

An Interview with  
HELEN  
MANLEY

An Oral History produced by  
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project  
Nye County, Nevada  
Tonopah  
2009

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Helen Manley  
2009

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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 incoherence. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;
- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

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

Jean Charney served as editor and administrative assistant throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Kimberley Dickey provided considerable assistance in transcribing many of the oral histories; Jean Charney, Julie Lancaster, and Darlene Morse also transcribed a number of interviews. Proofreading, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Marilyn Anderson, Joni Eastley, Julie Lancaster, Teri Jurgens Lefever, and Darlene Morse. Joni Eastley proofed all the manuscripts and often double-checked, as best as possible, the spelling of people’s names and the names of their children and other relatives. Jeanne Sharp Howerton provided digital services and consultation. Long-time Pahrump resident Harry Ford, founder and director of the Pahrump Valley Museum, served as a consultant throughout the project; his participation was essential. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

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—Robert D. McCracken

2009

## INTRODUCTION

Historians generally consider the year 1890 as the close of the American frontier. By then, most of the western United States had been settled, ranches and farms developed, communities established, and roads and railroads constructed. The mining boomtowns, based on the lure of overnight riches from newly 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 most of the state was mapped and its geographical features named, a vast region—stretching from Belmont south to the Las Vegas meadows, comprising most of Nye County—remained largely unsettled and unmapped. In 1890, most of southcentral Nevada remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be so for at least another twenty years.

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

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the 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. The Rhyolite Herald, longest surviving of Rhyolite/Bullfrog's three newspapers, lasted from 1905 to 1912. The Beatty Bullfrog Miner was in business from 1905 to 1906. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All these communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities once their own newspapers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, published as part of the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 resides in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) in 1987. The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County

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

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

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

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

—RDM  
2009



Interview with Helen Ford Manley and Harry "Button" Ford conducted by Robert McCracken, October 27, 2008, at the Fords' home in Pahrump, Nevada.

## CHAPTER ONE

RM: Helen. Let's start by you telling me your full name as it reads on your birth certificate:

HM: Helen Ruth Ford.

RM: And when and where were you born?

HM: I was born in Glendora, California, in 1934.

RM: Tell me your mother's full name.

HM: Her name was Hattie Eva Todd. She was born in Bloom County, Wisconsin, in 1904.

RM: And was she a native of Wisconsin?

HM: Yes.

RM: What did her family do for a living there?

HM: They had a farm and they raised sheep and had some cows.

RM: And what was your father's full name?

HM: His name was Stanley Ford; he had no middle name. He, too, was born in Wisconsin; in 1902.

RM: And what was his family's occupation?

HM: I think they just kind of wandered around. They were back and forth to California.

RM: I wonder what brought them West. Did your mother and father marry back there?

HM: They married in Wisconsin, yes.

RM: Did they go to school together?

HM: No. But they came West when my oldest sister was 18 months old. My dad's parents were living in California and they came out here. At that time they were out in Lanfair Valley, out from Essex and Goffs—Needles, in that area.

RM: And were they in the farming business there?

HM: They had some cattle. I don't think Granddad did much of anything; he did a little carpenter work.

RM: And then when your family moved there, your mother and father, were they in the vicinity of his parents?

HM: Yes, they lived there—where did they go from Goffs? They lived there when Betty and Mabel and Mary were little. Mary went to school in Lanfair.

HF: Originally they went on down to Fallbrook.

RM: (I should mention that your brother, Harry "Button" Ford, is sitting in on the interview.) How long did they live there?

HM: At Fallbrook? He didn't stay anyplace too long because they lived in Glendora. Was Fallbrook when he was fumigating the orange groves?

RM: Did they come out to California in the Depression?

HF: No, it was in 1925.

HM: I remember Mother talking about the Depression, and Daddy trying to make a living; he had a truck and he hauled anything and everything.

RM: Do you know what your father was doing in Glendora when you were born?

HM: Not really. I remember when I was a little older he was hauling oranges. I remember the trailer—he had little doors that opened up for the oranges to come out on a big conveyer belt.

They moved from Glendora to Essex, California. I went to the first and second grade in Essex and then we moved to Yermo; Daddy went to work for the marine base there. I went to the third grade and part of the fourth grade until March, when we moved to Pahrump.

RM: And that was 1944, wasn't it? The marine base was probably going as a part of the war effort.

HM: Yes, because we lived in Essex when the war broke out. I remember that so plain.

RM: Just an aside, what nationality is your family?

HM: Irish and German. Daddy claimed English and Irish, but during the war Mother wouldn't claim to be German; she was just Irish.

RM: Sure [laughs]. What was the first talk you heard of Pahrump before you moved; or did you hear any?

HM: Daddy heard of Pahrump through George Fink and I remember George loaned Daddy his pickup and Daddy took Button and me and we came to Pahrump to see it. I remember so well that Hattie Fink had fixed fried chicken; we had the nicest lunch when we came up here.

RM: What route did you take from Yermo?

HM: To Baker and Shoshone.

RM: When you came over the rise from Shoshone, what did you see?

HM: Well, not much of anything.

RM: What did you think?

HM: We were kids; we loved everything. It didn't make any difference to us, if that's where Daddy was going to move us . . . he told us about how the corn would grow higher than your head; anyway, we were ready to go.

RM: Did he make the decision to move here then when he saw the Pahrump Valley or did he go back home and talk it over?

HM: I think he'd already made the decision to move; then he came up and built a house and I remember when we moved up here the cows, chickens, rabbits, guineas, mules, horses—everything was moved up here from the farm in Yermo. We got up here the 13th of March, 1944, and Daddy fixed us hotcakes for breakfast.

RM: What was Pahrump like to you as a 10-year-old?

HM: It really wasn't much of anything. There was the Cayton Place—the post office was at the Cayton Place; that's the place just up from Binion's. We had mail once a week, on Wednesdays, and people gathered there to get their mail and that's when we'd see our neighbors. There was the Pahrump Ranch and the Manse Ranch and there wasn't much of anything else but Pop Buol and the Raycraft place, where we later moved.

RM: Were there any other outlying ranches that you recall?

HM: No, that was it.

RM: What did you think of this world that you were in then?

HM: We just liked being where we were; we had no complaints. We found fun in whatever we did; wherever we were, we found fun and pulled tricks on each other.

RM: What were some of the things you did here as a kid?

HM: We had our horses.

RM: Did you have your own horse?

HM: Not particularly my own horse, but it was our horse and then the Raycrafts had a horse that I rode.

RM: Did you ride a lot?

HM: Quite a bit. I rode all over and that's how I came across the pipe. I was by myself and I had this little old pony; she was a blue roan and her name was Jellybean. I was riding around; I liked to go up on the sand dunes and just mess around, and I came across a lot of casing. It was close to Ruuds' place in the sand dunes.

RM: About how far were you from home then?

HM: About a mile.

RM: So you would go as far as a mile from the ranch as a 10-year old?

HM: I was probably 11 or 12 when that happened, but yes, we'd take off and didn't have to worry about anything. We used to ride down to Six Mile Springs; we rode any place we wanted to.

RM: Did you ride alone?

HM: A lot of times I did.

RM: And when you were riding with somebody else, who was with you?

HM: My older sister, but other than that there were no other kids my age here. Button didn't really care to go horseback riding with me, so I would wander. . . .

HF: Did you go with Carol Jean?

HM: We rode together, but after they left I would go either with Betty or by myself. Anyway, I went home and told Daddy what I had found.

RM: Was it a lot of casing?

HM: It seemed like it was, to a little kid. It was probably enough for a well. He wanted to know where it was. I think he had heard a story about some casing that had come up missing and he must have told Roland Wiley. . . .

HF: It was Pop Buol.

HM: Didn't Al Carpenter go to jail over that?

RM: What was Roland going to do with the pipe?

HM: Drill a well down at the Hidden Hills Ranch. But somehow Al Carpenter got it and had it hidden out. Then one time I was at the store and Roland Wiley was in there and he bought me a bag of candy.

RM: For finding it, I suppose?

HM: I guess.

RM: A big reward.

HM: It was, to a little girl like that. [Laughter]

RM: How well hidden was it?

HM: In the sand dunes, you just have to kind of stumble across something to find it. Some years later, when Al Carpenter was working for Roland Wiley, we went down there to visit and I was just about to crack up. Here I had told Daddy and Daddy had turned him in and he had spent time in jail and I was sitting there and he didn't know that I found it; and I wasn't going to say anything then.

RM: Probably the police got involved then?

HF: I just don't remember. There were no phones, there was nothing.

HM: There were no police here, either.

RM: If law enforcement came in here, where did they come from?

HM: Tonopah.

RM: Bill Thomas would have been sheriff then. So Bill Thomas got involved; I wonder how they figured out it was Al who did it.

HF: Al lived right near where it had been stashed and Roland Wiley had hired Al to drill the well.

RM: And so Al obviously went to trial and did some time; do you know how long, Button?

HF: I don't know. Roland Wiley was real unhappy about it and he possibly was the [Clark County] district attorney at that time. So he went to the man and said, "Listen, if you want to confess up to this we'll see what we can do; but if you don't we're going put you away." I think Al Carpenter did some short time; I don't think it was long.

RM: That's an interesting story. And the kid out riding her horse finds it.

HF: Bill Thomas was also the assessor and he'd sleep on our porch when he'd come down.

HM: Everybody who came to Pahrump did; you always had somebody coming in to eat. There were no restaurants here, and just a little store that was open by chance. Remember those girls who rode out here from Vegas? They had sleeping bags and slept on our lawn. Daddy had anybody and everybody come in.

RM: They rode out from Mountain Springs?

HF: Probably Red Rock because they rode from Vegas and they stopped at our place and then went on over to Ash Meadows.

RM: You can cross the Spring Mountains out of Red Rock?

HF: That was the only road at that time. I mean, the old Spanish Trail was just a trail. But Charlie Williams had a ranch up there and Charlie Roberts had a ranch on this side.

RM: On this side of the mountains, on the Red Rock route? So it was a road?

HF: It was travelable.

HM: But we didn't use it with our cars; we had to go out through Johnnie and Indian Springs. In fact, two weeks before my twins, Debbie and Della, were born (their daddy was overseas) I drove and Button rode with me and Mom and Daddy drove Button's car so they would have a ride home because I kept my car in town. And we stopped at the DMV office there on Main and Bonanza and Button and I both took our driver's tests and got our driver's license. I could hardly sit up behind the steering wheel.

RM: What other kinds of adventures did you have on horseback in the valley?

