Interview with
HENRY J. "HANK"
RECORDS

An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada
Tonopah
1987

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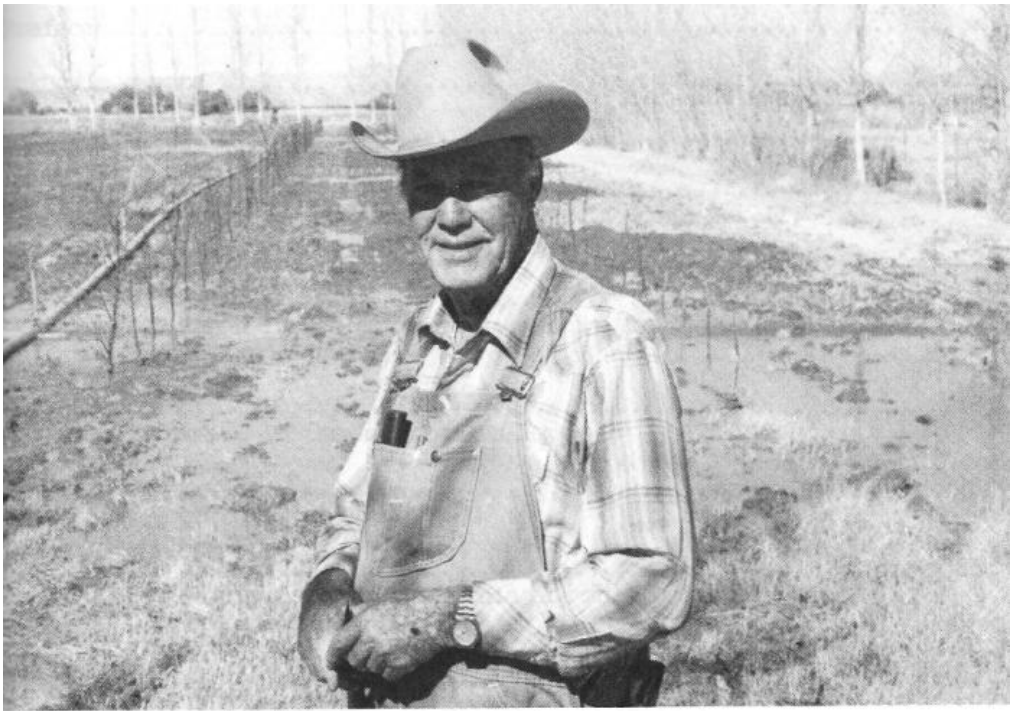

Henry H. "Hank" Records
circa 1987

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PREFACE

The Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are not history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the NCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the NCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherency. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production. While keeping alterations to a minimum the NCTHP will,

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 wham I have known and admired since I was a teenager; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and southern Nevada—too numerous to mention by name-who provided assistance, information, and photographs. They helped make the successful completion of this project possible.

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. "Bobby" Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Revert, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the project within Nye County and before the State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office and the United States Department of Energy; both entities provided funds for this project. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Bradhurst for his advice and input regarding the conduct of the research and for constantly serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. This project would never have became a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Bradhurst.

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

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--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the Round Mountain Nugget, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper; Beatty's independent paper folded in 1912. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All six communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities after their own papers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, which was published as a supplement to the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

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

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

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

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

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

--R. D M.

This is Robert McCracken interviewing Hank Records at Hank's home in the Amargosa Valley - March 15 and 17 and April 27 and 29, 1987

CHAPTER. ONE

RM: Hank, tell us a little bit about your folks.

HR: My folks were originally from England. My Grandfather Records was one of the first of the family born in the United States, and they came from Missouri. My grandfather came to New Mexico when he was 13 years old with a wagon train. He stopped with another wagon, the Tabors' wagon. The rest of the wagon train went by what is Clayton, New Mexico, today, and were massacred.

RM: Do you know about what year it was?

HR: Let's see, my grandmother and grandfather were married in 1881, so it would have had to be around 1868 or '70, because I have the letter from my grandmother to my grandfather in the Territory of New Mexico that she had written to him, and that was in 1881. And they were married that same year, I think, when he came back. They were married in Folsom, New Mexico. It was actually called Harrison at that time, which was when the railroads finally came through. They were with the Tabor party from back in that country when they stopped, and eventually he married one of the Tabor girls.

Here's a thing that we made up for our family. Here's a picture of them and here's the envelope and it shows you where it was; it became Folsom, New Mexico, and it was in the Territory of New Mexico when they were married. My father was the eldest son. There were two sons and four daughters.

RM: How long did they stay in Folsom?

HR: My grandmother and grandfather both died there. My father ranched around Folsom for years. The only time he left there was when we went to Colorado during the Depression, in about 1931 or 1930. Then we lived in Morley. I was born in Folson September 6th, 1918. My brother Rob was born March 25th, 1915. He was among the first white children born in the State of New Mexico. It was a territory up until that time.

We moved from Folsom, New Mexico to Morley in the height of the Depression. We still had the ranch back at Folsom, and we went back one time, and my father finally-went back to Morley again, and he died in the hospital at Pueblo, Colorado in 1936.

RM: How long did you live in Morley?

HR: About 6, 7 years altogether. I had just come to California when my father got sick and I went back and he passed away.

RM: What year did you go to California?

HR: In '36. I went to work for the Wallace China Company in Huntington Park, California, for Wallace Wood, whose father used to be mayor of Trinidad, Colorado. That's how I got the job.

RM: How did you happen to go to California?

HR: I'd always heard of the oranges and the trees, and things were hard times, naturally, during the Depression, so my brother and I went out there to a job that we had to go to. I had my 18th birthday in California.

RM: Did you graduate from high school, Hank?

HR: No, I lacked one year. I went to Trinidad High School, and then I took a night course, and finally graduated, and then I took mining and a course from the Penn State and finally got my degree in Metallurgical Engineering from Penn State. I got that in about '40.

RM: Was that by correspondence?

HR: Yes. That was Pennsylvania State. I'm a member of the Mining and Metallurgical Engineers. It, frankly, no way would be a full-fledged mining engineering thing. In those days an engineer had to be a geologist and everything else, and I studied metallurgy.

RM What turned you to metallurgy?

HR I got into mining through a friend who had a mine in 1937. I was working for Continental Oil Company.

RM: In '36 you moved to California and you were working for Wallace.

