darrough's Hot Springs. That was in the days of no highway. We could look out and see a car coming: "Well, it didn't go into Pete and Mary's," which was the Roger's ranch. "Well, it didn't go into Darrough's Hot Springs. Oh, there's a car coming on." And you'd see this car coming - pretty soon, here it would come into the ranch. That was back in the days when you didn't have that kind of traffic. To look up there and see a car driving at 8:00 at night . . . RM: And that house is still there, isn't it?

SL: No. It burned down.

RM: When did it burn down?

SL: It was after I was married, so between '50 and '53. Dan and Rene were living in it and they moved a house out from Tonopah that belonged to a Clifford. But this was Reynold Clifford, who later moved to Fallon. It would have been Marguerite Boscovich's brother, Reynold Clifford.

RM: Well, her brothers are Joe and Roy.

SL: Reynold is in there somehow; I'm not quite sure how.

RM: Maybe he was old Joe's brother.

SL: Now that could have been too. That's probably how it is.

RM: So your Uncle Little was really a member of the family, wasn't he?

SL: He was family. Here's an inventive thing we had: In the kitchen we had a table with a front leaf that dropped down, so every day when we got ready to set the table we'd pull this leaf up and pull out these things that hold it up. OK. I'm facing the table. Claude Mealman always sat here, Uncle Little sat here, Man sat here, Daddy sat here, and we kids sat back there. And that back, which was against the wall, was a long bench. Well, Claude Mealman was a born prankster. So between him and my brother Skook, who's very mechanically minded, you're in for trouble. They took a piece of tin and cut it out in the shape of a quarter-moon, but a lot bigger, and they nailed it down to the bench. They nailed all the nails in, but they left the heads just a tad up - but not enough to catch your clothes or make it uncomfortable. Then they had a magneto over here on this bench, this shelf that's underneath the sink. And they have these wires running over to the magneto. So when anybody was sitting there, they'd give this magneto a little touch and you'd feel a little shock, and then a little harder and then real hard.

RM: And it really gave you a jolt?

SL: Oh yes. And they just delighted in catching somebody new that hadn't heard about this. One guy had heard about it and he cut a big inner tube out and lined his pants with it so that he sat there and they cranked it up. He sat there and poor old Skook and Claude were absolutely . . . And my dad would get a silly little grin on his face.

RM: That's funny.

SL: Except one time. We had a big old blue bowl, I never will forget it, and Mom had it full of stew. As I said, she was a good cook and always cooked for extras. And they gave this one poor guy just a little shock, and he stood up and that table came up and that thing of stew went in poor Uncle Little's lap.

RM: [Laughs]

SL: Oh, the things that they would do. Like the water over the door tricks, or pinning the sheets together out in the cabin. Putting sugar in . . . I mean, you never knew what you were in for with that Claude. He loved things like that.

RM: Now, your Uncle Little was about 50 by the time you really were aware of what was going on around you. What was your relationship with him and his relationship with the family?

SL: He just was always there, you know.

RM: Was he affectionate?

SL: Very. I can remember sitting on his lap. He's the one who taught me how to ride, gave me a saddle, gave me my first little horse - one of the little mustangs from south of Tonopah. He had patience . . . he just was always there. He had a good sense of humor and never talked a lot but he'd enter into the conversation. Then later on - I don't know why, and I probably just never questioned it - he bought a little ranch across the valley called Barker Creek from Pete Boni in Tonopah and he moved over there. But he'd generally stay with us in the wintertime because, being crippled and getting older, he couldn't do the work. He grubbed out a lot of willows in the place.

RM: What do you mean by "grubbed out"?

SL: Well, you have a grubbing hoe. It's got a blade about that wide on it that's sharp. And he had a garden and he had a mirror, and every day at high noon my mom and I would go out there and flash to him and he would flash back to us and that meant he was OK. We had a system worked out where so many flashes meant "come over." We had an emergency one too, which thankfully we never had to use.

We weren't against poaching a deer, but we used every ounce of it. Uncle Little had a horse, Queen. Being crippled, he couldn't walk the hills. But he'd go out with Queen, and her ears would spot a deer faster than he would. She'd see something and those ears would come up and he'd know that she saw something. So he'd start looking and he could shoot off of her. He'd get a deer and bring it back to the place there and he'd flash us and tell us that he had meat or something and we'd come over.

RM: He didn't have a falling out, did he, when he moved over there?

SL: I don't think so. In a way, I think it was just kind of an independence. He couldn't raise horses anymore. The cavalry - the government - wasn't buying horses anymore. And what few horses he sold around here . . . Also, he had this brother Guard, who came in and out, who was over there with him for a while. He helped him build on an extra room.