HM: One time my brother-in-law and I took off and went out toward Ash Meadows looking for the wild horses that were out there at that time. We had a lady friend who lived at the other

end of the valley; I rode up there and visited her one time. The Caytons moved out into the valley and I'd ride out there and visit with their daughter.

RM: To me, living in a different time here, I wonder, what if you fell off and broke a leg or something?

HM: We never thought of that; in fact, I fell off a few times and was never hurt. [Laughs]

RM: What other kinds of activities were you involved in as a child here?

HM: Button probably told you about when we moved over to the Raycraft place and the ponds there. We had a raft made out of ties and the water wasn't that deep; we would use a stick that we could just poke around in this pond. Remember when we decided we were going to build a little cabin on the raft—we were really going to fix a good boat? Well, that wasn't our smartest idea because it was a little wobbly so we took that little cabin off. We were always doing things like that.

We would catch frogs and we ate frog legs. We'd go out there in the swamps and Mama thought there was quicksand out there and she always thought we were going to sink. Right out in the front, there was this nice artesian well. I guess we plugged the side so the water would come out over the top and we would take a board and something heavy and it put on top and the water would just billow out, and we played like we were beavers—we would go under and come back up. We spent hours doing things like that; we were never bored.

Something Button and I did—and it was a good thing we didn't get caught—was to go down to the pasture where the calves were and play cowboy. We would catch a calf by the tail. The calf would take off running, kicking and bucking. We would try to keep up. When we fell we laughed and said we were bucked off.

We made our own little cars and trucks; we'd take a flat board and nail a can on the front of it and we'd have a string tied to it and we would make roads; we just played for hours with our little homemade trucks. If somebody gave Button a new truck it was put up because we didn't want to get it dirty, we played with the homemade ones. And then we had our chores.

RM: As a girl, were your chores different than Button's?

HM: Not as a girl, but they were different than Button's because he was a lot smaller. Daddy would mow the hay and rake it up and we'd have to go out there and put it in shocks. Then Daddy would take the team and a wagon; the horses seemed to know that you go a little ways and you stop. Button and I would be on top stomping down the hay so Dad could load more hay. I remember one time I was up there and I had my pitchfork and Daddy reached and got a shock of hay and brought it up like this and I saw a snake. Well, I poked that gob of hay right back down on Daddy and then he realized why.

RM: Was it a rattler?

HM: No, but I didn't want it up there on that hay with us. I remember one time Button and I were up there packing down the hay. Button was at the end of the trailer and I was at the front and the horses decided it was time to go so they went on and Button fell off. I think he stuck a piece of hay up his nose because he got a nosebleed and got to go to the house. We worked hard, but we always seemed to have fun, whatever we were doing.

I remember one year when I was about 15 or 16, Daddy got half of the hay that we put up on the Pahrump Ranch; but he had his own haying crew—my brother-in-law would mow, Button would rake, Daddy and I would bail, I would drive the tractor and it was the old bailer that he had to tie the wires. Daddy and I would bail and then we would haul in the hay. There was a thing on the side of the trailer and, like I said, I drove the tractor. I'd have to hit those bails just right to pop it up there so we could load it—this was from early morning until late at night.

Dad had a sow that had six baby pigs. She died when the babies were two days old. I asked Daddy if I could have them. He said, "You can't raise pigs on cow's milk." I said, "Please, just let me try."

Daddy took in a deep breath, let it out, and said, "If they are still alive in the morning you can have them."

I could hardly wait till morning. I ran to the pigpen and sure enough, they were still alive. I gathered them up in a box, took them to the house, heated some milk, and fed them with a spoon. They were so hungry. My sister gave me a baby bottle to feed them. They all lived.

Daddy had the little dairy and he was always rigging up something. He bought a milking machine—this was when my older sister was still at home—and I was too little to put the cups on the cow. You get on the floor and you hold it like this, then you bring one, two, three and four, but if you weren't fast enough you'd lose the air and they'd fall off. So my sister and I got the good idea that I'd take two and she'd take two. We'd turn the air on and do all four of them at the same time.

RM: Each of the four were separate?

HM: Yes. But those poor cows. It was all four of those at one time; wasn't it a double? I know when you start to put the other one on the cow on this side, you'd better be fast because you lose air and that one is going to fall off. That was quite an experience, too.

RM: How many cows was your dad milking?

HM: About a dozen, then we would take the milk to the house and separate the cream. The cream went into Rancho Grande Creamery in Vegas and Button and I would go with Daddy [to deliver it]. This was the greatest trip because we got ice cream—vanilla ice cream—and that is still my favorite today. Oh, that was good. There was no place out here to buy anything like that.

RM: Especially anything cold. Did you have a Servel refrigerator?



HM: Yes; we had two. We had to keep the cream cold. We'd go into Vegas once a week and then Daddy would get the groceries. We always had a grocery list; no matter what we wanted, we'd write it on this grocery list and Daddy would bring it. I got cravings for sardines and he would bring me a couple of cans. About the only kind of cold cereal he knew, I think, was Grape Nuts. He always brought us Grape Nuts.

RM: What did you do with the milk?

HM: We fed the skim milk to the pigs.

RM: So what you were selling was just the cream. You don't remember what he got for the cream, do you?

HM: Oh, no.

RM: It was enough to make it worthwhile, I guess.

HM: It must have been. He had to do a little bit of everything to make a living. He hauled the mail and I remember he got \$44.00 a month to haul the mail. That was once a week, every Wednesday, and Button and I used to go out with him to the Tonopah highway and wait for that bus. That was the greatest thing! We messed around out there and it would really be a nice surprise when somebody would get off the bus, the LTR, and ride with us to Pahrump.

RM: And this would have been after the war.

HM: During the war, too, because that's when we had our gasoline ration stamps.

RM: Did the \$44.00 a month include his gas?

HM: No, he got \$44.00 a month and that's it. He had to buy his own gas and use his own car.

RM: What would he do with the mail when he got it back here?

HM: He took it over here to Cayton's at that time; then they moved the post office up to the store when Paulford Brooks built a store. And then we had mail, was it five days a week?

HF: Well, not till it went to Shoshone; it was two days and then five. The mail was picked up in Shoshone and dropped off in Shoshone, but that was sometime later.

RM: Who were the Caytons?

HM: They were here when we came—Paul and Helen Cayton—and they had a daughter we went to school with. Was she the same grade or a year older than you?

HF: She and Carol Jean both were in my grade.

HM: And Sally Ann was another Cayton. Paul and Buddy Cayton were brothers, and they each had one daughter. Carol Jean's folks worked at the Pahrump Ranch, but there weren't really that many kids. We lived over here when we moved from California and we finished out the year. We would have to walk from there through the sand dunes, and you couldn't see anything, little kids walking through there. We were so scared, and we would have to walk through Pop Buol's place, which is now Binion's. I remember Pop Buol telling us, "When you walk through here, I want you to whistle." I didn't really understand why, but if we whistled he knew we weren't eating his pears or grapes or mulberries and all of that.

At that time we went to school in a two-room cabin—the teacher lived in the back and the school was in the front. It was first through eighth, and my sister was in high school but she finished out the year in the little school.

RM: And who was your teacher?

HM: Miss Bauer. I'll never forget her. She wore a dark wig; we knew it was a wig because she had grey hair poking out like this all around the wig. And she had a pair of glasses that pinched on her nose, with a chain that she pinned to her wig.

RM: Oh my lord. How old do you think she was, in retrospect?

HM: Sixty?

HF: I'd say so.

RM: Was she a good teacher?

HM: I guess. The kids were kind of ornery. She had a little windup clock and the kids would sneak around and turn that clock up a little bit. Another one would go up and turn it up a little more. One girl went up and got caught and she turned it the wrong way. So how did she know what time we were supposed to come to school the next day?

HF: She possibly had a radio in the back.

HM: She might have. We could never see in there, she was so fast. We'd want to see what she had back there but she kept that little lock thing on it and we never got to look in. That was before the school was moved up to the little red schoolhouse up by the Pahrump Ranch.

RM: What do you know about her?

HM: We didn't ask; we moved to Pahrump and started school in March and school was out in May.

RM: And that was the only time you went to that school? The next year you went to the little red schoolhouse?

HM: Yes.

RM: Was she the teacher at the little schoolhouse?

HM: No. She couldn't stand the bunch of kids. I mean, it would be recess time and we'd go down underneath the big trees and this one kid, Milton Skinner, he would have things like the discs that they use in the fields, and he'd be banging them together and poor Miss Bauer would come out and there'd be a little ding, ding, ding. And, of course, we saw her but we didn't hear her. When we got through playing down there, we would go back to school, but between the clock and other things, I don't think she could have stood another year.

RM: I wonder whatever happened to her.

HM: I have no idea. She had a nice old car.

HF: It wasn't old in those days; it was a nice car.

HM: Some of the other teachers who came in—one year they didn't have enough money to pay a teacher and that's when they did cake walks to try to raise money to pay the teacher. One year the teacher was going to stay with us and she and I had to share a room. Well, she didn't last very long, either; she took off.

RM: Did she take off in mid-year?

HM: She wasn't there very long that year. And then we didn't have a teacher that one year until . . .

HF: After the first of the year.

RM: Did you go to school?

HM: No, there was nothing. That teacher was Bobbie McQuery. When we went out for recess and got into a good baseball game, she played with us and we didn't go back into study until our baseball game was over. It was different out here.

RM: And yet you kids all learned fine, didn't you? And you all turned out to be good people.

HM: Well, sure. We did because everybody knew everybody out here. You'd see a light coming in from Johnnie way—well, everybody knew who'd gone to Vegas that day and who was coming home. And if we would have done anything wrong, I don't know what Daddy would

have done. Mama always said he'd have a conniption fit. Now, we never knew what a conniption fit was and we weren't going to find out. We just didn't do anything wrong.

RM: She used the word "conniption?" My dad used that term. He was from Kansas.

HM: No, we didn't know what it was. Talking about the teachers, one year the teacher lived down at Manse. They had a car down there, and several of the Indian kids rode with her; they all came from there. One morning when we went to school—I was probably in the sixth grade—the teacher didn't show up so I decided I was going to teach school that day. I taught the few kids who were there and then I think we had our lunch and we decided we'd had enough, so we went home. The next day the teacher came and we told her what we'd done and so on the sheet she wrote, "School was held; teacher was absent." Remember that? It was Norma Snyder.

RM: And how many kids would have been in the school at that time?

HM: It varied, but there were probably a half a dozen of us that time from this valley; the other hadn't come in yet.