HR: Then we left to go to the oil fields of Wasco, California in '37. I spent a little time there and then I went on up to pitch ball at Salinas, California. I was a softball pitcher and kind of hired out to them. It was with the box company.

RM: You were good at softball?

HR:. They seemed to think so [chuckles]. I got a job out of it.

RM: Were you good in Trinidad?

HR: I didn't do an awful lot of playing in Trinidad. We lived at Morley and we went on a bus to Trinidad to high school, and there was hardly any way to get back and forth to home and go out for a lot of sports in those days. Today, I guess if you were good, they'd see that you had a ride back and forth.

RM: You went up to the oil fields in 1937, and then what year did you go to Salinas?

HR: In 1939. And then the draft came up for World War II, and I registered in Salinas. This was about in 1940, when the first draft went on- I know I was in Salinas when Wilkie ran for President. And when some people came through the country and were hiring, I was running the machine for the box company. They said they needed good machine men down in the aircraft industry. We went down and I went to work for Lockheed in 1941 in the old Ford Motor Company Building at 7th and Santa Fe in Los Angeles. was Living there when they attacked at Pearl Harbor.

My brother and I got to talking and went up to White River, California, and opened up a copper mine because they needed copper during the war. We went up there and opened a mine up and just got it into production when I was drafted in 1943.

I went in the army out of Porterville, California and we were shipped down to Fort McArthur, California and had all our tests and things there. They wanted to send me back to the mines there (at that time they were Taking miners and sending them into key positions in places). But I didn't maw to go that way, so I went on in to basic training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. That's where I took my basic training. Then I went before a testing board, and won a thing to go to Officer's School. They shipped us to Fort Belvoir, Virginia, and I went to Officer's School there. mated Second Lieutenant at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, June 4th, '43. From there I was stationed in Spokane, Washington. We trained three outfits there, and were finally shipped overseas.

I went into the 1884th Engineer Aviation Battalion and the battalion was activated in 1943 at Geiger Field, Spokane, Washington. We departed Geiger Field the 30th of June, 1944. We left Seattle and went to Hickam Field in Oahu, Hawaii and we left there and crossed the International Dateline the 16th of August in '44 and crossed the equator the 21st of August, '44. We went down to Tulagi Naval Base in the Solomon Islands. We left Tulagi in September '44, and arrived on Angaur in the Palau Islands lie 15th of September, and we landed with the 81st Wildcat Division on D plus 3 in September, 1944. And then we departed Angaur on December of '44 mod arrived in Guam, in the Marianas Islands, and we were on that invasion with, I think, the 6th Marines.

RM: You were involved in making airfields?

HR That's all we built. We were kind of an invasion-type troop, but ply we weren't supposed to be fighting, because that's why they were taking the islands, to build the airfields.

RM:: So that they would take the island, and then you'd go in and build an airfield.

HR: Yes. We worked with Seabees, there on Guam. On Angaur Island we were the only ones there. We built that field. Then we arrived, as I say, in Guam. We worked on the Naha Airbase there, and North and Northwest Field. And then we were shipped out of there, and sent up standby on Iwo Jima. We didn't go in on Iwo, and then they sent us on in to Okinawa, in the Ryukyus Islands, the 29th of June 1945. Then we built the Naha Airfield, there, then the. .

RM That's where the Enola Gay took off, wasn't it?

HR Yes. We build the field that they took off from. I'll never forget the night that they dropped the bomb. Okinawa just went crazy with fire. Some kid - some soldier - had let it out over the radio, and he shouldn't Save announced it yet. And that island just erupted, and it could've been a ruse. The way the commanders figured, they were still having bombings on 3kinawa. I know we had orders to go down and take our ammunition away from our men, which we naturally didn't do.

The war with Japan was over on the 15th of August, 1945, and we started returning men to the United States on the 10th of December, '45. We were finally inactivated the 21st of March, 1946, on Okinawa. On New year's Eve I was aboard a ship in Okinawa, and I brought 158 men back to The United States. I left off about half of them at Presidio, San Francisco, and the other half I took back to where I came in the Army, full circle, at Fort McArthur, California.

RM: And were you a lieutenant, or had you been promoted?

HR: I was a captain. I had a company. A battalion, and . .

RM: What did you do after you got out, Hank?

HR: Oh, we were still dreaming about mining, like all miners. I was going to hit the proverbial deal, so my brother Rob and I went back into mining. We went to Prescott, Arizona, and opened up a lead zinc property. Then we went up on the Navajo Reservation with Vaughey and Vaughey Oil Company and opened up a big copper deposit on the Navajo Reservation. Then we came out to look at a mine over in Death Valley in 1950.

RM: How did you happen to come to this mine in Death Valley?

HR: There was an outfit in Pasadena that wanted us to take a look at it and put equipment in there on an asbestos deposit. It was back by the Ubehebe Crater.

RM: How, did they happen to get in touch with you to do it?

HR: My brother and I were pretty well known in mining. When uranium was starting to be a big thing we had a uranium concentrating company in Prescott, and we built a testing mill there, and so we were pretty well known, and this man wanted us to look at that mine over in the Ubehebe . .

RM: Who wanted you to do this?

HR: Fred DuMontier out of Pasadena. We moved equipment and everything over there. And then we sold our interest in the Black Mesa copper in Arizona to Vaughey and Vaughey Oil Company out of Denver, Colorado. We still had our uranium concentrating company, and we

did a lot of testing for Anaconda Copper on their uranium deposits in New Mexico at this mill in Prescott.

Anyway, when we came we hadn't sold out yet. We were still going to go back to Prescott, but we came back around through the Amargosa Valley, here, and. .

RM Did this take place over a period of months, or. . .?

HR: It was probably three months, because we moved some equipment in from Flagstaff, Arizona, and got the man set up pretty well on his milling. We sere consulting and paid on a cost-plus [basis].

RM: Was it a good property?

HR: Yes, it was. It's a chrysatile, and it finally played out. This was acre or less in veins up there; it wasn't big enough to operate on a big scale. He operated for two or three years, I think.

RM What was the mine called?

HR I don't remember what he did call that. It was about 5 miles south and a little west of the crater.

