

An Interview with
CYNTHIA V. LYNCH

An Oral History conducted and edited by
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Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada

Tonopah
1988

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Tonopah, Nevada
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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.

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

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. "Bobby" Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Revert, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the project within Nye County and before the State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office and the United States Department of Energy; both entities provided funds for this project. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Bradhurst for his advice and input regarding the conduct of the research and for constantly serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. This project would never have

become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Bradhurst.

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

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--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

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

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

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

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources

varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the Round Mountain Nugget, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper; Beatty's independent paper folded in 1912. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All six communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities after their own papers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, which was published as a supplement to the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson

Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique--some are large, others are small--yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

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

On the basis of the oral interviews as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories also have been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impacts of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions, and quality of life of Nye County

communities that may be impacted by a repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided near the site. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCIHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--R.D.M.

Robert McCracken interviewing Cynthia and Charles Lynch at their home in Pahrump Valley, Nevada - April 19, 1988

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Cynthia, could you start off by telling me your full maiden name?

CL: Cynthia Viola Jim.

RM: And could you tell me when you were born, and where?

CL: September, 19, 1932, in Pahrump, Nevada.

RM: Could you tell me your father's name?

CL: Long Jim.

RM: Was he from the Pahrump Valley?

CL: No, he was from the Death Valley-Furnace Creek area.

RM: Was he a Furnace Creek Shoshoni?

CL: Yes.

RM: And what was your mother's name?

CL: Ruby [no last name].

RM: And where was she from?

CL: Here in Pahrump.

RM: Did you grow up in the Pahrump Valley?

CL: Yes.

RM: Could you tell me where you lived as a child?

CL: We lived up here near the Indian cemetery. We lived in the Pahrump Ranch, too, before.

RM: I should note here that your husband, Charles Lynch, is sitting nearby and might make an occasional comment.

What did your father do for a living?

CL: He worked on farms as a ranch hand. He worked at the Manse Ranch and also for Lois Kellogg at her ranch. He also worked on the county road and

at the Clay Camp in Ash Meadows.

RM: Did you live at Clay Camp?

CL: No, I wasn't born then. [chuckles]

RM: How many children were in your family?

CL: There were quite a few of us.

ChL: Fourteen.

CL: Maybe 14; I don't know. That's what he used to say, but I don't know.

I'm the youngest one. There was one set of twin girls, and one of them is living.

RM: Do many of your brothers and sisters still live in the valley?

CL: Two of my sisters live in Las Vegas and one lives up the mountain here.

RM: About how many Indians were living in the Pahrump Valley when you were a small child?

CL: About 42. [They included] my great-grandfather, Whispering Ben, and his wife Mary. He was my mother's grandfather.

RM: Is that right. He used to own Indian Springs.

CL: Yes. He was around Indian Spring and Tule Spring and . . .

RM: Were there many families in the valley then?

CL: No - just a few. Annie Beck, and the Sharpe family, later . . . They'd been here, though, before, and then went to Beatty.

RM: Did your mother have a lot of brothers and sisters?

CL: No.

ChL: What are her relative's names at Moapa, Cynthia?

CL: Irene Ben. She is a granddaughter of Whispering Ben. Fred Benn was a son of Whispering Ben. He's not living, though. Roger Benn lives at Henderson, Nevada.

RM: What tribe are you a member of? Do you consider yourself a member of an Indian tribe or anything?

CL: No; just Paiute and Shoshoni.

ChL: She's not a member of any tribe.

CL: Yes, I'm not a member - "Scattered Indian" is what they call the . . .

ChL: She's on the roll of "Scattered Indians."

RM: That's what you're called?

CL: Yes, that's what they have up at Carson City - Scattered Indian.

RM: What does it mean, to be a Scattered Indian?

CL: That's the Indian roll.

ChL: One of the things that it means is that you're not on a reservation. You don't get the entitlements that reservations get, such as Walker River and Moapa and different reservations. You were an independent Indian and you didn't go to a reservation on account of your independence.

RM: Are you entitled to Indian benefits like health care and some of those things?

ChL: You are if you fight like hell. I'm Delaware. And Indians in Oklahoma have never been treated this way. [chuckles] You're a first-class individual in Oklahoma; even your distant relatives have got a little Indian in them.

RM: I'm a little bit Indian out of Oklahoma - my grandmother was a registered Cherokee.

ChL: Well, my grandmother and my father were registered Cherokees.

RM: I'll be darned. But you consider yourself Delaware?

ChL: That's because the Delawares, when they were asked to move from the east, bought into the Cherokee tribe and give them a million and a half

dollars to become Cherokee so that they could have land in Oklahoma.

RM: That's interesting.

ChL: One of the things [I'd like to correct] was, Cynthia was born in Pahrump, yes. But she was born on Wheeler Pass Spring.

CL: Well, my birth certificate only said Pahrump, so I just said Pahrump.

RM: Did you go to school in Pahrump, then?

CL: Yes.

RM: How many kids went to school there?

CL: Thirteen.

RM: Were many of them Indian?

CL: They were all white, and when Sharpe came in and there were some Indian kids.

RM: What is Sharpe's full name?

CL: Louie Sharpe. He's dead now, but the daughters are still living on the property.

RM: What kind of a house did you live in at that time? Was it a traditional Indian house?