RM: And how many would have been coming in from the other end?

HF: All told, it would be less than 20.

RM: And how many were Indians, would you say?

HM: I think most of them were.

HF: Except the Sawday girls.

HM: And then Button and I and when we first came out here, and Carol Jean Wilson and the Cayton girls. It varied. With farm workers, they came and went.

RM: And who were the Sawdays?

HM: They were down at the Manse Ranch. Dr. Cornell had the Manse Ranch. Charles Sawday was a son-in-law of his.

HF: He had been here for some time before we came, running the ranch. I remember he bought a brand new 1946 Ford and that was when you could first buy a new car. So he had to have been here a couple of years.

RM: And he had children? Was his wife here, too?

HM: Yes. He had three children. Mary Sue was the oldest; Timmy was the other little girl; and the little boy, Charles.

RM: And what do you know about Sawday?

HM: They went back down toward Julian, California, east of San Diego, after they left here. My sister and brother-in-law went down there and worked for him for a while.

HF: Charles Sawday had an uncle who was very, very well off and had a very large ranch out east of San Diego; I believe his name was also Charles. I read about him later on in years, about how the BLM or something had sort of whittled his grazing rights down so much they darn near put him out of business.

RM: And Sawday married Dr. Cornell's daughter; what do you know about Dr. Cornell?

HM: Not much of anything. I don't know whether I ever saw Dr. Cornell. But I know he would come out and they told the story one time about him taking the tonsils out of some little Indian kids while he was out here.

RM: What kind of a doctor was he?

HF: Ear, nose and throat.

RM: And he was out of L.A., or San Diego?

HF: He was out of Escondido.

RM: And he bought the Manse Ranch, didn't he? And then Elmer Bowman bought it from him? What was Cornell trying to do with the Manse Ranch? Was it just a man who had money, or did he have a vision for it of some kind?

HM: They grew alfalfa.

HF: Yes, it was a nice ranch. They had hay, grain, and cattle.

HM: They had a bunkhouse for the hired hand and our brother-in-law Gene Avera worked for him for a while before he married our sister Betty.

RM: How old a guy was Charles Sawday when you knew him?

HF: Oh, probably 32 or 33.

HM: His wife's name was Ruth. They were nice. I remember she had two sisters; I can't remember their names. They would come out and we would go down to the Manse Ranch and swim down there. I remember one time Ruth fixed a nice big dinner and we all ate down there.

## CHAPTER TWO

RM: Describe what the Manse Ranch looked like the day you ate down there.

HM: I remember the bunkhouse and the house that the Sawdays lived in; that was the same one Elmer Bowman lived in. I mostly remember the pond of water where we swam.

RM: Was it a big pond?

HM: It seemed like it to a little kid.

RM: And was it deep?

HM: Well, in the place where Mother said there was quicksand, they said they dropped 50-gallon drums and they disappeared.

RM: How big would you say the ranch yard was?

HF: It was quite large; they had a number of houses. It was like the history of Yount—if you came through, Yount had a place for you to stay. There were a number of small houses that the workingmen lived in, and then they had big working corrals. I would say the ranch yard area was the best part of 10 acres.

RM: What was main house like?

HM: I really don't remember, but I remember at that time it was a very nice house.

RM: Would that have been the original Yount house?

HF: No, but it was an adobe house and stuccoed on the outside. My brother-in-law did the electrical work on it when the Bowmans put in their dairy. They bought a big diesel generator so they would have power round the clock. My brother-in-law wired the place up and it was just impossible to run wires other than down the sides and up in the attic. But it was a very nice house.

RM: Is it still there?

HF: No, they bulldozed it when Collins came in. Collins was the one responsible for building the Lakes in Las Vegas—the Collins Brothers. They built a lot of houses out on the west side of Vegas. They came out here and purchased a portion of the Bowman Ranch, basically the old original Manse Ranch. He had some great ideas; he started building houses and everything, and then he died. This was about 10 years ago.

RM: Is the bunkhouse still there?

HF: They split the place up and dragged a bunch of those over to Imogene Andersen's property so some of them are still down there.

RM: So there was a bunkhouse and an adobe house.

HF: And then the cook shack.

HM: And there were the small houses, because the house that Imogene lived in was there; the one that Mary lived in was there. . . .

HF: We've got it down there.

HM: And Ruth Dewey, the schoolteacher, had a little house down there.

HF: There were a number of small houses for the men and for the help and whatever.

RM: When Sawday was living there, how many workers do you think there were on the Manse Ranch?

HF: They probably had four or five Indians and three or four white people.

RM: Let's review the white children here when you were going to school. There was you and Button and. . . .

HM: My sister Betty and Carol Jean Wilson. She had a sister, Joey, but she didn't go to the school. And then the two Cayton girls, Darlene and Sally Ann, and three Sawday kids. Then there were people coming in and out on the Pahrump Ranch who would go to school for a little while and would move on. It seemed like they didn't stay here very long.

That Raycraft ranch where we lived—that was the childhood dream.

RM: It was a dream of a place or it was your dream?

HM: It was just the greatest place. We had our horses to ride, we had our chores to do, but it didn't make any difference whether we were chopping weeds in the field or hauling in hay. Our ponds, our frogs, all the animals and everything—it was just great; it was the greatest place on earth. You'd go to bed at night, you didn't lock a door. The only time you locked a door was when the wind was blowing to keep the screen from flopping. It was a safe place to be.

RM: And when you lived in town you didn't lock your door either, did you?

HM: No, I don't think we even had a lock on it, just one of those little hooks. I remember I had my screen door hooked and my little girls were playing and Button came down there and he hit the door and that little hook opened up and he come in.



RM: Let's just back up a minute—who were the Indian children in school that first year or two?

HM: There were the Sharps—Freddy, Angie, and Roberta—and Johnny Frank was with that bunch. They lived on the Manse Ranch. Louie Sharp was the dad and he worked down there. And then there were the Jim girls; we went to school with Cynthia and Lorraine. Alberta Sharp passed away when she went up to Schurz. And that really scared us because we knew her; we went to school with her. And there were the Bows, who lived up on the Raycraft place by that well.

I remember riding my horse to the Pahrump Ranch and I was scared to death of that Indian cemetery. White people are buried there now, too. Our mother and dad are buried there, but at that time it was an Indian cemetery. I remember coming from the Pahrump Ranch and it would be starting to get dark and oh, my horse could run fast past that cemetery. I'd have to stop before we got to the house because Daddy said, "Don't you run that horse to the house." Well, she sure ran fast past that cemetery.

RM: In your awareness, were there ever any ghosts that people talked about in Pahrump Valley?

HM: Not that I know of. Did you ever hear of any?

HF: We were never concerned with a ghost, but when we went by the cemetery—and I remember, we walked by it a time or two in the dark—you just thought some spook was going to come out and scare you. It scared us.

HM: Especially after dark. Now, we could walk to school in the morning and come home in the evening and that didn't bother us, but when it started getting a little bit late. . . .

RM: So your path from the Raycraft place to school took you past the cemetery.

HM: Yes. It was a mile from our house on the Raycraft place to where the school was.

RM: Button is showing a picture of your house.

HM: There were beds out here on this front porch and they enclosed this in. The house only had two bedrooms. They enclosed this and that's where Button's bedroom was.

RM: And a lot of the time, it was just you kids in the family playing?

HM: Yes, we had no really close next-door neighbors. We did play with the little Manley boys when they lived here.

HF: Yes, there were other folks who moved in here—George and Buster Manley.

HM: And there were the Looneys.

RM: Did they have children?

HF: Yes. Carl was about Button's age and Lacreata was my age or maybe a little older. Then the Wards moved in. I think you did a story about Dutch Turner.

RM: I did, I interviewed Dutch Turner.

HM: I was riding my horse the day they moved in and they moved into the house that Daddy had built and we had lived in. Al Carpenter had lived there and then the Wards moved in. By that time I thought I was a good detective because I had found that casing. I was up on one of the sand dunes watching them—they were unloading equipment and everything. I didn't know they'd seen me up there; I was up on this little blue roan with my hair in pigtails. But they were watching, they told me later on. They thought I was a little Indian girl; I was brown as a berry.

In fact, I married the second son, Benny Ward. We were married for 35 years. I was 13 and I think he was 17 when they moved in. Our families were real close neighbors.

RM: Oh, really? So you were related by marriage to Dutch.

HM: Yes. We were married 35 years and had three little girls and then he died of cancer in '87.

RM: As you went through the years in the school here, how would you describe it and what do you recall about it?

HM: I think we studied hard after Mrs. Clara Sturman came. We'd had just the teacher part-time and then the one who didn't really make us study; we'd play baseball and things like that. But then we got a real strict teacher in here in my eighth grade. You'd take an achievement test at the first of the school year. I took my test and she said, "Helen, you're not ready for the eighth grade."

I said, "Please don't put me back in the seventh grade. I will work hard; I will do anything. Just please let me try it."

She said, "Okay we'll let you try it." Well, I worked hard and at the end of the year we had to take our achievement test to see how much we'd learned, and my score was third year high school.

Mrs. Sturman was an older lady. I remember she had gray hair and she always wore it in a braid. There was a little trailer that she lived in behind the school. She would take no guff from any of us. She spanked Donny Ward one time because he played a trick and put a tack in somebody's seat. She paddled him—made a believer out of the rest of us, too. She was stern; she was a good teacher.

She could read Shakespeare to us; I loved Shakespeare. You could stand behind her and she wasn't reading word for word, but she would read and tell it in her own words so we could

understand Shakespeare. The one thing she did, I think for all of us, was if you worked hard, kept your mouth shut—I mean, shut—then at the end of the day she read a number of books to us: Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Kidnapped*, and Kipling’s *Kim* and a lot of others. And you were just so fascinated. You would really try to be good because while she read to you, you could go to sleep if you wanted to. (I mean, the little kids did.)

RM: Did the Indian kids get into it, too?

HF: Some did and some didn’t.

RM: Were there a lot of discipline problems that you remember?

HF: There weren’t after she came because, like Helen was saying, this one boy. . . . The first thing she did when she took over was to say, “Okay I am going to tell you something right now. I will not tolerate tacks in the seat. Because number one, they’re dangerous and it will cause a commotion and everything.” Well, Donny Ward put a little tack in one of his friend’s seats. So she took him, made him put his chest on the desk, and she took a yardstick and worked him over. And all of us just sat there—we didn’t want to get a beating or watch him get one. That was it; there were no more tacks.

RM: How many grades did you go to here?

HM: I went from the fourth to the eighth grade; two of us graduated from eighth grade.