We came back down through Beatty because we looked at another mine -there was a lead deposit that someone wanted us to look at. It was a company that we were to look for, and that's how we came back down through Beatty. We looked at that property, and came through Beatty, and as we came on down to go on back to California, we cut off on this road which was the old Highway 129, which is 373 now. And as we drove through it, I looked and I said, "That beautiful flat valley; something should be done with it." [chuckles] My brother says that's when they should have put us in a straight-jacket. [laughter] This was in the spring of 1950, because I know we'd walked through a snowstorm up at the mine, and just did get out ,71 the snowstorm in time to be able to get out without the road being blocked .

RM: how did the valley look like then?

HR It was just a beautiful expanse of level land, and it looked like good growth. I was born and raised, as I say, on a ranch and everything, and I never did get that farming out of me. The next trip back over, why, . .

RM: Were there any houses?

HR Nothing but the old T&T Ranch. As we got back in later, there were two old houses at the T&T Ranch.

RM Was there anybody living at Lathrop Wells?

HR: There was a service station; the south side of the street hadn't even Jim built on it that time, and a fellow by the name of Harry Pepping . . Harry Pepping is still alive, I understand, in a rest home up around Reno somewhere.

RM Did he own the buildings there?

HR: Yes. He and a friend built them. And then there was a lady who had the house of ill-repute there.

RM: Was it called the Shamrock then?

HR: No . I frankly don't remember what they ever called it.

RM: Was this before nuclear testing?

HR: I guess they had, because they put that first bomb off. I remember witching the bombs - I don't remember exactly the first one, but I remember watching from the ranch where we had a tent to start with at the old T&T. We watched them put those above-ground shots off. We went up to see if they had some state land to sell in here. That's when we were informed that it. was all federal land.

As we got in here, we found that Gordon Bettles, one of the old-timers here, was coming down, back and forth from Fallon, Nevada. He had taken one of the old T&T houses around where one of their old wells was and made it livable. We met Gordon; he was the only man in here then. He brought Mts. Bettles down to go to the Tecopa Hotsprings - it was pretty wild.

CHAPTER TWO

RM Bettles had fixed up a little place on the old T&T Ranch.

HR: Yes. He'd moved one of the buildings from the main place over there and had fixed it up where there were a few trees around a well site. The %T was formed by 5 sections of land taken out in this country under the old Pittman Act. The T&T Railroad envisioned a beautiful valley of produce and everything to be shipped on their railroad, which was still running when they put the ranch in. Then during World War II, they closed everything down. They even tore the tracks out for the steel.

Gordon Bettles, bless him, was a kind of an old promoter like me, I guess, or trying to see to things, and he was trying to get people interested.

The railroad took out these 5 sections of land back in 1917, under the old Pittman Act. Key Pittman was Senator from Nevada, and he passed a special act in Congress, and Nevada was the only one that ever had the Pittman Act. It was rescinded in 1964. The Pittman Act said that any individual could take 4 sections of land and prospect for water on those 4 sections. If you found water, then you could claim one section of land. took one section of the 4 and the other 3 went back to the Federal Government. The 5 people who took the land up here were vice presidents of Pacific Coast Borax. Their names were F. M. Jenifer, F. W. Qrkhill, and C. B. Zabriskie (and the Zabriskie Point in Death Valley is named after him). And then there was U. S. Miller, and W. W. Cahill. They took the land up in their own names. The reason it's all together is that they would take one section and the other 3 out this way, and this one out that way, and that's why the 5 sections of the T&T Ranch are all together. Because [sound of paper rustling] they'd take this 4 here, and this one would take 4 that way and this one 4 that way, and that's why that one is off to the side. But they had 5 sections altogether.

They did this under the Pittman Act of 1917, and their patents were issued. They had to discover water, which they did. On each section there's a good well, and they had all-underground cement watering on these places, and they put in 20 acres of grapes on each section. That's the way they proved up on them.

RM: How deep was the water?

HR: The shallowest well on the T&T is around 72 foot to water, and the deepest that I know of up there would be about 88 foot.

RM: Has the water level stayed about the same through the years?

HR: Yes, it has. In fact, there are some wells that went up a foot or two from the old original. I have the original well logs from the outfit in California that drilled the wells They started drilling in '17, and finished completely in 1920. It's the [sound of rustling papers] . . . I was trying to think of the company here, and I have the records here, and the old original well logs somewhere. It's by a big company in California.

RM: I don't understand why these 5 guys did it in their name.

HR: Well, they finally . . .The title shows here how they went to patent in 1927. Their deeds were signed by President Calvin Coolidge.

[tape is turned off for awhile]

HR: The men were all vice presidents of Pacific Coast Borax Company at that time, which is U.S. Borax today. The old station of Leeland was on one of the old railroad stops. Pacific Coast Borax formed the Leeland Water & Land Company. Then these five men, Jenifer, and Qrkhill, Zabriskie, and all of them, deeded it, by deed, to the Leeland Water & Land Company in 1928. It was recorded in 1930. Then the Leeland Water & Land Company, with a quit-claim deed, released all of their stuff at the request of U.S. Borax & Chemicals Corporation. They released all of their interest to Death Valley Hotel Company, Limited, a California Corporation. That was a corporate deed in 1958-59. And the reason for that was that we'd come in then and talked to them about buying the ranch. Death Valley Hotel Company is still Pacific Coast Borax too.

RM: I wonder why they did that.

HR I don't know, outside of a corporate thing. When I met Gordon Bettles, as I told you, he was the one trying to put the ranch together. He finally came up and said "Hank, I can't get the people and get this in here. We had our Desert Entries and were moving on those, drilling.

RM Meanwhile you'd put your Desert Entries in, right?

HR Yes. In 1950, as I told you, my brother and I came through and we went up to Carson City and found out that it was federal land, and we rushed around and just did beat everyone else by - Oh, it's a story in itself.

RM It might make a good story to tell, Hank.

HR When we came through the valley in the spring of 1950, I talked my brother into coming back and we looked at it. I got to came back over about a month later. We went in to the valley then. There was only one road - the old road going in. In fact, the road used to go through this valley to Beatty, back and forth between Death Valley Junction and Beatty. And we found tracks all around at every corner stake and section corner. And I said, "Well, there must be something going on in here, Rob." So we went to Reno to find out about it. The day we were in was Friday, George Washing ton's birthday, and the federal building was closed. So we got the home of the head of the BLM up there and called him at home. We heard a baby crying in the background, and we were telling him what we'd done and what we wanted to do, and he said, "Yes, there is something interesting coming up on the Amargosa Valley. They're opening it up to Desert Entry."