CL: [laughs] I wasn't living in a tepee. That was a long time ago. [laughter] We had a little house.

RM: What kinds of foods did the Indians eat here? Did they eat the same things as whites?

CL: Yes, they did, when I was growing up, [but they also ate things like] Indian spinach and mesquite beans.

RM: Did your father do any hunting?

CL: Yes. He and my mama hunted deer and everything.

ChL: They had a homestead right next to the graveyard and then they had a homestead that they now own 10 miles northeast, up on the mountain; Long

Jim Horse Springs Ranch. They lived in the valley in the wintertime and spent the summertime up there. Her father was still living when we were first married and he used to hunt deer, and bighorn sheep, and Mother also used to hunt. Cynthia used to go with her mother all the time all over the mountain. She knows the whole mountain; every trail on it, every spring on it, practically every tree on it. [chuckles] And every plant on it.

RM: Did your mother collect plants of any kind?

CL: Yes.

RM: What are some of the things that she collected?

CL: Oh, something about Indian medicines.

RM: Could you tell me some of the plants she collected for medicines?

CL: Well, one is the greasy-wood [chuckles]. It's got 4 names - greasy-wood, dwarfed oak, chaparral and creosote.

RM: Now, what did you use that for in medicine?

CL: You'd drink it for colds and some people drank it when they had VD.

RM: Will it cure VD?

CL: I guess so. That's what they used to use it for.

RM: Did you use it for anything else?

CL: Oh, sores; you could put your foot in it . . .

RM: Oh, soak your foot in the creosote tea?

ChL: And arthritis.

CL: You could bathe with it, too.

RM: For arthritis?

CL: Yes.

RM: How did you prepare it?

CL: You boiled it.

RM: What other plants did you collect?

CL: Well, there are some others that I don't know the English names for. I've got it in a book - I don't have it handy right now.

ChL: There's an herb for kidneys - a kidney medicine. It's used in pharmaceuticals even today.

CL: There's a gourd, too, that we call coyote melon. You're supposed to use the root part to cure VD, I guess. Clean the inside or something - that's what they used it for. Before white people came to the United States they didn't have that VD.

RM: What other plants did they collect?

CL: Blue sage.

RM: What did you use blue sage for?

CL: They say it's good for swelling. You could drink it, too.

ChL: And then there's Indian tea - the best one.

CL: Yes, we have an Indian tea, too. They have different ones around here, too, and they have different names for them.

RM: What kind of a plant was it?

ChL: A mint.

CL: They say it's part of the mint family. That's what they came up with - and just the way it smells, I guess.

RM: Did you collect all these plants up on the mountain?

CL: Yes.

RM: What kinds of plants did your mother collect to eat?

CL: Indian spinach - that's the princess plume. And there's another one, too, that's like spinach, too, but I don't know the English name.

RM: What other plants were there?

CL: Some [plant with] little berries - squaw berries is what they call it. It's a little red one.

CL: Indian berry - I think that's what they call it, but . . . Squaw berry is the one they made a basket out of. You know, the little one. They call that the squaw berry - that's the squaw bush. [chuckles] You could also drink the little fruit on it - make a juice out of it.

ChL: Indian berry makes good jelly.

RM: Did you collect pine nuts?

CL: Yes; they used to pick them every year.

RM: Did you go and camp out in the mountains?

CL: Yes. You can't cook them up there any more - it's against the law, they say.

RM: You went up to Wheeler? That's a long way, isn't it?

CL: No, it's not very far - takes you one day to get up there.

ChL: It's about 15 miles from where we're sitting.

RM: Oh, I'm thinking of Wheeler Peak.

CL: No - Willow Springs - behind that mountain.

ChL: Where that snow is - on the left. That's Wheeler Pass.

RM: OK, just east of here - OK.

CL: Yes. Wheeler Pass is behind here. You're thinking of the wrong place, Charles - it would be behind this big - our mountain up here.

ChL: Yes, behind our mountain. But you see, the snow comes to our . . . Do you see that clump of trees below that snow?

RM: Yes, right.

ChL: OK, that's their property there - it's 10 miles away.

CL: And then [they ate] mesquite beans.

RM: How did you prepare the mesquite beans?

CL: Oh, just pound them when they're dry and make powder out of it.

RM: And then what?

CL: Then put water in it and eat it. You could eat it raw, too.

RM: How did you prepare the pine nuts?

CL: [We'd] just cook it in an open fire. The one we had was on the ground. You could also put them in a frying pan and cook them on top of the stove.

RM: Was this in the shell? How did you get them out of the shell?

CL: With your teeth. [chuckles] Or you could shell them all.

RM: How did your family usually do it?

CL: Oh, just get a rock and crush them. And we used to have an Indian basket - you'd go like that . . .

RM: Yes - you'd winnow it.

CL: And clean it out. You could boil them too - cook them that way.

RM: How much Indian food did you eat, versus white food?

CL: Well, white food came, but still you could use [for instance] the princess plume in spring.

RM: Did you prefer Indian food or white food?

CL: Well, that's the only thing there is, now. How can you prefer it, [chuckles] over something [that's not there]? Beans are an Indian food, though.

RM: Yes, that's true.

ChL: Corn is, too.

ChL: You keep naming them, and you find out about 3/4 of the food you eat today came from the Indians.

RM: That's right - potatoes . . .