RM: Then what did you do?

HM: Well, the folks didn’t want to send me out to board me any place; they had done that with the first three. Betty went to Death Valley Junction, but they had to get a cabin over there so she could go to high school. She lived there with another girl.

My parents got a correspondence course for me but I didn’t graduate. You have no competition, you have too many outside things that you would rather do, and I was always busy cooking and baking in the kitchen; I really wasn’t interested in school. And then I got married just before I was 18.

RM: How long did you do the correspondence course?

HM: I guess off and on until I got married.

RM: Do you feel like you learned very much from it?

HM: Not really. I think you do better if you’re with other kids and there’s a challenge instead of just sitting down and reading and doing your homework and sending it off and then they grade it and they send it back to you.

RM: Do you remember what your parents paid for the course?

HF: It was five dollars a month.

RM: And where did the lessons come from?

HM: American Schools in Chicago, Illinois. Daddy would haul the mail and when he would bring the mail home and there wouldn't be any of my papers coming back, he'd say, "Helen, you'd better get started on your studies." He kept a pretty close watch on that.

RM: Then you got married—and did you stay on here?

HM: We went down to San Diego and Benny shipped out in May; we married in March of '52.

RM: Was he in the Korean War?

HM: Yes, he was on a carrier at that time. When he shipped out in May, I stayed down there and worked as a soda jerk for a little while. This little old country girl couldn't handle that so I came home and I got a job on the Pahrump Ranch as a cook in the bunkhouse. [Laughs] When I first went to work there I had three guys to cook for and oh, I babied them; they had pie, they had homemade ice cream and everything like that. Then they had others coming in to work and at the last I had 22 men I cooked for.

RM: Did you have help on that?

HM: At the last. Before I quit in December they had a lady who came in to help me a little bit. But this wasn't soup and sandwiches; this was three meals a day.

RM: How did it work out? You apparently handled it just fine.

HM: Yes. Two men came in there looking for work. They were tractor drivers and the foreman sent them in to eat dinner and they saw this little 18-year-old girl. One looked at the other one and he said, "What do you think? I don't think she can even boil water." And he said, "Well let's just try it. Let's just try it." I had fried chicken and mashed potatoes and gravy—it was on a Sunday—and a nice dessert. They sat down and enjoyed it and one said to the other, "You think it's just because it's Sunday?" And he said, "No, let's go ahead and hire out."

One old man, old Hub Wallace, told me this later; he was real nice. He laughed and told me about him and that other guy coming in, Herman, was that his name?

HF: Herman Mogart.

HM: Was that who it was? Anyway, they couldn't see this little old 18-year-old girl cooking. Every Saturday night this one guy on the ranch played a fiddle and I played the guitar. And we would go up here; the building is still standing at the school; they still have classes in it. Old Bill

and I would play every Saturday night and my dad called square dances. They danced hard and we played hard. Sometimes we would play a waltz because we loved to watch our mother and dad waltz. And we usually finished up about 11:00, wasn't it?

HF: Or later.

HM: Then I would go home to the bunkhouse and have to get up at a little after 4:00 to get started cooking breakfast. And when I'd stick my hand in that hot dishwater, oh, it hurt clear to the elbow because of my fingers.

When I was cooking there, I was the first one up on the ranch. They had several houses that couples lived in, but I was the first one up. They showed me how to start the light plant so I would kind of stumble around and walk out to that building and start the light plant—of course, every light on the ranch would come on because when they turned it off, everybody had their lights on. The generator was in the old Pahrump store that's here at the museum now. It was on the Pahrump Ranch then. I would start the light plant and have my breakfast ready. But on Sunday morning, I'd cook breakfast and get dinner started. I'd have it all ready and then I would sit in front of the heater in this big overstuffed chair and go to sleep. And when the first guy came in to eat, it would wake me up and then I could hurry and put dinner on the table.

When I was working there one old man who worked there, Les, was always up early. One morning, the guys all sat down to eat and then said, "Oh, Les is sleeping in this morning. Wonder what's going on." Well, after breakfast Les still wasn't up. The guys went and knocked on his door and there was no answer and they opened the door and Les had passed away. He had to lie there all day long because they had to go someplace, call Tonopah, and the coroner had to come down. So that man lay there all day long.

The guys were so good to me; they wouldn't leave me alone in the evenings. Usually they all had something to do, or would go to the bar or wherever they went, and I would be there by myself doing the dishes and everything.

RM: Tell me about the foods you prepared. What did breakfast consist of?

HM: There'd be bacon—we bought slab bacon that I had to slice the night before. By the time I got up and put the coffee pots on—we had big coffee pots—I got the bacon to frying, and usually made eggs and pancakes. The noon meal was always potatoes, gravy, meat.

RM: And they would come in for lunch?

HM: Yes, and it was always some kind of potatoes, gravy. . . .

RM: Were the potatoes fried?

HM: Fried, mashed, whatever, as long as they had potatoes. That stuck to their ribs because they worked hard. In fact, one of the bosses' sons worked there and he came in and tried to tell me that they were to have soup and sandwiches for lunch. Well, I wasn't raised that way. That's the way he had lunch, but he didn't work all that hard, either.

When one of the big bosses came up and I told him what Billy had told me, he said, “This is your department. If he comes in here and tries to tell you what to do, you pick up a skillet and run him out of here.” Here I am, 18 years old. [Chuckles]

RM: What kind of quarters did you have there?

HM: They had the big front room where the big long table was, and then the kitchen and then a little room where in later years my mother-in-law had her washing machine. They had a freezer there that only worked when the generator was going. And then there was a big long hallway at one end with rooms off from it—that’s where the hired men slept. At the other end was another long hallway and there were four bathrooms. I had my own bathroom, my own bedroom, and there were three other bedrooms where the bosses, the owners, slept when they came.

RM: And did you have running water?

HM: Oh yes. We had flushing toilets, I’ll have you know. [Laughs]

RM: What kind of stove were you cooking on?

HM: It was a gas stove, butane.

RM: And you would prepare potatoes? What other ways did you prepare potatoes?

HM: Either fried or fried with onions, but always with gravy to go on them; this is the way we were raised. Beans, potatoes and gravy—that’s what we were raised on.

RM: And did you cook with lard?

HM: Oh yes, big cans of lard.

RM: And what else would you cook?

HM: Always a meat—sometimes steak, sometimes roast, or hamburger, whatever.

RM: And what else for lunch?

HM: Maybe canned green beans, peas, corn.

RM: Did they have a garden on the Pahump Ranch?

HM: Not at that time.

RM: And they weren’t bringing in fresh vegetables or anything from Vegas.

HM: Oh, no. They would bring food from Bakersfield, and then when they weren't going to come up, I could go to Shoshone. Leon Hughes was the foreman. He lived right across the road, he and Gwen. Gwen would take me to Shoshone; they had an open tab there and I could buy anything I wanted to cook for my men. I could go over there and get roasts and hamburgers and whatever I needed.

RM: Were you baking bread or buying bread?

HM: I bought bread or made biscuits.

RM: Did you make biscuits for breakfast?

HM: After Mrs. Hughes came in at the last to help me, Leon's mother, she would make biscuits.

RM: And what kind of bread did you buy?

HM: White bread.

RM: Did you serve dessert at lunch?

HM: I always had cake or pie—at first, when I didn't have so many men, I could bake pie. I would bake, and when it was about to run out, I'd bake something else. I always kept dessert.

RM: What kind of cakes did you make?

HM: Chocolate, spice, vanilla; anything.

RM: Did you every make angel food?

HM: Oh, no. I'd have had to buy angel food cake and I think they cost more than 29 cents at that time.

RM: Was there an afternoon snack?

HM: No, just the three meals a day, breakfast, dinner and supper. Supper would consist of beans, potatoes and gravy, and canned vegetables and more dessert, and coffee.

RM: So lunch and supper were basically the same?

HM: Yes.

RM: And this was pretty much the routine all week. You probably never served fish, right?

HM: Oh, no.

RM: Did you serve pork?

HM: Yes, if they happened to bring in pork chops or a pork roast or something. And sometimes fried chicken.

RM: There must have been a lot of dishes. So you had to cook and do the dishes?

HM: Oh yes. The men were nice; they would bring their dirty dishes to the kitchen.

HF: Except on Saturday night.

HM: Did you help me on Saturday night?

HF: She was powdering her nose and powdering her face and powdering her ears and I was clear into the dishes.

RM: Getting ready to go up and play the guitar. Where did you learn to play the guitar?

HM: When we were in Wisconsin in '47, my cousin had a guitar and I wanted one and my daddy paid five dollars for it. We came back to Pahrump and Paul Cayton played the steel guitar. At the end of the neck, he had a special thing to make the strings rise; I took steel guitar lessons from him. Well, then the Wards came in and Ben played the guitar, so Helen wanted to play the guitar. He is the one who started me playing the guitar.

In the winter when it got dark early and supper was over and dishes done, Daddy would get his harmonica and I would get my guitar. Daddy would play songs like "Golden Slippers," "Snow Deer," "Redwing," "Peek-a-Boo," and "Rubber Dollie," and I would play, too. What great memories I have. I wouldn't trade it for anything. Growing up in Pahrump, I don't feel I missed anything.

RM: You must have been pretty good if you could play for square dancing.

HM: Not really. I mean, in Pahrump music was limited so if you'd just get up there and tap your foot and hit a chord once in a while, they'd dance to it. At those dances, everybody had a real good time. Then there was a family that started going up there and they'd bring alcohol. Well, that didn't go—especially on school grounds, in the schoolroom. We had to quit having the dances there and we would have them at different houses so those people wouldn't come. These people had their alcohol in their cars; they were just people who drank and that didn't go over with Mom and Dad. You don't have to drink to have a good time.

RM: Where did you learn to cook?



HM: From Mother. I'd been in the kitchen from the time I was six years old.

### CHAPTER THREE

RM: In growing up in Pahrump, did you orient more with your mother in terms of seeing what a girl should be doing?

HM: Well, I did that plus worked in the fields, milked cows and slopped hogs, so I guess I did both. I remember when I was six years old I'd have a little old granite cup and when Mama would make cookies or something, I didn't measure but I put in a little bit of everything she was using. When I was 10, 11 years old, I could fix potatoes and gravy.

RM: Just from watching your mother and helping her? Did you help with the dishes and everything as you were growing up?

HM: Oh yes. Button was talking about doing dishes; Daddy didn't think boys should do dishes, but if Button wanted me to go play then he would help with the dishes.