RM: It hadn't been open previously.

HR: No. This was the first they'd opened it up; they just had the Pittman Acts in here, was all. And then the other 3 sections had reverted back to the federal government. Incidentally, the land the 5 men patented was never recorded until 1960.

As I was telling you, the gentleman said, "Well, yes, I'll came on down and show-you what's happening. They're opening up the Amargosa Valley Monday morning." This was Friday.

RM Why did they suddenly open it up?

HR: The federals had found there was a lot of water here; they pumped the old T&T wells and they were wanting development in the country, and it was a beautiful valley. They opened this under Desert Land Entry and at the same time the Homestead Act. You could use Homestead in here, and there's a little bit of Homestead land in the valley, and most of the rest of it's all Desert Entry, under the Desert Entry Act.

RM: Now how did the Desert Entry work?

HR Well, the Homestead Act started right after the Civil War to get people into the west. They found that people couldn't prove up on a place and live on it. As time went on, they found that a man would have to have a job or another mode of income to live on that. For the Homestead Act you had to actually live on the ranch. I don't know the exact date of the Desert Entry, but I'm sure it applies to all of the west, because there's some Desert Entry land in California. I don't know where else outside of the two states, but you could put in for your Desert Entry. You're only allowed 320 acres under the Desert Entry, and you had to drill and have enough water for your whole 320, proven, and plant 40 acres, to get your deed on Desert Entry.

RM: How long did it take to get the deed?

HR: That depended on whenever you proved up. We didn't get our deed until 1957, and we started work on it in '51.

Anyway, we rushed back down here Friday night, stayed in Beatty, got up real early - we got in there real late - and came down here and rushed in and we saw where the T&T wells were, so we took Section 24, and Section 19, and there was a friend with us who took Section 18, because that just surrounded the 'T&T, which was known water. Then we rushed on to L.A. and my brother had to go to Bakersfield and get his wife to sign, because you're only allowed 320 - you and your wife are allowed a section. The other fellow went to Bakersfield and got his sister to sign, and my wife came on, then, with us and we met back in Mojave on Sunday. In the eveningtime we got all this done.

We drove all Sunday night and got into Carson City. In those days you had to have your water permits first before you could enter on the land. So we rushed in there and already the land rush was there and I said, "Oh God we're too late, Rob." I knew Mr. Shamberger, who was the head of the water for the state, the water resources, and any time, mining, that we'd ever hit any water we'd turn it in to the state. And I guess through the name maybe we had a little rapport, because my uncle was with the Department of Agriculture in Nevada. (I never met the gentleman. I talked to him on the phone, but never met him. But he was with the University.)

But anyway, we had always turned in our water and had a good rapport with the State Engineer, and so I just went down to his office, and I said, "Well, looks like we're a little too late."

And he said, "What's that?" And I told him, and he said, 'Why, just a minute." And he called in the other room, in to the engineers, and one of them was Elmo Dorico, who became State Engineer years later. And he said, well, they had some ranchers in there that they were going over water rights with, just two ranchers, and they wanted to get them out of the way before the land rush. He said, "When you're finished with them, came on in here." And - I don't think it's out of the way to say that - we were Nevadans, and whatever we could for the state, we did. But anyway, they stayed with us and we got our water permits from the State Engineer. We started out, and all the others already had their permits; all they had to do was get them stamped or something, because they were right behind us. When we got into Reno it was about 3:00 in the afternoon, and the man we'd seen the Friday just before looked at us and said, "You couldn't've done what you've done in that time." And he stamped it, and he said, "I'd like to tell you, that's number one, number two."

So we were the first ones in that Desert Entry. We had been over-staked probably 5 or 6 times. There was really a rush. There were a hundred people from the Sacramento area alone.

RM Just in this valley.

HR: Yes. In this valley.

RM: But most of them were too late.

HR: That old time clock is what had to resolve it. Then we went on for about a year, and nothing was heard on it. You had to wait and get a pink slip before you could go in on the land and do anything.

RM: Meanwhile, what were you doing?

HR: We were over at Prescott, and had gotten this started up in Death Valley.

I got on a plane in New York one day. Still that farmer was in me, so I came back. In Denver I was walking the aisle and I came back to Prescott finally and I said, "Rob, just pitch a card in the air. I'm going over and do something on that land." Well, we went to work and I won or lost, whichever way you want to put it.

RM: And he stayed there?

HR: He stayed there for a short while. When we came over here, we still hadn't got our pink slip to go in, so I flew back to Washington and saw Senator McCarran. Senator McCarran was probably one of the greatest statesmen the State of Nevada ever had. His only trouble, he and Walt Baring, is they were Democrats, and I'm a Republican [laughter].

RM: Tell me about how you went to see McCarran.

HR: I just flew back and went to his office. I had all the papers with me, and I said, "Senator McCarran, you know, they let us put up our money and take up this land, and we worked on it, and they never have turned it loose yet." And I started opening up the maps. I'd met Senator McCarran before, in Beatty. He was out campaigning and in those days you knew pretty near everyone in the state.

He said, "Don't fold all that, Hank. Just be sure that what you're telling me is right." He called up the Interior Department and had a little talk with them, and he said, "I want a report on my desk within 30 days why that land hasn't been allowed." And within 2 weeks we had our pink slips to go in on it. And that's how I started over here.

Then Rob and I got rid of the uranium concentrating company, and we thought we had a lot of money. [laughter] So we came to the Amargosa Valley with - I guess we probably had $30,000, which was quite a lot in those days, and we went to get the first well driller, and he looked at this valley, and no roads, and he took cash on the barreihead before he'd :[chuckles] . . . This was the latter part of the year. In fact, when I came over here, then, to drill the wells, it was in '53. We were still out mining and I'd gone back and gotten it allowed.

RM: Ok. When did you see McCarran?

HR: It was in the summer of '51.

RM: And by the time you came in here to begin drilling wells it was '53.

HR: Yes. I was trying to think of the first driller that we got hold of. He was from Bakersfield, and I'll think of his name during our talking, But. . . They looked at this valley, and they had to practically use a tractor to pull in to their well places sometimes, and they wanted cash. They thought, 'any damn fool that's come in to here . . .' [chuckles] So we paid cash for those wells. And before long, we found we didn't have very much money. It was cash for the pumps, and cash for. . . And I know I traded different things for pumps and everything. In fact, I brought a pump out of Downing, California where the water table had dropped so far that they'd quit pumping.