CL: Cranberries [chuckles] and so forth.

RM: Sunflower seeds . . .

ChL: Walnuts . . . you see, you keep going . . .

CL: Anyway, beans and corn and squash, I guess, are the most . . .

RM: So the white man learned to eat the Indian food.

CL: Then they have a wild onion back east - poke salad, you've probably heard of it.

RM: Yes, I've had it; yes.

CL: I haven't; I'm from here. [chuckles] I have my own.

RM: When you lived up on the hill at Horse Spring Ranch, did you grow crops there?

CL: Yes - watermelon and pumpkin and tomatoes and cucumbers and corn, beans, string beans, chile . . . It was a big garden.

RM: When did you plant your garden?

CL: We used to plant in April. Now the weather's different - it's cold.

RM: Do you mean right now, or [in recent] years?

CL: No, it's more than the last 2 or 3 years. We used to have a lot of wind, here, too, in the wintertime; we don't have that any more. When I was a little kid, the north wind used to blow, and it doesn't do it any more. Well, once in a while, but it's different. It always starts up here - where the sand dunes are - and comes down.

RM: How far did you go in school?

CL: Eighth grade.

RM: What did you do then?

CL: I worked on the Pahrump Ranch and the Manse Ranch, too.

RM: What did you do on the Pahrump Ranch?

CL: Oh, we hoed cotton.

RM: Was that hard work?

CL: Yes, in the hot sun. [laughs] And then I used to pick cotton in October.

RM: Were there a lot of Mexicans working on the farms then?

CL: A few were, yes.

RM: How did the Indians get along with the Mexicans?

CL: They were in different fields.

RM: Were there a lot of Indians working on the farms?

CL: No. Just our family and some white people. That was in the '50s.

RM: Did you know Walt Williams?

CL: Yes.

RM: Did you work for him?

CL: No, he's the one I didn't work for. The rest of them, I did. We worked for C.B. Dickey and Dan Moore.

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

CL: I knew him, but I never did know much about him. I know he had a son who worked on the ranch, too. He and his wife lived here. His name was Billy Dickey.

RM: Did you know Dr. Thomas, who owned the ranch before Dickey?

CL: Do you mean Ray Thomas?

RM: Yes.

CL: I knew him too.

RM: Did he live on the ranch?

CL: No, he lived in California. He'd come here for a few days - probably stayed here. I knew his son-in-law, too - Clint Hutchins.

RM: Who owned the ranch before Thomas?

CL: I guess Zigger was the boss for Thomas before. I don't recall his first name, but Zigger was his last name. And his wife was cooking at the bunkhouse. Soupe had [the ranch] too. Maybe he was working for [Thomas], but I'm not sure. And after that that Ray Van Horn came. I don't think he

owned it, but he was working over there as the boss, I guess. He might be working for Soupe; I don't remember that. (I've got to talk to Darlene Clayton - he was her step-grandpa. She lives in Vegas.)

RM: Did your family practice the traditional Indian religion?

CL: No.

RM: Could you tell me a little bit about the ways the Indians believed?

CL: Oh, there were a lot of things you believe in. Some beliefs were different; you can't do that do this, and a lot of things. [laughs]

RM: When you worked on the ranch did you live there?

CL: No, we lived at the same place up here near the Indian cemetery.

RM: Then when did you move to the place across from the cemetery?

CL: Well, it was destroyed - Cal-Vada came in . . . these people have it now . . . I think it's sold to somebody else now, isn't it, Charles?

ChL: Yes.

RM: Was it on the Pahrump Ranch?

CL: Yes. You see, we lived here a number of years and when my nephew went to the service in 1968, there were a lot of people around and they would destroy things in there; his belongings were outside. I went up there and called the sheriff. They opened the door and stole everything out of it and took everything out of it. But nobody was there. My sister works in Vegas and she couldn't be out here. She had a lot of stuff there, too. I was not here then - in '63. They destroyed everything.

RM: When did you move down to this place?

CL: I was down here in '63 or '64.

ChL: I bought this place in '60.

RM: When did you get married?

CL: '63.

RM: And how did you meet Charles?

CL: Oh, [laughter] I met him here.

RM: In Pahrump? Charles, how did you happen to be in Pahrump?

ChL: I was working in Las Vegas and I bought property up near Moapa, and the escrow was 30 days. The man didn't perform as he was supposed to have done, so I cancelled the escrow and came to Pahrump and looked around and bought the land here.

RM: There wasn't much here in '64, was there?

ChL: No, there wasn't anything.

CL: There were a few people here, then. They were coming in.

ChL: About 300.

CL: They were coming in in the '50s. In the '30s and '40s nobody was here.

RM: What was Pahrump like in the '30s?

CL: I was a baby that time.

RM: OK, say in 1939; what did it look like here?

CL: There was only the Manse Ranch and this up here; what is the Binion place now. This was only a grocery store they had. Pop Buol owned that place. And Raycrafts' place was over here across from it; Mrs. Bolling lives there now. Those are the only people who were here - and also the Pahrump Ranch - that's it. Nobody was around here except those people.

RM: There weren't any ranches out this way?

CL: No, nobody.

RM: How did you get to town?