HF: She was older than me, she'd kind of jury-rig it a little bit sometimes.

HM: If I was going hunting with you, we'd take the .22 and go out and crawl on our bellies, pop our little heads up, and there wouldn't be a duck on the pond.

RM: Did you have a cookbook at the Pahrump Ranch or did you have all of this in your head?

HM: When it comes to beans and potatoes and gravy and cake mixes, you don't need one.

RM: Were there ever special dishes that you prepared that were out of the ordinary, or, "I'm feeling really good today?"

HM: You mean at the Pahrump Ranch? I think I fixed what I called goulash. That's with hamburger and macaroni and stuff like that.

RM: Did you ever serve pasta as a substitute for potatoes?

HM: We weren't raised that way, no. We really weren't raised with rice either.

HF: For us, rice was a dessert—you put sugar and cream on it.

HM: But once in a while Mama would fix Spanish rice, remember?

HF: I thought you didn't like it?

HM: Well. . . .

RM: Did you ever make any ethnic dishes like Mexican food?

HM: Not at that time, no. When you lived in Pahrump, you just cooked the basics.

RM: Did you ever go to a restaurant?

HM: When we went to town. I remember Daddy taking us out to this one restaurant. The ceiling was low and we always got to have chicken fried steak, and it was cheap. And I remember Daddy playing the jukebox, playing "Rum and Coca Cola."

Out here of course we had no telephone, no television, but we had our radio programs. We listened to Amos & Andy and Our Miss Brooks and Saturday night was Grand Ole Opry. We had our programs, just like you have on TV.

RM: Was your radio battery operated, or powered by generator?

HM: It was battery operated.

RM: What stations were you getting, do you remember?

HF: KFI in Los Angeles and KSL at Salt Lake, for sure.

HM: I remember one channel that we got from Vegas; I can't remember what that one was, but I used to listen to that. Daddy had to listen to the news and he had to listen to the ball games and when the ball games were on, we'd better not even giggle. And the fights.

Mother liked her soap operas and she was always afraid Daddy would say something. I remember she used to get in the front of it and turn the radio on, ear right next to it so she could hear Ma Perkins.

HF: And Just Plain Bill. We used to get the Polka Party.

HM: But the Grand Ole Opry—I loved to listen to that. I remember when I was real little Daddy would have the radio on and "My Wild Irish Rose" would play.

HF: Well that was probably down in Los Angeles.

HM: No, that was out in Essex; you were in your baby bed.

RM: Did you listen to programs like Lone Ranger and Sky King?

HM: We listened to murder mysteries.

HF: She used to listen to the murder mysteries. They scared me to death. I can't remember the one, he would talk, you know, so slow.

HM: Well, I read those murder mystery books—I loved them—until dark. And he used to come in and try to scare me.

RM: So after dark you weren't reading, but in the daylight you were.

HM: Oh, yes. I read everything I could get my hands on.

RM: Do you remember any murder mystery programs?

HM: Inner Sanctum and The Shadow.

RM: Talk about how you experienced radio. It's completely different than kids now with TV. They have no grasp of how we experienced radio.

HM: We couldn't wait for supper to be over and dishes done so we could listen to our programs. Amos and Andy and I can't remember what all of those were. . . .

HF: Fibber McGee and Molly; that was great. Jack Benny. Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis.

HM: On Saturday night, Mama heated water and had a big old tub and I insisted I take my bath first before Button did.

RM: Because you had to use the same water.

HM: Oh yes. And he was ornery. [Laughter] But we'd hurry so we could get in there, and we had popcorn and made fudge. I don't know; it was so much different than now.

RM: With radio you experienced it all in your head. It was a movie in your head, wasn't it? You imagined, visualized the whole thing.

HM: Yes, we were right with them just like Button was with the murder mysteries. [Laughs]

RM: But kids now, it's all either the video game or the TV.

HM: Or they're bored; yes. I don't think we ever said we were bored.

RM: Did you play any board games like Monopoly?

HM: Yes, Monopoly. And Mama bought us a croquet set.

RM: How much older were your sisters than you?

HM: Betty is six years older than me, Mary is 10 years older than me, Mabel is between Betty and Mary. They went to high school in Needles when we lived in Essex so we weren't really

around the older kids; it was mostly just Button and me. Betty moved to Pahrump with us and she went to Death Valley Junction for high school. She got married right after high school so she wasn't here all that long, either.

I wanted to tell you about the Levis. Daddy would go into town when we needed Levis and he would buy Levis for my sister Betty and me. He always bought size 30/30 even though they were way big around the waist and we had to cuff them up, but we all wore size 30/30. I thought Levi only made 30/30 pants. After I got grown and was going to buy me a pair of Levis, I was trying them on and I fit into a size 30/30; I got the giggles and I said to myself, "Daddy, I finally grew into those 30/30 Levis."

RM: That's a lovely story.

HM: So many great memories. After the Wards came, they worked in the store over here when George Brooks and Johnny built a store.

RM: And they built another store?

HM: And a bar, this one couple did. It was a bar and a grocery store and when they sold out, the Wards came in there, and old Guy Pinnell. But anyway, Dutch (Ben's sister) and Ben would play. They had no amplifiers or anything, but they would play. People would gather from all here in Pahrump and we would dance. I remember one night after the dance, I had my dress (I didn't wear a dress very often) and my nice shoes. Five or six of us got in this pickup and were going to go down to Bowman's and steal watermelons and then go to Ash Meadows the next day and we'd have watermelons and swim.

We got to Elmer Bowman's and parked the pickup; we were going to have to walk a ways to get to the field. I told all of them, "I can't go down there and steal watermelons." That was a no-no for our folks—you just didn't steal. I was scared to death. I said, "Why don't we come back tomorrow. Elmer will give us all the melons we want." So I talked them out of it. The next day we went down there and Elmer gave us all the melons we wanted and we all went over to Ash Meadows and went swimming there.

RM: How were the Bowmans seen in the community? They came in a little after you, didn't they?

HM: Yes. Daddy always said Elmer was one of the best neighbors he ever had; they were good people. Everybody helped everybody then. And we went to school with the one boy, Merton.

When they were letting off the bombs over here, it would be early in the morning and the flash would wake us up. We would wake up and pretty soon the bed would start shaking. We had no telephone or anything like that but they had told us, "When the mushroom comes up and it starts our way and you see stuff falling," we would have to evacuate. Poor Mama was so scared—she would run out in the front yard and watch that mushroom and if it looked like it was headed this way, she would run in the house and open the screen door going in the house and before it shut, she could be out the other door out the kitchen, she was so fast. I don't

know where she was going, to evacuate and leave us in bed—I don't know. She was going to be gone; she was so scared of those bombs.

RM: You must have seen a lot of them go off then.

HM: There were quite a few of them. They were going off when the Wards were in the store over here, and that was before he went into the service in 1950. At that time, I was about the only teenage girl in Pahrump. When anybody went to town, they would get Helen to baby-sit. There were twin redheaded girls that I'd baby-sit. Their last name was Dickey; his dad was one of the partners in Pahrump Ranch.

When Guy Pinnell, the old guy from the store, had to go in for supplies, he would get Helen to come over (I was 15 years old). There would be the little grocery store with the little counter, with I forget how many stools, and a stove with a grill and I could fix hamburgers if anybody came in for coffee, hamburgers, soda, whatever. I took care of the store. One kid who used to come in there would have a note from his folks that they wanted cigarettes. So here I am, 15 years old, selling him cigarettes. It didn't dawn on me till later that he would say, "Oh I want some Pall Malls," but those were for him.

There was also a gas pump. Anybody who would come in for gas, I could pump gas. Anybody who had forgotten to get their mail, I could get their mail for them in the little post office in the store.

And in the meantime, there was this old man named Dick Bell and I'd halfway baby-sit him; we would sit there and play penny-ante because he liked to play penny-ante. Here I am 15, gambling and selling cigarettes. [Laughter]

RM: Back up for one question—how long did you cook at the Pahrump Ranch?

HM: After Ben shipped out in May, I stayed in San Diego until, I think, June or the first part of July; I came up and went to work right away. I worked there until sometime in December because he was coming home from overseas.

RM: Did they always have a cook there as far as you know?

HM: Yes.

RM: And how much were you being paid?

HM: I got my room and board and \$100 a month.

RM: In '52, that wasn't bad. I was working in the Modern Cleaners in '53 in Ely, Nevada, and I was making \$20 a week.

HM: When Ben got out of the Navy, we went to work for the Pahrump Ranch and we got a house furnished, and I think he was getting 75 cents an hour. We had two little girls and then he went to work for the county and worked there until he decided he wanted to be a truck

driver. After he passed away, I met Jack. As I think you said to me, we needed each other; we really needed each other. He had three sons and I had three grown daughters, the twins and Laurie; the two older ones were probably 31.

RM: Was your first husband a long-haul truck driver?

HM: At first he went to work for Morgan out of Barstow hauling talc and we lived in Shoshone and in Baker. Then we moved to Henderson and he went to work for Post Transportation hauling chemicals; he would be gone overnight an awful lot, sometimes two nights.

RM: What was it like living in Baker?

HM: It was pretty hot. After the sun went down it wouldn't be quite as hot, even though I've seen it 100 degrees at midnight. We played volleyball and they had dances down there. At Halloween, instead of the kids going around trick-or-treating, they loaded them in a flatbed truck and took them to the restaurants. It was close-knit people.

RM: When did you live there?

HM: Let's see, the twins were born in '53—in '56.

RM: So that was before they had put in the Interstate. What highway was it before they put in I-15?

HF: I think it was Highway 91 that went to Los Angeles.

RM: What did Baker look like then?

HM: It was small, and I don't think it has really grown all that much.

HF: You had the Browns on one side and the Failings on the other side and that's basically what you had. In Baker in those days it was not uncommon to see a big Cadillac come through, and they'd always stop and have a drink or something. I've seen Robert Mitchum down there; I've seen a number of movie stars. They didn't fly that much in those days, but those big old Cadillacs would come rolling in; it was really quite common.

RM: People stopped more, didn't they, in those days?

HF: Oh, they had to.

HM: The cars didn't get as good of gas mileage. There was no air conditioning in them, either.

HF: Not until '55 or '56.

RM: What was it like going from here down to Yermo, say, in the summer with no air conditioning during the day?