RM: Meanwhile your brother had come up?

HR: He came over, and we started developing it, and I remember before we got our equipment in here, our first 10 acres, we used Gordon Bettles' old Ford tractor and we'd throw a chain, and believe this or not (we were kind of nuts, but we got pretty good at it) we'd throw a chain around the creosote and pull it up with the tractor. We cleared 10 acres, I think. [chuckles] You could do it in 2 hours today, but it looked awfully big. And I have pictures of us planting our first trees there. And we have some pictures on 8 mm from them on around the valley that we could show you.

We finally proved up on it. I would say we probably had all of our wells finished in '56 - all that we had to have. And I remember a man by the name of Robinson. When we put in for our final proof - as I told you, you have to have all the water proven - he came down, and by

this time we were kind of running out of money. We did have 2 pumps in on my Desert Entry, and we had 2 on Rob's, and we had proved up on Rob's section first. And when Mr. Robinson came to pimp the water on ours, he was the type of man who says, "You know, you guys pay a dollar and a quarter for this acreage, so they ought to give it to you. Anybody that'd come out here and do this." [chuckles]

RM: Because you'd initially plunked down a dollar and a quarter when you filed?

HR: Yes. When we filed it cost us a $1.25 an acre. So we went over and he came down unexpectedly on this final proof, so we went over and I kept thinking 'How will I tell him that I don't have a motor on the other one?' (And we had one big jimmy diesel.) We'd come to the pump and he'd measured the water and we had plenty of water for 320, but not enough for the whole section, you know. So I was about to tell him, and I think he knew it. So he looked at his watch [laughs] and said, "You know, I won't have time to pump that other well today. I've got to be up in Mesquite." It was so great. In those days Nevada was so great." He said, "I'll be back. How would about 10 days be?"

And I said, "Gee, that's swell." I started to break down two or three times and tell him I didn't have a diesel, but. . . [chuckles]

He left, and he came back in about 10 days. In the meantime, we'd taken the motor off and put it over at the other one. And he was so nice, he didn't even go by that to see if the motor was gone.

RM: Was he a state man, or federal?

HR: Federal, for your final inspection. And so we went over and pumped it, and he gave us the approval that we had enough water. And Bob Robinson was his name.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: Were you and your brother the first ones in under the Desert Entry Act?

HR: Yes.

RM: Meanwhile, what had happened to the T&T sections?

HR: No one was farming them. They were still in the ownership of the Leeland Land & Water Company, or Death Valley Hotel Company as they finally put them in. And Gordon Bettles was trying to buy them. He came up one day in the latter part of 1956, and he said, "Hank, I'm not going to be able to put that whole ranch together. If you have any one, maybe, feel free to go ahead."

And I said, "Well, on one condition. What do you want, Gordon?"

He said, "Well, I'd like to have the 40 acres that I'm living on. And the well in Section 36."

So I said, "Well good, I'll see what I can do." So I got some people interested in the T&T - the Dalton Pipe Company. We went down then and talked to Harry Gower. I'd known of him around, but I'd never actually met him, so I went down to Los Angeles to their head office there, on Wiltshire Boulevard, and told him that Gordon had talked to me, and they said Yes, they couldn't see why we couldn't put something together. I had enough money to make the down payment on the T&T Ranch, which was sold in those days for $37.50 an acre.

RM: So you bought the whole 5 sections?

HR: Five sections, less the 40 acres. As we went on, then, we went to farming some on the T, and put in wheat and alfalfa. We were trying to irrigate it by row irrigation, and that didn't work out so well, so we finally got some hand lines in here, sprinkler pipe, and, oh, we thought that was the greatest thing that ever hit the country, until we had to start moving them in that mud and everything [laughs]. So then we went and got wheel systems and traded, and we had 9 wheel lines on there, and then I told Rob one night, "You know, there has to be an easier way than this." And the old Valley systems, made by the Valley Manufacturing Company in Nebraska, came out with a water-driven circle system. We bought two of those, and put them in there, and you can't believe the result. As I say, water pressure in the cylinders drives those wheels forward and back. . And I'll never forget, along about that time - 1959 or '60 - (not to get ahead of the story, but. . .) we were fighting to try and get the REA in here.

RM: Oh, yes, this is an important story.

HR: Yes. I'll get into the REA, but I just wanted to tell you - I'll never forget - the people used to come down from the Test Site to the ranch - they kind of liked it. This one general, I can't think of his name, but he was from Sandia, was down with a bunch that night and we were sitting at the table up at the ranch and naturally we had a few drinks, and they were talking about this, and he said, "By God, I want to see something like that." We came down and by the car lights there was that old thing spraying away and you could hear it exhausting the water - it'd go

pssshhh, and then go on up. He wanted to really look at that, so I went down and cut off the motor. When I came back up he had climbed up in one of the superstructures up on that thing and he said, "I'll be damned! I've never seen anything this in my life! That is something!"

He was going on and I looked up at him and I said, "Yeah?" I said, "How about the hydrogen bomb?" Because he was a big boy in atomic bombs.

And I'll never forget; he looked down at me, and he said, "Well, yeah, that's great too. But," he said, "You know, this damn thing works." [laughter] And I'll never forget that because here was - to me - one of the greatest scientists in the country out here.

RM: Let's back up now and talk about the crops you initially grew, and the problems you had.

HR: The first thing you always think of is alfalfa, because that's a saleable crop. We started to put in alfalfa, and I remember I wanted to put in some wheat. I went to ask everyone in the country - I went over to Mr. Bowman in Pahrump and they said they didn't know what kind of wheat to put in. It's a different valley and they hadn't grown, but. . . they were alfalfa.

RM: The Bowman had just come in to Pahrump a few years previously?

HR: Yes, they were on the old Manse Ranch. And Hafen and Bob Ruud and different ones came in after that, and they had all been over at the ranch at times. I called Professor Fred Decker of Germaine Seeds, who I knew real well, and he came up and said, "Well, Hank, why don't you try Ramona? It's a hard wheat." (which is a high-price wheat; it's not a feed wheat) And he said, "If it'd grow here it'd be great." So we tried it, and as you see there, in that picture, we had terrific wheat.

RM: How did you know him from the seed company?