CL: We didn't go to town. [laughs] Well, I went once, with my sister - with the teacher's boyfriend - because she wanted us to come to Las Vegas. That was the time my grandfather passed away - that day. I think it was in

1938. I remember that.

ChL: [To get to Las Vegas] you crossed once on the old road between here and Red Rock Canyon. There was a road that went through Red Rock Canyon; it crossed the mountain.

Cl: That might be in '40 or '41.

ChL: You haven't been around here very long, son. [laughter]

Rm: I was over that road once, a long time ago.

Cl: I've been through there 2 or 3 times, I think, with my sister.

Rm: Is that how people got to Vegas, or did they go up to 95?

Cl: Yes - it was 100 miles.

ChL: They went to 95 and they also went to Baker. They had 3 routes out. They went to Baker or they went to 95 and out, and also they had this one road across the mountain, which wasn't much of a road. It'd get washed out quite often.

Rm: Is that road still there?

ChL: Oh, it's still there; it's probably washed out.

Cl: Yes, I think . . . I haven't been up there for a long time.

Rm: How do you get to it?

Cl: You go to Trout Canyon, and then you go right some place and then up.

Rm: And it comes down through Red Rocks, right?

ChL: It lets you out at Red Rocks.

Rm: But people here just didn't go to town?

Cl: No, we didn't go to town.

ChL: What was that little grocery store here?

Rm: Was that the little Pahrump store?

Cl: That was a long time ago, too - my sister worked at Pop Buol's store.

Rm: When did they close that store down?

CL: Oh, a long time ago; in the '20s, wasn't it?

RM: Was it here when you were a little girl?

CL: No.

RM: Where did you buy things?

CL: Up here at Pop Buol's store. There used to be a winery there - Pop Buol also had a winery. He had a post office there, too.

ChL: The only licensed winery in the state of Nevada was Pop Buol's.

RM: That's what I hear; yes.

CL: The name of that winery was Chacheau - C.h.e.a.u . . . or something.

RM: What did you think the first time you went to Vegas?

CL: I don't remember it very much. [chuckles]

ChL: She's been to every Helldorado since the first one she went to, when she was a kid.

CL: I used to be in them; yes. We'd go 4 days - and 4 nights. [chuckles]
And we went to live in Vegas in the '50s - '55 to '59.

RM: Why did you move to Vegas?

CL: Oh, I just went to Vegas with my sister, and I worked in a motel.

RM: Who did you live with?

CL: My sister, Lorraine Jim. Clara was living in Vegas, too. (This was also in the '60s.)

RM: Your sister Clara Jim?

CL: Yes. Both of them live together in a trailer park.

ChL: Alice Jim is 80-something, and she lives up here on the mountain. That's her oldest sister.

RM: So you still have several sisters?

CL: Three sisters, and no brothers.

RM: What brought you back to Pahrump after you moved to Vegas?

Q: I'm from Pahrump [laughs] and I just came back.

R: And then you met Charles in . . .

Q: '62.

R: And you've been together ever since? Do you have any children?

Q: I have 3 sons. Eddie Jim and Ben and Greg Morris Lynch.

R: Where do they live?

Q: They live here in the valley. The youngest one is 21 and the middle one is 23, and my oldest one is 32. [chuckles] Two are married and I've got 2 granddaughters.

R: How much do you know about the Death Valley Indians, since your father was from Death Valley?

Q: Well, . . . [chuckles] he came over when he was a little boy. I don't know very much about . . .

R: Were both his father and mother Shoshoni?

Q: I think so.

ChL: He's from the Hungry Bill family.

Q: Hungry Bill and Panamint Tom were brothers. My daddy came from their sisters.

Q: You've probably read about them in books - Hungry Bill and Panamint Tom. Also, Steve Brown's grandmother was Hungry Bill's sister.

R: Yes, I've heard of Panamint Tom.

ChL: There's an interesting story you can read on Hungry Bill, if you can find it. The last time I looked at it, it was in Death Valley library in Furnace Creek, in the museum there. There's a library in behind it.

R: Is it a book?

ChL: No, it wasn't a book, it was an article by an archaeologist by the name of Kroeber from the University of California - quite a famous

~~archaeologist~~. He knew the Hungry Bill family.

~~RM~~: I'll try and find out more about that.

~~CL~~: That one's hard to find - if you find it, you call me, immediately - collect. It's a very interesting story.

~~RM~~: Why did your father's family move up here instead of staying in Death Valley?

~~CL~~: I wouldn't know.

~~RM~~: Tell me about Whispering Ben - I've heard a lot about him because he owned Indian Springs.

~~CL~~: He went wandering around everywhere, I guess. He used to be down at Mile Spring, and then Indian Spring and around here.

~~RM~~: Can you think of any other Indians who used to live here in Pahrump a long time ago?

~~CL~~: Well, they're all dead now. Tom Bob Weed and Annie Beck and Sarah Weed.

~~CL~~: Chief Tecopa.

~~CL~~: Chief Tecopa, and Whispering Ben and his wife, Mary.

~~RM~~: Mary was Whispering Ben's wife?

~~CL~~: Yes. Maybe his second wife, or something like that. Whispering Ben had a son named Lawrence Ben.

~~RM~~: When did Whispering Ben die?

~~CL~~: 1938; the time that I went to Vegas.

~~RM~~: Tell me what you remember about him?

~~CL~~: Oh, I remember his memory wasn't with him.

~~RM~~: He'd lost his memory?

~~CL~~: Yes. He'd go different ways, when he went to bed. My sister used to go help him.