HM: It was hot; very hot. We had a little trailer house; we lived in Baker in the trailer park. The house was about a 35-foot long trailer house, eight wide. It had two bedrooms and one little bathroom and we had a swamp cooler on the top and a swamp cooler in our bedroom, and it was nothing to see it at 100 degrees inside our trailer with both of those coolers running. One time I went to Barstow with a friend and we got groceries and came back and I opened that door and it was so hot in my trailer that I couldn't walk in (I always kicked my shoes off at the door). The coolers would go out and when my husband wasn't around I'd get the ladder and put it up against the trailer. And I had an old pair of Levis up there. . . . I couldn't fall off on the tin roof. I'd take the side off, and it was usually plugged up or something. I was doing that until I was about five months pregnant with our third daughter and when I got the ladder out somebody saw me and came to help me.

RM: And those trailers get hot in the heat, a lot hotter than a house.

HM: The kids didn't go outside and play in the daytime.

RM: Not even in the shade?

HM: There wasn't too much shade in Baker. [Laughter]

RM: What were the businesses there? Was there a business street with restaurants and probably a couple of motels?

HM: When we were there, there were cabins that people could rent. Main Street in Baker today was the main highway, just like Main Street in Vegas today was the main highway.

RM: Celesta Lowe told me that she worked down there for her grandfather, Dad Fairbanks, early on and that somebody in the family had some kind of little motel there.

HM: Fairbanks and the Browns were related, weren't they?

HF: Yes, that was her father.

HM: We all called her Aunt Betty—she's the one who had the motel and her granddaughter worked there, Lois Clark. She was always working.

RM: Was it a congenial, friendly community?

HM: It really was.



RM: Do you have any other recollections about Baker?

HM: Well, on Sunday there was a lady who held church and all of the kids on our side of the highway would come to our house. I would walk with them and cross them across the street so they could go to church and then I'd go get the Sunday paper, come home, and read that when I didn't have any kids to look after, and she would bring the kids home.

RM: And what was it like living in Shoshone at that time?

HM: Everybody knew everybody over there, too. We had known people in Shoshone since 1944.

RM: There weren't very many people living over there, were there?

HM: In the earlier days when Dutch and Ben used to play over there, Celesta Lowe would promise them five dollars each to play for the dance. They had a kitty and people would put money in it. It seemed like miners from all around would come in there and there would be quite a few people at the dances. Later on when they had dances, Button played the guitar over there.

RM: Did he get the bug to learn the guitar from you?

HF: No, from Ben.

HM: Yes, I taught him the chords and then Ben worked at it.

RM: What was social life like in Shoshone?

HM: The high school was there. We lived in the RV park there before Button and Mary Lou was married. Mary Lou and her sister and another girl used to come over for lunch hour and visit with me. Mary went to high school in Shoshone.

When they had the big school reunion in Carson City and Button was invited because Mary Lou went to high school there, my sister who lives in Reno had graduated from Death Valley Junction . . . they had 20 or 30 years of kids for that school reunion but they didn't invite me. My present husband, Jack, and another lady that we knew planned the reunion. We'd run around with all of these kids over there when we were young; we went to movies and dances and every party and everything, but I didn't go to school there so they didn't invite me. Jack always says I crashed the party in Carson City—that's where I met him. I lived in Henderson and he lived in Vegas. There were all of these people that he knew and I knew, and we didn't know each other.

RM: And where did he go to school?

HM: He went to school in Tecopa and Shoshone.

HF: And Death Valley Junction.

RM: There was a grade school in Tecopa? The railroad was gone in Shoshone by this time, wasn't it?

HF: Yes, when we came here the railroad ties were still there, but the tracks were all gone.

HM: When Jack lived there, the train was still running; his mother used to ride the Galloping Goose down to L.A. He knows a lot about the train.

RM: What was in Shoshone at that time?

HM: One gas station and one little bar and one little café and the little store.

HF: The whole town was owned by Charlie Brown.

RM: Was there a motel there then?

HF: Yes, there was a little one.

HM: Then there were cabins some of the Morgans drivers rented.

HF: Well the company that came in there—they were a trucking company—built their own little area, and it's still there. These little houses are still there and the drivers and employees worked there.

RM: Was Shoshone as hot as Baker?

HF: It was close, but it wasn't as hot.

RM: But you were living in a trailer there, too, with a swamp cooler?

HM: Yes, the same little trailer.

RM: To me it is almost unimaginable, living in a trailer in Baker, but you survived.

HM: A lot of people did. We would go into Barstow if we needed some groceries or whatever. It was cooler to have the windows up than it was to have them down with that hot air blowing in at you.

RM: And they had those things that you put on the window that had ice in them.

HM: We used to go to Arizona, where the Wards were from, and we tried that and that didn't help; it was too steamy. There was also a little box—you'd put water in and plug it into the cigarette lighter—and that just made it more humid. It was better to have a little bit of hot air blowing.

RM: In those days, when you traveled did you try to do it at night, after sundown?

HM: A lot of times we did, because it's easier to travel with children that way.

RM: How did the kids take that kind of heat?

HM: They survived. They didn't know any different. We were all in the same boat.

RM: One of the things that I wanted to ask about is the availability of health care here in Pahrump, but also with your small children in Baker and Shoshone. Today, you take the kids to the doctor. How did you deal with that kind of thing back then?

HM: If they were sick, we usually doctored them; we had our own home remedies. And if they did have to go to the doctor, it maybe cost \$5.00 dollars; it wasn't like it is now. When my twins were born at Clark County Memorial (now it's UMC), I remember the doctor charged me \$100 dollars to deliver them. I'd given the hospital \$100 dollars, and it cost me \$87—and this is for two kids instead of one; but that's what it cost in those days. Of course when you only make \$84 a month. . . . And when the twins were born, my allotment went from \$84 to \$150, I think it was.

RM: This was your military allotment when your husband was in the service?

HM: Yes.

RM: You mentioned home remedies; what were some of them?

HM: One time my sister's little boy probably had pneumonia, knowing what I do now; it sounded like it. I remember Mama put a mustard plaster on him and one time she fried onions, remember the fried onions? They smell bad, but he got better.

RM: She put fried onions on his chest?

HM: Yes.

RM: Did she make a poultice out of fried onions, put them in like a dish towel or something, and then just. . . .

HM: Laid it on him.

RM: And they weren't hot or anything.

HM: Oh, no. For cough syrup, Mother would slice onions and put sugar on it. It makes the liquid come out of the onions, and this is what we had for cough syrup.

RM: You wouldn't eat the onions?

HM: Oh no. And we always got greased with Mentholatum and Vick's or something; our chest and our back were rubbed. And Mother used a lot of eucalyptus oil.

RM: How did she use that?

HM: Put sugar on a spoon and then she'd take her finger until it was moistened, and that's what we had.

RM: So there wasn't much oil with the sugar?

HM: No. that was for colds and sore throats.

RM: Were there any home remedies for cuts and scrapes?

HF: Just clean them and put on a bandage material.

HM: We just didn't go to doctors.

HF: I remember my dad was always out with his old truck and he carried a little bottle of turpentine. I have a scar on my leg today . . . of course, it was only two inches long when I got it because I was a little kid; now it's six or eight inches long. I cut it on the barbed wire and he put that old turpentine on it.

RM: How about iodine and Mentholatum?

HM: We had iodine and Mentholatum, yes.

RM: Did you use rubbing alcohol for anything?

HM: Mother always had a bottle of witch hazel.

HF: As I remember as a child, iodine was dangerous and the only thing my mother ever used iodine was if you got a ringworm playing with the cats. She'd make a circle around the ringworm with the iodine, but that's the only way she ever used iodine because that stuff burns like heck.

HM: I know it burned; but you're talking about the ringworms. Daddy would get a cigar and smoke it and take the ash and mix that with cold cream or lard.

RM: And then put that on the ringworm and that would cure it?

HM: Yes, it would. And for a boil, I've seen him take a bottle like a pop bottle and stick the head of it in hot water and then put that on the boil and it just went whewww. It draws it out. It's pretty quick.

RM: Were there any remedies for things like sprains and strains?

HM: That would be the mustard oil or the Mentholatum or analgesic balm, like Ben-Gay. I remember playing baseball and getting the ball off my thumb. Daddy would say, "Oh, I've done that many of times, it will be all right." Or growing pains—if your legs hurt or something it was growing pains. There was a cure for everything; we didn't run to doctors. And there were those little white pills that Mama had.

HF: I've still got those.

RM: And what were they?

HM: Who knows? She knew how many to give you if you had a bellyache or a fever. They were teeny tiny, smaller than a BB.

HF: When she left civilization down in Los Angeles, Glendora and that area, she had a doctor and she told him, "We're going to be going to the desert now and there's no doctors, there is no anything." He gave her these four little bottles and they had a cork in them. You had to be pretty doggone sick, but if you were having mainly stomachache, she would give you three out of this thing and two out of that one.

RM: Did she have home remedies for diarrhea?

HM: Scalded milk. That's what they'd give the calves if they got scours.

HF: Eggs and milk.

HM: Yes, and those pepper pills. They would mix flour and water and put black pepper in it and make a pepper pill and put that down the calf's throat.

HM: They had a cure for everything.

RM: They were very self-reliant, weren't they?

HF: Well, you had to be. You couldn't just go to the doctor. Also, it was 100 miles from here into Vegas out through Johnnie and it was dirt road until you got to the main highway. There wasn't an oiled road here in Pahrump. Every place you went you went on dirt roads.

RM: And when you were living in Shoshone and in Baker, where would the doctor be? In Barstow?

HM: Yes, in Barstow. One time we had to bring the girls into Boulder City. It was the Fourth of July; we'd been to Pahrump because my husband didn't want to drive from Baker to Vegas on that two-lane road on the Fourth of July in bumper-to-bumper traffic. We come up to Pahrump and back to Baker and one of the twins, Debbie, had a marble in her mouth and she swallowed it. Well, of course I panicked. I was trying to run my finger down her throat and I could feel a little ball and I knew it was stuck. So I insisted we take her into the hospital. In all that traffic we had to go to Boulder City, and the doctor came to the hospital because it was late and he said, "That is the only thing this child could swallow that wouldn't hurt her; there are no sharp edges, it's not going to catch anything."

RM: So it just came out?

HM: Oh, yes. I still have it.

## CHAPTER FOUR

HM: Our older sister and her husband had the service station and bulk plant in Pahrump. They came to Baker and asked us if we would come up and help them. So we moved our trailer and came up here and I helped my sister in the coffee shop and Ben helped in the service station because one would have to go deliver the bulk fuel and somebody would have to stay in the service station. Sometimes one guy would be delivering gas and the other one, Leroy, would have to go to town or to Beatty, and that left nobody in the service station. If somebody needed gas either Mary or I would go out there in our little white uniforms and our white shoes to pump gas for them. Of course, there were no oil roads and all the cars were dirty and we weren't tall enough to reach them, but they insisted that we wash their windshields. So we'd pump a little gas and wash the windshield and we'd work in there. I think we had a stool to reach the windshield.