HR: Because we went to the seed company, wanting to know what to plant and what types of things to plant in here once we'd came in. He was down in Los Angeles, and I'd lived in Downey, so I got to know Professor Decker real well. I know when the salesman with Germaine would come in here, he'd try to sell you anything, so I'd go right to Professor Decker, and he'd say, "No, you wouldn't want that." He was a great help. So we had the wheat, and then we put in some alfalfa.

RM: Where did you sell your alfalfa?

HR: Locally, mostly. In fact, we even sold some up at the Test Site. They had a dairy herd up at the Test Site at that time, and they were testing them, and I got that contract for a few years. And I started selling to Fred Harvey down in Furnace Creek Inn, at the ranch down there, for those horses. We still sell to them after all these years. And we sold in town. But we'd have hay left. I went down and got together with the big dairy company out of Glendale - Roger Jessup. Jessup was one of the city councilmen or whatever they call them in L.A. - supervisors, county supervisor. We had the big Jessup Dairies, and he said "Well, yes," and so I got some day-old heifer calves then, and we had about 200 head.

RM: You traded hay for calves?

HR: No. We bought the calves, but they went in with us. They said they'd take all the cows that we could get. They were out of their herd. The Jessup herd was bred down to the. . . Well, Jessup Dairies have sent semen and everything all over the world. They had a cow that was built real heavy in the back and everything. You could just almost tell a Jessup cow. So they said they would take all of the cattle - their replacements - that we could raise up here. We thought we had a lot of land up here until those calves grew up - 200 head of them - and they'd make mincemeat out of those fields. We took them down to California then, and pastured down there for a while, and then we went into beef cattle.

RM: What yields did you get with your alfalfa?

HR: Oh, good yield. We didn't know what fertilizer to use, so Professor Decker, again, said, "You know, it would be hard." He took soil analysis for us and said, "You need a 16-20-0. There's plenty of potash here, and you see why, with all the volcanoes above us, here. So we tried our 16-20 in 200 pounds to the acre. And of course, in those days all the government men were out to try to help you, because it was a new development out here. We had good, good luck with the 16-20-0. Then, I've always tried to tell people, it was just water from then on. Really keeping your water up.

RM: How many cuttings did you get a year?

HR: We got 6. We took 40 acres up there one year with the Ag people out of town. In fact, Jim Lee was head of ASCS then, and we took 40 acres over there and controlled and really watered it every 12 hours - changed our lines every 12 hours - and we made about 10 ton to the acre on that. As a whole field and not with that special stuff, you'll probably average 7 ton to the acre in a year. But we did make 10.

RM: Is it true that alfalfa roots go down 50 feet?

HR: I don't know if they go down that deep. If you have water down at 14 foot, I know they'll go that deep. Roots will go just as deep down as there's moisture. I would say if you had subterranean water where it's 14 foot, eventually it'll get down to that. Otherwise, they just go to where the moisture is.

RM: Initially you planted alfalfa and then you went to wheat and you had good success with that.

HR: Yes. In fact, a fellow by the name of Mankinen had came in, in the meantime and he bought a combine just to combine our wheat, and he put in some.

RM: Where did you sell your wheat?

HR: In Los Angeles. In fact, the year we made that real good crop they were short somewhere on that, and we got a real good price for our wheat. We shipped it out of the L.A. mills down there, and it went to France to fill a contract over there. We put in some special horse sorghum one year for Mr. Ansacker in Las Vegas and we did well on that. But our market is the big trouble from up in here.

RM: How have you solved that problem over the years?

HR: Like everyplace, Las Vegas has grown so much that they'd have to bring hay in from California if they didn't buy it from us. And then cubing came about, and they need lots of cubes and hay. They've been cubing in this valley now about 8 years, so it's relatively new. My brother and I went up to Mesquite, Nevada, and watched a test on cubing the federals had up there and we just couldn't see that machine, at that time. It's like everything new, it's hard to prove it to someone.

[tape is turned off for a while]

RM: You'd just finished talking about cubing. What came next in terms of the development of the valley?

HR: That was just about it. Alfalfa was the main thing in the whole valley, and pretty near everyone has always raised alfalfa. There's been some milo maize that's done well in here, and barley, and wheat, but the main crop in the valley is alfalfa. Today, though, it's going to have to became higher-priced crops. We have raised potatoes in here, and done very well with them, and we're trying to get some potato people interested. There are some people from Hawaii who have bought 480 acres in here and they're going to put in turf - grass - and then the balance in alfalfa until they can get it all into turf. They feel that Las Vegas alone can handle around 300 acres in turf. They're supposed to be started in here this year, and I'm trying to get other people I know that . . . some of the farmers in here this year are not even going to raise alfalfa, because the price is 'way down on cubes. Once it's cubed, you have to sell it to the cube people, and it's just not paying out. Our power is much higher than it was years ago. Of course everything else is. Our alfalfa's higher, but not to the point that it overtakes the price of power.

RM: Is there any grape culture?

HR: At one time Old Man Guesti of Guesti Wines was over here and he took pieces of the grape vines that the Pacific Coast Works had planted many years ago. They were great big vines, and he would take and peel that back, and peel it back, and he said it was some of the finest grape wood that he had ever seen. And it is perfect for grapes. Charlie Holtz over here in the valley has been raising grapes for quite a few years, and does a beautiful job. The Guesti people were going to contract with me at that time and put in 2 sections of grapes on the T&T, and then they ran into a lot of state laws that if they took grapes from Nevada into California, they couldn't make California wine out of them. They'd have to make vinegar or something like that.

They couldn't call it California wine. There are ways around the law, probably, if they wanted to, but we just never did get together on the two sections of grapes.

After I lost the T&T in the '60s Free Fairfield, of Fairfield Oil Company, who took it over, planted some pistachios through the University of California at Davis, and they've done just fine. I know when I took the ranch back over in '70 I started watering them and everything, and they never were grafted the way they should've been, but they're still producing a terrific crop of pistachios. Morris DeLee is putting in quite a few more acres of pistachio nuts.

We have a city in our back yard now that ships everything in - Las Vegas. There are outfits in here that'll take contracts on potatoes and everything now, but no one has the equipment or the knowledge of it. It's hard to change people over from what they're doing.

RM: Who was behind you in the Desert Entry?

HR: Well, Mankinens came in, and the Stricklands. Mr. and Mrs. Ed Mankinen are both dead now. Their son still owns quite a lot of land up here. He's trying to put in an airport.