RM: But he stayed with you in the winter at the ranch?

SL: Right.

RM: But you didn't spend that much time at the ranch in the winter, did you?

SL: No, but he would move back to the ranch. Daddy would spend more time down there because in the fall Daddy had the apples and all the power stuff to take care of, so he would be here, and then Mom and I would go down. Or else Daddy'd come up on Fridays and take us down. We always spent weekends on the farm. In the winter, you couldn't get me away from there. We'd always stay there. When you read in Uncle Little's diary, in the wintertime it'd say, "Oh, the folks went back to town this morning. Gee, it's lonesome here."

RM: About what year do you think he moved over to his own place?

SL: I was in grade school. It was probably after the Second World War broke out because I was in the sixth grade when the Second World War broke out. The mine shut down and from Christmas on there was no more school up here because everybody was moving out. So somewhere along in there . . . Then in later years, like when I was in high school, Uncle Little got sick. He was at the ranch and he had high blood pressure so he went down and stayed with Aunt Angie, his sister in Bakersfield.

I have letters from Uncle Little when he wrote to us. He'd always write, "Dear S.A. and Maw" - Shirley Ann and Maw. M-A-W for Mom. Of course, the letters were for everybody. Or, "Dear Family," he'd say, and, "Tell me the news." But he came back and as I said he had this high blood pressure. They took him off of coffee, they cut his cigarettes down and then in April he got sick and we took him into Tonopah to the doctor and they threw him in the hospital. I don't even know how long he was in there. In '45 I was just 13. I can remember that we went in to see him and he asked me (Mom's birthday was the 3rd of April) [whispers], "You got your ma's birthday present."

And I said, "Yeah. OK," and all that, and then he died on either the 11th, the 12th or the 13th. His blood pressure had skyrocketed again. And it always bothered me because he was telling me how much the doctor had taken it down. Well, you know, you just don't take blood pressure from those high numbers and drop it just like that. It's got to be done gradually, and that always kind of bothered me.

RM: What did he die of then? A stroke?

SL: Must have been.

RM: Is he buried in Round Mountain?

SL: Yes.

RM: Now, tell us about his diaries.

SL: Well, he just always kept a diary. He had one of those round tin boxes - an old orange one - and that's where he kept them. He wrote in it every night or every morning. Whenever we wanted to know when something happened - when somebody was born or the big snow was or something - we'd say, "Uncle Little, go get your diary. Let's settle this." And he'd go get his diaries and there it'd be. I lost one older diary; this one starts in '37 and runs to '41 and that one starts in '32 and runs to 1936. So these run from 1932 through 1941.

RM: So it's 10 years.

SL: To me they're priceless.

RM: I think they are.

SL: He got so that he would use initials for names - my mother's name was Lillian, so he'd call her L.

SL: And this Miss Holts (the schoolteacher in Vegas I think you ought to visit), her name is Betty Holts and he would use BH for her.

RM: Oh, tell me about his romance.

SL: Well, now to me it was all hearsay. This evidently happened when he was over in the Hot Creek area before '23; before he came here. Supposedly this woman named Lucille had come out . . .

RM: Do you remember her name?

SL: Lucille is all I know. And there's a picture - she corresponded with him after she went back, because she sent him a picture of her and her 2 kids. Now whether she was out here to get a divorce or what, I have no idea.

RM: Were they love letters?

SL: That I don't know; I don't think so. When she sent him pictures of the kids I was under the impression that she wasn't married. But she could have been out here for a divorce.

RM: Well, Nevada didn't have easy divorce laws then.

SL: Then I don't know, because on the back of that picture she wrote him a note and was telling him the names of her kids, I think.

RM: So she might have been married?

SL: I didn't get that impression. As I say, this all comes through Mom; I never heard him ever mention her name. There again, in those days when the grown-ups sat around and talked we kids generally sat over behind the old wood stove until they noticed us or something. And we went to bed early.

RM: Well when did you go to bed, now that you mention it?

SL: Oh, 8:00 on school days.

RM: And what time did you get up?

SL: Well, it all depended. If we were at the ranch and had to get up and get to Round Mountain to get to school, we got up pretty early. And then when we peddled vegetables we were up at 4:00. We'd have 16-hour days. In town I didn't get up early - it was about 7:00. My dad was always up. He ate oatmeal every morning for breakfast.

RM: Well, back to Kelsay's romance. Now, Lucille came out to the Monitor area?