RM: Do you have any more stories about funny things that happened?

HM: Everything was funny in those days. If I could pull a joke on somebody I still would do it.

RM: What would be a joke that you would play?

HM: [Laughs] I have a real good friend in Vegas; we've known since we were young and we've stayed close. She called me up one day to tell me she had got her Christmas tree out and had it out on the porch and she flocked it and left it out there to dry. When she took it into the house, the cats had wet on it and when it got warm in there, it started smelling. (She and I share things like that.) I went to the store and paid 79 cents for a can of pine spray and I think it cost me a couple of dollars to send it to her. I just didn't put my name on it.

She got that and she'd thought her oldest son had done it, but Jimmy told her, "Don't say anything about it; somebody's going to fess up." So she said Gary, her oldest son came, and she ran and got this pine spray and she sprayed good in front of the door and he came in and he just kind of looked around; he didn't know what was going on.

It must have been a month later, I was talking to her and she said, "You know, the darndest thing happened. I don't know who sent it. Somebody sent this little can of spray and wrote this little note to spray our tree and I don't know who did it."

And I said, "Honey, is it pine?"

And she said, "You did it! You did it!" Yes, I did that.

RM: Did you meet her out here?

HM: No, she was from Oklahoma; her husband, Jim Campbell, used to be roommates with Ben when they were young before they went in the service. He married Millie and when he introduced us to her, she was pregnant with their little girl and I was pregnant with the twins. The guys would laugh and say, "Next time we see you, you we'll put our boys in a playpen together," and here we had three little girls. The twins were born October and their little girl was born in January.

RM: What do you think when you see Pahrump now?

HM: I think they ruined my valley. When you see the graffiti, you see the mailboxes . . . our house was broke into. You see the crime, you look at the kids; it's just different.

RM: How do you see the future of Pahrump?

HM: Right now it looks pretty sad. We tried to sell our house for two and a half years. You can't sell it; they say you can pick up a foreclosure cheaper than we could sell ours. And just since we've come down here this time, there are no buffets. On Sunday we went to Saddle West and had the buffet, but we were down through Lakeside this morning and they didn't have any buffet.

RM: I think there is still a buffet at Mountain View.

HM: One night a week, I think Leroy said. But you drive around the valley and see all of the houses that are empty and have windows broken out and trailer houses with the outside walls taken down and the insulation blown all in among the weeds, it's sad. It is really sad.

RM: How do you see Pahrump in say, 10 years and 20 years?

HM: It doesn't look too good.

RM: Is there a city in the future here, looking down the road?

HM: I don't know. How long is the hospital going to stay here? I don't know whether they're going to have enough people who'll be able to afford to go to it. Last time we were here I fell out of the motor home and broke my arm and had to go down there and have a splint put on it until I could get back to Idaho, but it was pretty nice to have it here. Otherwise, we'd have had to go into Vegas.

RM: When you were growing up, did you ever go over the Red Rock route to Vegas?

HM: I remember when the road was put across the mountain here. The twins were almost a year old when it opened up, and they've just turned 55. They had a big celebration and a ribbon-cutting and everything and it was a great day. It's such a short cut to be able to go that way rather than clear around. The people who were expecting a baby had better get to town before the baby was due. One time they were rushing one of the Bowman girls into town and they got as far as Indian Springs. They pulled in because they thought they could get help there and the baby was born just as they got to the gate.

When I was expecting the twins, I had to go the old way and poor Mama, bless her heart, wanted me to hurry up and get to town because she just knew this baby was going to be



born. We had been to a baseball game and I told her, "I am tired. I don't want to go into town today." We lived here in this house.

She stomped through this house and she had the baby's clothes packed in the back seat of my car, Daddy was sitting here in this big chair and I said, "Daddy, I am tired; I don't think we need to go to town today," and he went along with me. He said, "I don't think we do either, babe." Mama just stomped, stomped, stomped through this house and I went to town that day. I told her, "I don't need to go." There was an Indian woman out here by the name of Annie Beck who delivered all of the Indian babies and I said, "Annie Beck can deliver this baby." Oh, she stomped that much faster and that much harder. She didn't think that was a good idea, but I thought Annie Beck could do that; she did all the Indian babies.

RM: Is she still alive?

HM: Oh no. She was a little old lady.

HF: She rode a horse.

RM: Where did she live?

HF: The Manse Ranch.

RM: Did the two ranches have an Indian community? Was there an Indian section or anything like that?

HF: Well, the Bowman Ranch, or the Manse Ranch . . . they always had some people living around the wells and the springs, but down here they had a couple of spaces and between it, water was close by.

HM: They just built their little houses; they didn't own the land.

RM: Would they form kind of a little community or did they not tend to settle next to each other?

HM: No, it was just, this family lived here and that family lived over there.

HF: They did have a community down at the Manse Ranch, but not here where we were.

RM: Were there more Indians in those days than there are now?

HF: Oh yes; they're practically all gone now.

RM: What happened to them?

HF: I have no idea. The Sharps didn't have many children and they just sort of went away—they passed on and went away.

RM: Can either of you think of any other memories or things that we should talk about?

HF: I've been thinking and thinking and I'm sure I'm in a mental block here because there were a lot of things that went on. Like Ash Meadows—she touched on Ash Meadows, but we went swimming in the big spring in Ash Meadows. It was a big thing; the young people would get a couple of old cars and they would bake a chicken and whatever. We would all go over there. To change your suit, the boys had the right side, the girls had the left side.

HM: And it wasn't dating, it was just a group. I remember Boyd Dewitt went with our sister Betty, and his mother was married to Al Carpenter. He had a little pickup thing and he'd load all the kids who could fit on that and go out in his mother's chicken coop and grab a chicken or a rooster and wring its neck and clean it and we'd take it over to Ash Meadows. I thought he was the smartest guy I'd ever seen. Of course, I was only 11 years old. He had an iron bar and he'd fix it so it would hold the chicken; it had a crank thing down here. And he'd get forked sticks and roast that thing. All we had was roast chicken, but it was so good.

RM: What about playing with dolls—did you have your dolls? Did you play with dolls a lot?

HM: Yes, when I was younger.

HF: We played a lot of cards. We learned to count playing cards

HM: We played crazy eights, canasta, fish, rook, hearts, spades. We entertained ourselves. In the wintertime, the sun goes down early and you've got an hour or two where you can't work, and we played a lot of cards.

I was thinking of times when I was about 17 and the big thing was, you and Mike and I would go to the store and get a Coke and—remember the neckin' knobs? It's a round knob that fastens onto the steering wheel.

RM: Yes, we called them suicide knobs.

HM: Well, they were neckin' knobs in my day. Anyway, we would go down in the mesquites—we had a road this way and through the mesquites. One night, Daddy was gone and we didn't want to leave Mama alone, so we said, "Mama come, we'll show you what we do." We three sat in the front seat and put Mama in the back seat by herself and got her a Coke and she slid back and forth in that back seat; she saw what we were doing out there. [Laughs]

RM: What was your mother like?

HM: She was a hard worker; she was little; in her younger years, she had coal black hair and black eyes. She was olive skinned. A tiny, tiny little lady. Always working, always busy, although

as I was growing up, I can remember her running in and putting the salt and pepper shaker on the table and running back in and stirring the gravy and running back in and getting the salt and pepper shaker and running back in, instead of just taking one trip. I remember standing there stirring the gravy and she'd say, "Helen, are you stirring the gravy?" "Yes Mama." I'd go ahead and stir the gravy. She was a hard-working lady.

RM: How did she make gravy?

HM: You heat your lard. She used a lot of bacon grease, or the grease from the meat. You put flour in it and brown it; otherwise it tastes floury. And you put your milk and salt and pepper in and it thickens.

RM: And what were some of the other recipes that you used on the Pahrump Ranch? How would you have made biscuits?

HM: Well, with flour, baking powder and salt, shortening and milk. For two cups of flour, you use four teaspoons of baking powder, a teaspoon of salt, four tablespoons of melted Crisco or lard or whatever and a cup of milk. We always made our own pie crust.

RM: Is that a lost art? I remember people used to talk about "nice flaky pie crust" and all that.

HM: Well, now you can buy the frozen. I have one daughter who can make pies like Mama, but the other two say heck with that noise, they're not going to even try.

RM: What was your recipe for pie crust?

HM: To a cup of flour, three oval tablespoons of Crisco and this much salt in your hand.

RM: About a penny wide, or less.

HM: And then three tablespoons of ice water.

RM: You don't stir it, do you?

HM: No; you do it with your hands.

RM: You mix it with your hands. And when do you stop?

HM: When it looks like little peas; then you put your water in and it's ready to roll out. Sometimes you have to use a little more water. Our beans—remember how Mama used to cook red beans? And in those days (I don't know whether you can buy it now or not), they had brick chili. It would come in a square and it was hard, but that's what you put in the beans and it softens up and makes chili beans.

RM: And it was dried chili?

HM: Yes, because they had trouble keeping things cool. Pop Buol didn't have any refrigeration, did he? You couldn't buy milk or anything like that there. In the summertime you could buy chocolate candy bars but they'd be melted. We had two refrigerators to keep the cream in. And Mother churned butter and sold butter. We churned butter in a quart or two-quart jar, bounced it on our knees.

RM: Oh really? Just shaking it? Put the cream in a quart jar and shake it and it will make butter? I'm going to try that.

HM: You have to get the heavy whipping cream. Put it in a quart jar and set it out where it is not ice cold and then just take it and bounce it on your leg.

RM: How long does it take?

HM: I don't know; it was fun to make because you could see it. In fact, if you get whipping cream and turn your mixer on and do it a little bit too much it will turn into butter that way, but it's more fun to shake the jar.

Then Daddy got a churn with a handle with a glass bottom on it; and then he bought the bigger churn, the wooden one. Mama was really in business when he got that. And the butter mold; Mama would make a pound of butter.

RM: What's your secret for mashed potatoes?

HM: There's not really any secret to it. You just peel and cook them and when you get through, you salt them and add butter and cream.

RM: Cream really helps, doesn't it?

HM: It makes it really good. Even canned milk works better than regular milk. When the kids all come for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, I make my own pies, my own bread.

RM: Did your mom make her own bread?