Q: Did he live to be an old man?

A: Yes.

Q: Didn't Chief Tecopa live to be very old, too?

A: Yes, because he had 2 sons and they died before him.

Q: Her daddy lived to 110 - Long Jim.

Q: How are you related to Tecopa?

A: Through my mother, but I don't know how; just some people who lived at Tecopa. Chief Tecopa had 2 little sons - Johnnie Tecopa and Charlie Tecopa.

Q: Did you know them?

A: No. They died a long, long time ago - before I was born. All I [know] is what I heard from my sisters and my mother. He had a grandson, too; they called him Little Johnny Tecopa. He had another grandson named William Jones. He used his stepfather's name - Jones. His last name should be Tecopa but he used Jones because his mother married that guy, I guess. I know him; I saw him growing up.

Q: What other Indians lived here in the Pahrump Valley?

A: There was the Mutt Weed family, too.

Q: Are they Paiutes?

A: Yes.

Q: When did they come in here?

A: A long time ago, I guess. Mutt Weed's family's came from Whispering Ben's daughter. Weren't they were first cousins?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes, Mama's first cousins.

CHAPTER TWO

Q: You were talking about some other Indian people who live in Pahrump Valley?

A: Bob Lee lived here a long time ago; and he might have been the oldest one, too. I don't know when he died - sometime in the '60s. His sister's name was Dora Lee Brown - Steve Brown's mother. He's also related on my father's side - from over in Death Valley. They came from Hungry Bill's sister - Bob Lee's and Dora Lee's father. Dora Lee had Steve Brown and she had 2 brothers - Dick Lee and Bob Lee. Bob Lee had a son, too - Bob Lee, Jr. - and I know he had another one, but I never did see him.

Q: Tell me the Indian families living here in the '40s.

A: My family and Annie Beck . . .

Q: Annie Beck. Now, how many people were in her family?

A: Just one. And Sarah's daughter and her husband. Steve Brown's family used to live down on Stump Spring below Manse. And Sharpe came - they used to work in Beatty. I think they came in '40-something, or '30 - I don't remember.

Q: Now, did you say Sharpe was Shoshoni?

A: Yes; the mother was. Louie's wife Helen was a Shoshoni Indian.

Q: Do you know the Cottonwoods in Beatty? Bombo Cottonwood?

A: I don't know them. Our family - a relative - used to be named Cottonwood; John Cottonwood. I don't know him but I think my sisters do. I don't know how he comes into relation [with us], but I heard them say . . . And Annie Beck used to say he was her grandfather, but it's not a real grandfather, it's the way they say it in Indian.

Q: Tell me some more about how you lived when you were young?

CL: We lived in a tent. Most Indians had a tent - a little house.

RM: Did you have cars?

CL: Daddy had an old Model-T Ford. We had horses, too; [we] went horseback riding.

RM: When did your father pass away?

CL: He died June 26, 1965. Mama died in 1948 in May.

RM: How old was your father when he passed away?

CL: I don't remember now, but he was old.

ChL: They think he was 110.

RM: How about your mother - how old was she?

CL: I don't know. She died when I was 15 years old.

ChL: She was pretty young.

CL: They have that on the Indian roll numbers, a long time ago. She was 65, but they didn't know their ages [exactly].

ChL: In 1931 they listed her as 48.

CL: My Indian roll number is 144. My kids don't have a number; I think they stopped it.

ChL: What year did you say your mother died - '48?

CL: '48 - May 15th. We don't have that [record], though. She died at Schurz, Nevada.

RM: What was she doing up at Schurz?

CL: [She was at the] Indian hospital.

CL: I got an Indian roll number for Whispering Ben. He was 100 and something, too.

RM: Some of those people really live a long time, don't they?

CL: Yes. But it may not be right; I don't know.

ChL: According to these records, it shows him as 94.

RM: Long Jim?

ChL: Yes. But the older kids - Alice - said he was older than this when they took this census of 1931.

[sound of papers rustling]

CL: Yes, he was 100 - here, Whispering Ben - in 1937.

RM: Whispering Ben was 100?

CL: Yes. They have the Bishop roll. I copied that off the . . . They had them in their Indian roll papers, too - in the Indian colony. His last name was Shaw. [laughs] We never heard of that name before. It might be different, too - a different book. It was a big book of everybody's, you know. When we were up at Carson City we looked at the books, and I didn't run into that, either. His last name might be Shaw, though. Maybe somebody gave him a last name; he didn't have one.

RM: Where did your father get his name - Long Jim?

ChL: He was tall.

CL: All of the people over there didn't have English names, so the white people gave them names. Hungry Bill might be hungry. My father also had a brother named Jim Patt [so that was] backward.

CHL: He was always hungry.

CL: And Panamint Tom was named after that mountain over there - Panamint.

Panamint's a different Indian nationality, too. I'm part Panamint.

RM: When you were growing up in your home, did you speak Paiute?

CL: Yes; I still speak it.

RM: Do you prefer to speak Paiute instead of English?

CL: I really do. My kids don't.

RM: How did some of the other Indians here get their names? For instance, Sharpe . . .

ChL: I think that was a white man.

CL: He's a part white man - Sharpe is - his father and mother were half white; that's where they got the name.

RM: What were the other Indians' names here?

CL: Weed.

RM: How did they get their name?