SL: Yes, over in that area. If I'd ever gotten with Joe Clifford Sr., he could have probably told me about it. I didn't even find out that he knew Uncle Little until after he was gone. It was in Tonopah. And I found out that Joe Senior knew Uncle Little.

RM: So anyway, she's in the Monitor area and he's living on his ranch over there?

SL: Yes, because that's where a lot of the pictures were taken. And evidently she liked horses because I see a lot of pictures of them riding together.

RM: And then he must have fallen in love with her and she went back east and it didn't work out?

SL: That was it. I'm sure she was strictly a city girl. And he never married.

RM: Did he ever have girlfriends or anything?

SL: No. Never. Uncle Little always stayed home and took care of us kids and Mom and everybody else went to the dances.

RM: Is that right? And then how did you acquire the diaries'

SL: He left them to me. He left all of his things . . . I was his pet; it was no secret.

RM: And he knew you'd take care of them?

SL: I was his pet. Well, all the others . . . Skook was 9 years older than I. My sis was married and out. Of course, she was around home when he first came, but I was the youngest. He was there when I was born or whatever, you know, and come home and so . . . Of course at the time I didn't know it. But later on, when he passed away and left everything to me . . . He had \$1500 in bonds. And to me that was a fortune.

RM: What about the ranch - the Barker Creek. He left all that to you? SL: Yes.

RM: I'll be darned. How about the ranches over at Fish Lake? By then they'd probably passed out of his control, hadn't they?

SL: Yes. As I said, I don't really know any of the history on that. And when I went to Reno last spring and was talking to Lone Lerude, she is 86 years old herself (she is a daughter of Uncle Little's sister) so there were things that were vague in her mind also. And I'm not meticulous enough, I guess, to dig out the history like that. I should get a person who's really knowledgeable in doing family trees and that type of thing.

RM: Well, I think his diaries are a legacy in themselves. They provide a flow of life and a feel for the times . . .

SL: I have had more people try to get me to put those in the museum and so forth and I said, "No, because that's a heritage on my part. That's going to my kids." And they're going to read them and learn them. I've already had one daughter of mine, my number-3 daughter, Tinker . . . I used to have to take her to the orthodontist over in Bishop and then to Reno to the allergy doctor because she had asthma and allergies so badly when she was growing up. We were on the road quite a bit together and she would read them as we went along and ask me questions about them. Or, as she got older, she drove and I read. So the kids know Uncle Little more than they do their blood uncles, really.

RM: And you were closer to him than your real uncles.

SL: Well, I know more about him than I do any of them. He was just part of my family. One of things about Uncle Little was, when we were haying, as I said, I drove that big old white truck. (It's in Round Mountain now; I don't know if it's in the yard or the garage.) And the gear shift had the round ball with the little nozzle on the top and you'd push that knob and go down a notch and whatever, you know. I would back the truck up and it would lift the hay, and I would go so far and stop and my brother Dan would be on the haystack, and he'd give that a yank and the hay would drop.

But Uncle Little drove a buckrake, and the team of horses were back here and then the framework across here was wood. And you have all these wooden teeth that go out and on the end of each tooth is metal, pointed like that and flat so that it would just slide onto this other thing like a buck rack, that also has these teeth. And there's a lever and it lowers those teeth right down and then they slide out. You back your horses out and your hay stays there, and then I would back the truck up and it raises that hay up and gets up so far and I'd stop and it would bounce up against 2 posts here that had rubber stops on it. It would hit those rubber things and that hay would slide off onto the haystack. And then somebody was up there stacking the hay. Uncle Little was the best buckrake man in the valley. They all could take lessons from him. And that was what his job always was, going out and getting a load of hay and, bringing it in. Because, if you didn't get those teeth in there just right they would split each other and get stuck. I'd forgotten about that, but that was one of his chores.

RM: What were you wearing when you peddled vegetables?

SL: Bib overalls and cowboy boots and a cowboy hat. And every night before I got ready to go peddle vegetables, I'd take sugar and water and put on my hat to make sure that it had the proper curl and was just right.

RM: And it doesn't stain it?

SL: No. That's the way you do with doilies - lots of times it takes sugar and water to make them stiff. When I went out and to peddle vegetables I was spiffy.

RM: What kind of shirt did you wear below the overalls?

SL: They were styled after the old-fashioned men's Arrow shirts. In fact, sometimes I'd wear Daddy's Arrow shirts - the ones that he'd discarded. I'd press those with the old irons that you put on the stove to get hot, because we didn't have electricity at the ranch.

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