Then the Selbachs came in. Theo Selbach was the first Selbach in here. He died just this last year. Then his nephews and his brother came in, and they're still here. The Stricklands and the Selbachs went to work at the Test Site. They are now retired from the Test Site, and they raise alfalfa on their ranch. They've leased their ranches out, as far as I know. And then after than there was a group that came in from California ¬the Wall Ranch up here - Steve Wall. They took that ranch over in 1960 and put in a lot of fruit trees at one time.

RM: Meanwhile, you'd taken over the T&T, so you had your Desert Entry plus the T&T.

HR: We had 7 sections in here, my brother and I. And, frankly, it was just too big with trying to do everything.

RM: Then you've mentioned that you lost the T&T.

HR: We took bankruptcy on the T in 1964. And Free Fairfield, an oil man from Long Beach, California, operated it for a while. Then he died and the T was finally traded to Charles Hughes, out of Sacramento. Fairfield Oil had a loan - $200,000 - to my partner, Dalton Pipe Company, in Long Beach. We hadn't formed our corporation in time, and they took us to court and proved that I was a partner with Dalton. And he couldn't pay the loan, so I ended up owing $200,000 along with my partner and we couldn't make it, so by court order and foreclosure Fairfield Oil took it over. They drilled new wells and were really doing a wonderful job when Free Fairfield died. They traded the ranch to Charles Hughes out of Sacramento. Then Dr. DeLee in town - in Las Vegas - and William Hernstead - Senator Hernstead - and myself bought the T&T from Charles Hughes in the latter part of '69 or '70.

I farmed there for. . . I bought up some other land and then finally back in our payments . . . There was a foreclosure on that, and that's where Morris DeLee came in and bought the ranch. He's still operating it. He has about 3200 acres left, I believe. Some of the other is sold off. He sold 2040 acres to Jim Owens, who was hurt 2 years ago in a horse accident, and he's

closed down now and I think the property's in foreclosure and in bankruptcy court right now. It is probably some of the prime land in the whole valley. It was the original T&T Ranch.

RM Meanwhile, are the operations of the people whose land came in under the Desert Entry still going?

HR: Some of those are still going. The water has been taken away from a lot of them, and it's not being farmed.

RM How about the T&T's water?

HR: As I understand, the T&T has around 640 acres of certified water. From the last count that I have, there's only 1280 acres of certified water in the whole valley. There were some permits still pending and if we can get the on-going bills passed in the Legislature, it looks like the valley might possibly really open back up to its full extent.

RM: So the T&T has about half the certified acreage of water, and then the rest is on the Desert Entry property?

HR: On Desert Entry properties. The property that I live on right here is old Homestead land, and they've never told me to cut this well down, yet, to stop it.

RM: How many homesteads were there in the area?

HR: Some people took their land under Desert Entry, and some homesteaded. But as I can recall, there were only 5 homesteads in here - people who could actually live on their place and prove up on it. Glessner proved up on his. The one I'm sitting on was owned by Gordon Bettles' brother. It was a homestead, and then he has Desert Entry, too. I can't think of the other names - there were 2 or 3 other homesteads. There weren't too many homesteads, and those were on the 160 acre homesteads, instead of any size. RM: What was happening with the T&T in, say, the '30's?

HR: Nothing.

RM: When was it abandoned?

HR: It was completely abandoned in the late part of the '30s.

RM: And then nobody, was there until Gordon Bettles in the 1950s?

HR: Yes. He wasn't farming or anything as of yet. He was just getting a few things started - that nice garden and things like that.

RM: So if you took Highway 373 to Death Valley Junction from Lathrop Wells north of the road there was nothing happening here prior to when you and Bettles came in.

HR: There wasn't a thing.

RM: Now, on the south side of the road, there was Ash Meadows. What was happening there?

HR: There were people in there who had always had kind of homesteads. When I came here, Pete Peterson, who came here in the '30s, was running cattle. That was a homestead. Lyle Gross was a homestead. The Rookers were a homestead. The old Tubbs place was a homestead. And the Ash Meadows Lodge.

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: You just mentioned that Anne Weller owned the Ash. Meadows Lodge in 1950, when you came here.

HR: Yes, that was an existing homestead. I don't remember how she got that. And then there was what they call the Ash Meadows Ranch, or the Spring Meadows Ranch, now. There was quite a lot of land in there at that time, and I know we looked at it at one time, and they wanted . . . I believe it was old patented land, and how it was taken up originally I don't know. There used to be a stocking place for wagons and things like that in the Meadows', and I don't know what the land originally was. A lot of it was Homestead in there.

RM Pete came in, in the '30s, and when did Lyle Gross come in?

HR: Lyle came in probably in the '50s. I met Lyle when I came here, and I think he came here in around '49. Re still has same relations. .

RM: Is his place occupied now?

HR: Yes. The Fish and Wildlife have taken that country over there.

RM: Have they taken Pete's or the Rookers'?

HR: No, they have to buy those people out. I guess they're eventually going to. They've bought some of that land. I don't know what is finally going to happen.

RM: Do they plan to take the whole thing?

HR: Yes.

RM: Are the Tubbs still there?

HR: There's a granddaughter who still owns the old Tubbs place. She runs a few head of cattle and a few horses on it and that's about all. Judy Trenary is her name.

RM: When did the Rookers came in?

HR: The first time I actually met them was in about '54 or '55. They were over in Pahrump Valley and had some land. I think they moved here in the early '50s, too. I don't know the exact date Tubbs came here, but they were in here when I came.

RM Are those all the people who were living in the Ash Meadows area at the time you came?

HR: There were some people on the old - I don't know the name of that ranch at that time - it's the Spring Meadows Ranch. I don't remember their names. They sold the property, and a man had it and did a tremendous amount of work on the Spring Meadows Ranch, and then sold out. Mr. Barnett was boss for them. It was an outfit out of Tennessee, it seems like, that bought the then-existing . . . The ranch went on under their operation. They had about 3000 head of cattle in there, and they drilled wells, had electricity all in there, and they had about 2000 acres under cultivation. They grew alfalfa, and then they have all of the range grass in there. They grew a lot of grain and they had elevators. They called it the beef factory out here. And then finally the Fish and Wildlife came in on the pupfish, and the Nature Conservancy .

RM When did that all get started?