CL: I don't know. John Weed, Mutt Weed, Jeff Weed, Joe Weed - they were brothers. Mamie and Anna Weed were the sisters.

RM: Were they Paiutes?

CL: Yes.

RM: Were they here when you were little?

CL: Yes. They were my relatives through my mother.

RM: Are any of them here now?

CL: No. The last one - Mutt Weed - died in '70, I think - or '71 or '72. Weed's brothers didn't have any children, but his sisters had some children.

RM: And their children didn't stay here?

CL: No. The other kids are in California, I think. Irene . . .

RM: What Indian people are here now?

CL: The Sharpes, and Rosie Weed, Arnold Beck's . . . she came from the Beck family. Steve Brown, from the Lee family, and myself and my kids and [my sister] Alice Jim. My [other] sisters are not here because they're working in town.

RM: Well, what do you think about the change that's happened in Pahrump?

CL: Oh, didn't like it.

RM: You don't like it?

CL: [chuckles] I don't like too many people here. [laughs]

RM: How would you rather see it, here?

CL: I like it the way it was before. Nobody was living here. There are a lot of people destroying the mesquite beans and everything now; that's what I don't like - and leveling the ground up above. I'd like to see it the way it was.

RM: Do you still use the Indian foods here?

CL: Yes, some. In the springtime I get the princess plume.

RM: What does it look like?

ChL: It's a yellow plant with a long, yellow flower.

RM: And what do you do with it?

CL: You pick the leaves and boil them like spinach. They call it Indian cabbage, though. That's the way I used to hear it from Mama.

ChL: Or Indian spinach.

CL: Yes, it looked like spinach to me, but . . .

RM: What other Indians foods do you use, now?

CL: I don't [use them, but] I could get mesquite beans. Also we could eat pine nuts.

RM: Do you do any hunting or anything?

CL: No. It's against the law now; you can't hunt, you know, and all that. I could get it any time I wanted to, [before]. [chuckles] It was the Indian food before, and they still could make them, but the law . . . You can't do this, can't do this.

RM: Do the Indian people in Pahrump Valley get together and visit or have social gatherings or anything?

CL: No, but sometimes I go visit the Becks. Oh, the Sacketts live here, too - Mary Sackett. She lives next to the Richard Arnolds. There are other Indians here now, too. Eileen Brandt lives up at the north end;

she's a granddaughter of Bob Lee. An elder man is living with them up there, too. He's the caretaker sometimes when she goes someplace; Bert Nicholson. He's really old, too.

RM: Is he Indian?

CL: Yes, he's Indian.

RM: Where do the Indians here get their health care? Do they have to go up to Schurz?

ChL: [The hospital at] Schurz was closed down, practically, [in the] Carter administration.

CL: They closed that Stewart Indian School, too.

RM: Did the Indian people here in Pahrump own much land here?

CL: No.

ChL: The Indian owned it before the whites ever came, so he didn't figure he had to own any. It was the whites who owned something - would buy something that's already owned.

RM: Yes. It's already mine; yes.

ChL: It's already mine, you see.

RM: And then the whites just came in and took it, didn't they?

ChL: Yes, they took it. The Pahrump Ranch, and the Manse Ranch and the Jim Raycraft place were started by the Indians 200 or 300 years ago. I don't know any history of it, but . . .

RM: I'm sure they were using it.

CL: Yes.

ChL: Oh, yes. They're bound to have been.

RM: Sure; with all that water there, and those mesquite beans and the game that would've been there and everything.

CL: Yes. Cottontail rabbits and . . .

ChL: There used to be a lot of deer and pheasants in the valley.

There were quite a bunch of Indians working at Goodsprings way back in 1900. You see, the Younts owned the general merchandise store at Goodsprings, and there were quite a few of those Indians who worked on the Yount ranch and also worked in Goodsprings.

CL: I have a magazine [with something about] Charley Keate. I think he had his picture taken down in the Sandy Valley.

RM: When you were young and growing up, were there Indians living in Sandy Valley?

CL: Dick Lee used to live down there in the wintertime. Some of our relatives used to live in Ash Meadows - Joe Bishop and his wife Belle.

RM: Were there other Indian families?

CL: Well, there was a Howell, too. I don't know what the old lady's name was.

ChL: Some of Cynthia's older sisters were born in Ash Meadows.

CL: Bishop was living over there, [and his] wife; he died before her. The grandmother, Mary Scott, used to have that place and then the granddaughter, Belle Bishop, lived there and had it, and it was taken away from a white person, too. It was in the '50s, I think.

RM: Were they Paiutes?

CL: Shoshoni and Paiute. She spoke Paiute, but she could understand the Shoshoni language, too. So could my mama.

RM: So the Paiutes here could understand Shoshoni?

ChL: Well, they were intermarried.

CL: If they had been around one or married to him, or something like that.

RM: The languages are kind of close, aren't they? They're not that far away.

CL: No, it's a little different. Some of it's almost the same.

ChL: The Shoshonis picked up more Spanish than the Paiute did.

CL: Caballo - a 'horse.' And pan is 'bread' - same as Spanish.

RM: So there's a lot of Spanish in Shoshoni but not in Paiute?

ChL: Not in Paiute.

CL: Paiute got a little - toro - 'bull,' is Spanish. We didn't have any cows here a long time ago; I guess that's why they picked that name.