HM: Yes. Instead of dry yeast, she bought the little squares of Fleischmann yeast. I remember her making bread. In the wintertime it would be cold; all we had for heat was the wood heater, and she'd put them in by the heater. Remember when she had them there and somebody came and sat on that one pan of buns? You don't remember that?

HF: It wasn't me.

HM: No, it wasn't you, but somebody sat on that pan of buns. You couldn't get a fresh loaf of bread here except for the first day of the supply. Otherwise it was two, three, four days old. And if we went to Shoshone we'd pick up a loaf of bread once in a while.

RM: Was the Thanksgiving meal a big deal for your family?

HF: We always had a turkey.

RM: A turkey that you probably raised?

HM: Yes, and cleaned. Those were nasty things to clean, all the little pinfeathers. They raised turkeys and Daddy sold turkeys to Tecopa for their turkey shoot. Button got to go that day; and as it turned out, my present husband was there. We came so close to meeting. . . .

RM: And then, was Christmas dinner a big deal?

HM: It seemed to be, yes. She usually had turkey for that; and then usually for New Years she would have a goose or a chicken or something. I never did understand why, but she cooked the same kind of a meal for New Years.

RM: The same as Christmas?

HF: Well, similar; kind of a cut down version. But I never could understand that. New Years was a big day; they brought all of this from Wisconsin.

HM: Remember even those people who lived out there at the other end of the valley, we went out there one time and had New Years dinner.

HF: I remember we went out there one time, I thought it was for Thanksgiving, when Dutch lived in. . . .

HM: Well, we went to Dutch's for Thanksgiving, too, that time, but we went to . . . Niles; he was halfway deaf. They used to come to the dances and they had a daughter. Niles could square dance, and he was hard of hearing.

HF: He was stone deaf. In those days, it was real common to have one cylinder not firing and he could walk up the car and feel it.

RM: I'll be darned. How did you keep your equipment running? Your dad was probably a pretty good mechanic, wasn't he?

HM: He could rig up anything. Remember the cooler he put in the house at Raycrafts'? He had all those batteries . . . he had that little Briggs and Stratton motor, and he charged the

batteries and that way we had lights. Somehow he had that cooler hooked up, but no water to it. We'd have to go out there and spray it every so often, but that helped a little bit.

HF: Oh, it helped a lot. The cooler was brand spanking new; he ordered it from Sears & Roebuck.

HM: But we'd have to go out there and spray it with water. Daddy slept outside in the summertime.

RM: Yes, we ran a picture of his trailer in the paper.

HM: I loved that trailer. When I was a kid, I would take a potato and a little skillet and the grease and a little onion and go down there and fry my potato and onions. It had a little wood stove. That was my playhouse; I loved that trailer—until it got dark. Oh man, how I headed for the house! [Laughter]

RM: It sounds like as a child there wasn't a neighbor child to play with all the time.

HM: There were no girls my age here.

RM: Did you feel any sense of deprivation in that—"I don't have any girls to play with?"

HM: Oh, no. I was busy. And when I wasn't babysitting or working at the store, Old Guy Pinnell would hire me to go over and defrost his refrigerators, and then he would want me to bake him a cake. I would always call him Porky. I remember for his birthday I wrote, "Happy Birthday Porky" and took it over there. We were busy.

When I would get money, I would send off for material and make a dress for myself. And we made aprons. I'd get enough material so Mama could have an apron.

RM: And you had the old pedal machine?

HM: Oh yes. And Mama taught us to quilt. I still make quilts.

RM: Was there any kind of a quilting bee here in Pahrump?

HM: We didn't have enough people for a quilting bee. Everybody was busy at their own thing, anyway.

RM: So your mom had learned quilting back in Wisconsin as a part of that life back there. And you still make quilts—are they really quilted?

HM: Well, I tie a lot of them. But I quilt the baby quilts I've made.

RM: Do you sew the patches by hand?

HM: I have, yes. She also taught me to embroider and knit. She couldn't teach me to crochet. I finally learned—she was in the hospital and I decided I was going to learn to crochet and I did. She would crochet the prettiest little flower and I'd do the same thing and mine would be a bunch of knots.

RM: What about your dad? What stands out in your mind about him?

HM: He never spanked us but we were scared of him, especially if he was going to have a conniption. [Laughs] He was a very stern man and they never showed affection to each other or to us kids until after my twins were born. And the Wards were such loving people. If I walked past my father-in-law, he might just grab me and hug me, which I wasn't used to and it used to bother me. But after the twins came along they would get up on their granddaddy's lap and they would kiss him on the head and he melted.

RM: So he was reserved naturally and then with the twins he kind of. . . ?

HM: Yes. Neither Mama or Daddy showed affection to us kids or toward each other. We knew they loved us, but as far saying "I love you," they didn't. But the Wards were such loving people and I'd made up my mind—well, I'd known them since I was 13 years old—that when I got married and had children they were going to know they were loved.

RM: That was the way a lot of people were back in those days; my dad was never demonstrative, either.

HM: It was; there was a time and place for everything. That's what Daddy said. But Daddy would tease; he was always whistling. Mama sang sometimes, I remember her singing, "K-k-k Katy!" [Laughs] No, it was just different times then.

Daddy's discipline was making you sit on a chair. And I was such a good little girl, I never had to sit on a chair but Button did. [Laughs]

HF: All the time.

HM: You sat down to the table, everything was passed and you never said a word. And when everything was passed then you could eat. But you didn't talk, you didn't do anything. That was another thing—I said, "When I have a family, we're not going to do that." And when my kids came along and the television went off and we sat down to the table, this is when they told me what was going on in school and this was when we had our discussions.

Mama and Daddy came in to stay and I thought, "Whooo, how am I going to handle this?" And Daddy turned out to be my biggest kid. He had long hair on his arm and he would [tickle] my daughter's nose with the hair; he got to be the biggest kid I had at the table. But we wasn't allowed to do that. But he did; he mellowed up a lot in later years.

RM: Was your mom demonstrative with her affection and everything or was she was reserved, too?

HM: She was reserved, too. The only thing I remember is Daddy would go up behind her and goose in her the ribs so she'd squeal. That was the only thing I saw until Mama was in the hospital dying and I walked in the room one day and Daddy was there. He would always wait until I got to the hospital before he drove back to Pahrump. He was sitting there holding her hand. I thought, "Man, that's strange; I have never seen him do anything like that."

RM: Would you say that in general, people in Pahrump were demonstrative?

HM: How do you mean?

RM: Well, were they open and friendly and warm or was it kind of reserved?

HM: They were open, wouldn't you say?

HF: It was just like Dad—I mean, he would take the shirt right off his back and give it to somebody who needed it.

HM: There wasn't that many people here; but like, Mom and Daddy and the Wards would sit and play canasta and have dinner together and things like that. There weren't that many people, but they were all friendly. Dad would help you in any way. But we were afraid of Daddy.

HF: I thought he'd kill me. He told me not to smoke; I never smoked. He told me not to drink; I never drank. I thought he'd kill me if I did.

HM: We never did anything wrong because we were afraid to. When it came to the farm animals, "Helen was a lady." I wasn't allowed to go out during the time when they cut the hogs and all of that kind of stuff.

I had an old tom cat. [Laughs] My brother-in-law said, "Helen, he'll be a better mouser if we neuter him. We usually put their head in a boot and then you hold them, and then I'll neuter him. We don't have a boot." He said, "We'll put him in a gunny sack." So I'm astraddle of the cat and he's in a gunny sack and I've got him like this. . . .

RM: Holding his legs apart.

HM: When he made that first cut those cat's claws went right in my rear. He said, "Don't turn him loose now; I've got to finish." And it was, "Don't tell Daddy." Oh, I think Daddy would have got us all if he'd have known I saw something like that. We went over to the Caytons' one time and their Mama cat was having kittens and Darlene and I sat and watched her have her kittens. We would not tell Mama and Daddy.

RM: Because they would have not have approved.



HM: Oh, no, no. Helen was a lady. Helen doesn't see things like that. Button couldn't stand the sight of blood, so he would have ran out of the house.

RM: So even on the farm—a calf being born or something?

HM: I never saw anything like that.

RM: I think those were closer to what the values were in those days.

HM: Yes. We were taught morals. It was a great life we had out here. We worked hard; we played hard; anything for a joke. Remember the time several of us kids were going to go horseback riding at night? I had my horse and Button rode one of our horses, somebody else had a horse and this guy, Mike, didn't have a horse. There was a stray around and he caught it. He went riding with the stray horse and when we got through, he turned it loose. It was running loose anyway.

Or the times we would go to Shoshone to the movies and the flat tires—the Sorrel boy would open up the service station after the movie so the guys could fix the tires. I don't know whether the kids siphoned out our gas, but several times we run out of gas halfway home. Some guy came by that one time and he had a 50-gallon drum of gas, remember? He pumped gas in the car so that we could make it on home.

RM: Was there a theatre in Shoshone?

HF: In the old schoolhouse.

HM: Once a week, somebody would get a movie and they'd run it.

RM: And that was probably a pretty big deal for you?

HM: Oh, we didn't go to movies otherwise.

RM: Did you go into Vegas and see movies at the El Portal Theatre on Fremont Street?

HF: We did later.

HM: Not when we were growing up as kids. I only remember going to one movie when I was a little girl, and this was down in Glendora (I don't know whether you were even born yet). Mama took us girls to the movie, and it was Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn and you had to wear these glasses. I'm sitting there and you know when Indian Joe came and his face just fills up, I thought it was the devil after me and I'd been naughty. I was down on the floor; I didn't have sense enough to take those glasses off. We were taught you'd better be good or the devil is going to get you. Well, Indian Joe was just about to get me. That's the only time I remember going to a movie as a kid. In the summertime we worked hard and by bedtime, we weren't

wanting to get out and get into trouble; we were ready to go to bed because we had to get up early the next morning and start again.

When we were going to school in the little red schoolhouse that's here at the museum now, before Mrs. Sturman came, the teacher who was so stern with us, we would write notes and pass them to each other. And the notes I got, I would fold up and there would be a little crack and I'd get rid of them in the wall there. I hope they never tear that wall board out and I just hope I didn't sign my name to them. [Laughs]

RM: It would almost be worth taking one of those boards out and looking. That would be very interesting. [Laughter] When you start to become a teenager and start getting interested in boys, they don't look like they did when you were a little kid. With this isolation and everything, how did that affect you?

HM: Well, I met Ben when I was 13 and he was 17, and there was never another boy that would compare to him. And he always said, he hung around and waited until I grew up so he could marry me.

RM: That's very nice. It's been great talking with you; thank you.

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