RM: Were there Indians, when you were growing up, living at Tecopa?

CL: Yes. Nicholson was married to one - Bert Nicholson was telling me about it. Danny Fields was over there, too, and Estella Fields. And one Indian lady - the mother - lived at Shoshone. Mutt Weed's sister used to live at Shoshone, too.

RM: Were there any Indians living at Death Valley Junction?

CL: Well, Bishop used to live down there, too - he was working, and they'd go up to their ranch on weekends.

RM: Were there any Indians living off in the hills? I mean, that we haven't mentioned.

CL: Not that I know of; no. They were all dead. Bob Lee . . .

ChL: What was the one who lived on the other side at Lum and Abner's place?

CL: Oh, you mean the Wilsons - yes.

RM: Did you know the Wilsons?

CL: Yes, I'd heard of them. His brother, too - Boone Wilson.

RM: Were they Paiutes?

ChL: I think so, weren't they?

CL: I don't know. The funny thing about that is that in the story, his father Tweed was raised by a white person. I didn't know what he was; a half-breed, or . . . The son was at least half, though; his father. Tweed

Wilson was his father. The son's name was Buster Wilson.

RM: Do you have much to do with the Indians in Las Vegas - the Las Vegas Paiutes?

CL: No.

RM: Do you have close ties to the Death Valley Indians?

CL: No.

RM: You really don't have close ties with any Indians, then, do you?

CL: No.

ChL: No way.

RM: Why do you say that?

ChL: Well, because the Indians who went to reservations and got involved with reservations - this was true in Oklahoma, even - as far as independent Indians were concerned, they didn't want anything to do with them.

RM: Why?

ChL: They relinquished their rights.

RM: You mean, the ones on the reservations relinquished their rights?

ChL: That's right. But the independent Indians didn't, you see. This is true in Oklahoma, even. To this day, the Indians go to talking about other Indians, and they say, "Well, they went to the reservation; they're no-good Indians."

RM: Is that right.

CL: [laughs] I don't know if it's true. I was raised at home all the time - stayed at home - when I was growing up. I didn't hardly go around anybody. Now I go visit Rosie Beck sometimes - Rosie Arnold. Sometimes we see Steve Brown - run into him at the store. Steve Brown's 2 daughters live in Montana; both of them married Montana men up there - some kind of Indian. They're supposed to be from Pahrump but they're gone - they've

been up there 6 or 7 years. My sons don't like to go live anyplace else; they like Pahrump; they were raised here.

RM: What do they do?

CL: Two boys are working for Test Site up there at Mercury and the other one hasn't got a job yet - the little one. He stays here.

RM: Do the ones who work for the Test Site drive back and forth?

CL: Mike goes on the bus. The son's up there near Tonopah, so he stays up there all week and comes back weekends.

RM: I see. What's his name?

CL: Eddie Jim. He has to go where the job is, you know.

RM: Does he live in Tonopah now?

CL: No, he lives inside the Test Site.

RM: What does he do?

CL: He does auto body work.

RM: What does your other son do?

CL: He's a mechanic, isn't he, Charles? He went to school . . .

ChL: Yes.

RM: An Operating Engineer?

ChL: An Operating Engineer.

ChL: They both are Operating Engineers . . .

RM: Do you keep a garden here now where you live?

ChL: We keep one up on the mountain.

RM: What all do you grow in your garden up there?

ChL: Everything except citrus.

CL: Yes.

ChL: Corn, beans, squash.

RM: Is it a big garden?

CL: No, just little.

ChL: Pretty big.

CL: Not to me. [laughs] I love to plant some little flowers.

RM: Have you planted it yet?

ChL: Yes. The corn is 4 inches high.

CL: I haven't planted my garden yet.

RM: Do you spend part of your summers up there?

ChL: We spend the biggest part of our time there.

CL: Yes, working up there.

ChL: We're not here 30 minutes of the day.

RM: I was lucky to reach you today, then.

ChL: Yes, you were.

CL: Yes. I paint, too, if it's a painting day.

RM: Oh, these [on the wall] are your paintings?

CL: Yes.

RM: They're very good. Tell me how you got into painting?

CL: I got into painting 7 or 8 years ago. Here's my desert one.

RM: That's lovely. Did you take lessons?

CL: I did at first, but my teacher, Lew Fluge, kind of lost his memory.
What do they call that, Charles?

ChL: Stroke.

CL: Stroke or . . .

ChL: Senile; old age.

CL: He was good. I liked to watch him paint. He made good clouds.

RM: Yours are good.

CL: He made a good sky - good mountains - and did everything in his head.

ChL: There's no artist in the state of Nevada, or the United States, who

can pick up a desert scene like that.

RM: Did you paint that from your head?

ChL: Yes.

CL: Some people can't do it. Well, some of them - you could look at an art book - I have a lot of art books; I bought some. My teacher said you don't copy somebody else's paintings. Some people do, though. A lot of people can't do it in their own heads.

RM: Those are really nice.

CL: I sold some, but . . .

RM: Do you paint all the time?

CL: We go every week. Supposedly - I missed 3 weeks now, [chuckles] when I was up there. We always paint Monday. We used to on Monday and Thursday, but Monday . . .

RM: Do you paint at home, or just there?

CL: I painted that one here, because I missed so much.

RM: You found the plant she was talking about in a book. It's called yerba mansa. And the Indians also ate the desert trumpet of the buckwheat family. What part did they eat of that, Cynthia?

CL: The young shoots. They ate cactus, too.

CL: Here's a better picture of it.

RM: This is the princess plume?

CL: Yes. And here's that coyote melon I was talking about before.

RM: Now, how do they eat that?

CL: They don't eat it, they used the medicine off it - the root part. It looks like a yam. And they ate screw beans.

RM: I wonder how they prepared them?

CL: I don't know - they'd grind it, I guess. They ate the cactus, too;

hedge cactus.

RM: What part of it did they eat?

CL: The fruit. And I eat that, and it's good - it's got a lot of seeds in it. And they ate chia, too.

RM: From the mint family. How did they eat that?

CL: The seed part.

ChL: The seed is very high in protein. If you walk 50 miles, you take a handful with you.

CL: Here's the one I said was medicine - blue sage.

RM: Oh, it's beautiful. It's in the mint family, too. Now, how did they use that, again?

CL: For swelling. You boil it. You could drink it, too. It made you eat well, too. It made your food taste good; you'd stick it in the other things that you boiled.

RM: Did they eat the leaves or the flowers?

CL: They drank the liquid that . . .

RM: Did they boil the flowers and the leaves?

CL: Not the flowers; just the stems. I have some dry ones over there. You can use it dry, too. It was named differently, too. It grows different in different places. It's the same thing - they call this a rose sage. You could find the plant someplace in some mountains. It grows differently but it's the same thing.

RM: The same as the blue sage?

CL: Yes. This was squaw tea - mountain tea.

RM: OK, mountain tea is called joint fir squaw tea, from the joint fir family. And you made a tea out of that, too?

CL: Yes. There's another one down here, too - in the valley. This was up

the mountain.

RM: Was that for food?

CL: No; drink.

RM: For medicine, you mean? What did they use it for?

CL: No, not for medicine. They'd just drink it. This is the kind [of cactus] we'd eat up on the mountain.

RM: That's called a hedgehog calico cactus. And what did they eat there? The fruit?

CL: The fruit; yes. The sand mat is a eye medicine, too.

RM: How did they prepare that?

CL: They boiled that and just put the water in your eyes. People found it in the desert. And you could eat foxtail.

RM: Yes, foxtail cactus.

CL: It's got a little fruit down in here.

CL: There are a lot of seeds in it, too. That's it; that's all.

RM: What does Pahrump mean, now?

CL: Pahrump is the name of the spring, and that's it.

ChL: The Indians called it Pahrump.

RM: And what it mean?

ChL: It doesn't have a meaning.

CL: There's no meaning to it - it's just a place.

CL: That isn't a correct pronunciation for that, though. In Indian it's parumba. That's the real name of it, but the white people made it Pahrump. Tecopa's the same way.

RM: How do you say Tecopa?

CL: TekupatE. t.e.c.o.p.s.l, I think - it's supposed to be -a.l at the end. But when they wrote it the white person put down Tecopa.

RM: Yes; they couldn't say it too well.

CL: Yes, they couldn't pronounce . . . it's hard.

RM: Yes, hard for the white tongue.

CL: Yes, it is. [laughter]

RM: Well, what did the word Pahrump mean, then?

CL: That was just the name of the place.

CL: A little spring used to be . . .

RM: But Las Vegas means 'the meadows,' and Denver is named after somebody . . .

ChL: Why does Las Vegas mean the meadows? Where did the word Las Vegas come from? It's in the Spanish dictionary, Spanish books, all have meanings. So does everything in Latin. Take that right on down into English or German - whichever branch you take. But the Indians called the spring here Pahrump . . . "I'm going to go to Pahrump." That means, that particular spring in that particular location. And that's all it meant to them; it didn't mean watermelon or water or mounds of water or . . .

CL: Stone mountain or stone spring or something like this . . .

ChL: No, the word has no meaning, other than location.

CL: That's what they have up there in that little restaurant up there - Saddle West - at the corner.

RM: They say that?

CL: It says Pahrump means Paiute what - water-stone or something like that. It's not right.

On your way out, when you get to the first restaurant, at the highway, make a left and go for less than a quarter of a mile, and on your right is a cemetery. In the north end of that cemetery you'll find a plaque that I had put there from the Historical Society of the State of Nevada. I wrote

[the inscription]. You stop there and read it.

CL: It's for Chief Tecopa.

ChL: On Chief Tecopa's grave.

RM: E Street?

ChL: Yes, E Street.

CL: It's behind the Methodist church.

ChL: There's a brand new Methodist church over there.

RM: Does the spring still flow?

CL: No; they covered it up. This is where it was taken - one of them, I guess - this older picture. The one Denny [Lynch] got from those people. This is a part of it. We used to go swimming in it a long, long time ago.

RM: Oh, you used to swim in the Pahrump Springs.

CL: It used to have 2 big holes; yes. I think this is the lower one. The other one is the deeper - right here. They said that bathing beach was in 1916. That's what they got this from - that guy came through here. Denny got hold of him somehow and he gave me some of . . .

RM: Telfert Duper . . . Dupes. From Lynch's book - page 91. Yes.

CL: He got those from some people who used to live here at Pahrump a long time ago - in 1916 it says. I don't know them.

RM: Yes, that was before your time.

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