HR: That started in the '70s, and then the pupfish thing, and then up into the '80s, and finally Cal-Vada bought the ranch, and was going to put lakes in, and an airfield, and what have you, and finally the Nature Conservancy bought the ranch from Cal-Vada. They turned around and somehow in Congress they got $5.5 million dollars appropriated, and they bought the land from the Conservancy and gave it to Fish and Wildlife. And that's where we stand today. The Fish and Wildlife have taken that over, and they're trying to buy out all of the patented land in there. I think they've got most of it.

RM What kinds of operations did Pete and the Grosses and the Rookers and so on have back in there?

HR: They were small. Pete always ran cattle and good horses. In fact, Pete used to turn loose registered stallions in there, and we'd take the old horses and ship them to market. We had a nice bunch of wild horses in there. And they all ran cattle.

RM: Was anybody doing any cultivation besides the Spring Meadows Ranch?

HR: Not that I know of. It was a cattle operation - cattle and horses.

RM: Was Anne Weller there when you came in?

HR: Yes.

RM: When was that established as a brothel?

HR: I don't know for sure. I know Lyle Gross and Anne went together for years, and then when Lyle got burned up . . . His pickup caught on fire coming from the Test Site (he was working at the Test Site) and I guess Anne passed away about 3 years later.

RM: Was that the end of the brothel?

HR: No, it went on operating. A fellow by the name of Van Camp bought it - he and his wife - and they ran it for a few years. That was in the late '60s. (I was trying to think . . .) I got Lyle's pickup where he got burned on that. He died from his burns. I had a good friend, Dr. Scott, who I'd served over in the Pacific with, and he had a Desert Entry in here. When I found out Lyle was in the hospital I called Dr. Scott in Reno and had him fly down a specialist from Reno, but there was no way of saving him. He was burned so bad that. . . When I went and picked up his clothes, there were just the cuffs left where they couldn't catch on fire, and his belt; things like that were all that was left. He was burned pretty bad, but I think he lived till about 4:00 or 5:00 the next morning. I know that's when his brother came in. I met his brother, and I've known his cousin, Hank Lowe, who lives in Las Vegas. He came here and went to work on the Test Site in about '59, and I got to know him real well, and then got to know his brother after this accident.

They were on his place for a little while. I don't think Hank Lowe ever lived there; he was just was out there quite a lot. He lived in Vegas, and had a place in Vegas, but worked at the Test Site. That's how I met him. I don't know whether Lyle's brother sold the place, and I frankly don't know who owns it now. I'm sure it's in the Nature Conservancy now, because there are a lot of ponds on it - we would fish in it.

RM: Where are Longstreet Springs and Fairbanks Springs and the old Winters' stone cabin in relation to the homesteads9

HR: The Fairbanks Springs are 'way at the northern end of the Ash Meadows, and Longstreet is down where the old Ash Meadows Ranch was. When we came in here, there were people living on it. The Longstreet Spring is where the original ranch house was. Fairbanks Springs was still part of the Spring Meadows Ranch - or the Ash Meadows Ranch.

RM: So these other people took spots on the sides of the big ranch.

HR: Yes. And there are a lot of springs in Ash Meadows where small waters run. The big ones, though - the Fairbanks discharges 4000 gallons a minute, year round. It's a tremendous flaw of water. And Longstreet probably does 1200 gallons a minute. There are two good-sized lakes.

RM: That must've been a big ranch.

HR: About 15,000 acres.

RM: How did that came to be?

HR: Well, people just kept acquiring . . . Pete can give you the complete history of the Ash Meadows, and I'd rather he would do it, because he knows the exact people. I know he sold out his original homestead where we took power, and he had another piece down there that he went on to.

The Winters' old cabin is still standing I think it was more adobe, though - rock and adobe. There are still some of the old buildings over there, and I can show you when we go over there. You can take a look at that.

There was mining in the clay pits many years ago, which is just as you're going into Ash Meadows. There seems to be clay throughout the valley. Not necessarily in the main part of the Amargosa, but from Fairbanks south probably 4 or 5 miles and north quite a few miles. Forrest Hansen, who is the manager of IMV down here, could give you all of the quadrangles where the clay is. They have drilled that whole country. They make 13 different kinds of clays here and it's shipped all over the world. There's one clay here that only exists in 2 places - England and here. And then they make an extrusion that can be used in salt water exploration in oil drilling. It will expand under salt water, where your other clays won't. This has been hurt a little bit now, because oil drilling is not as high as it was, but they still have tremendous orders for their other clays. We look for it to get better, and it's probably one of the largest clay deposits in the United States.

Another company that's closed down is the ABC - American Borate. We kind of look for them to open up. That was originally Tenneco. Gemco and then Tenneco and then ABC. And of course you hear all kinds of rumors, as you always do anywhere, but it looks like they will open back up. They bought tremendous mines down in Death Valley. A lot of that was bought from Pacific Coast Borax - it was all Pacific Coast Borax. The ABC mill is just [over the border] in Nevada because of certain regulations in California. And I imagine IMV, too. Because the EPA and OSHA and all of them have so much to say about these things, where Nevada's more liberal.

RM: What kind of a town was Beatty when you first got here?

HR: The Burro Inn has been built since I came to Beatty, and the hotel and gambling above Beatty - the Stagecoach - has been built; otherwise, it looks about as it was when I came here. In fact there were still people living at Rhyolite. They had the old railroad station, and it was still open. No railroad, but people still lived there. There were quite a few who lived in and around Rhyolite and Beatty, but they're all gone, now. The town of Beatty itself, though . . . There was quite a little mining at different times. There's still the Crowell Mine, and there's one other mine going in Beatty that Jerry Leese runs, and they still produce all the time. Naturally, everybody thinks of the comeback of mining one day, and the gold in there. But Beatty's about the same as when I got here.

Warren Doing owned the Exchange Club, and he since went to Searchlight and leased his Exchange Club to the Knights. When their lease was up they're the ones who bought the Burro Inn and started operating, and I understand that Warren's son is still running the old Exchange Club. But the Knights came in, and were here. In fact, Mrs. Parker, who operates the Burro Inn, is one of the Knights. But most of the old-timers that I knew when I first came here are gone. Frank Truga owned a big place out of town that I think the Parkers own now which was the Knights'. They bought that when they came in. And otherwise, as I say, it's just about the same as it was. There's quite a future, I think, the way people are getting out of cities now.

Beatty was pretty well owned by two of the old-time families. The Revert brothers owned an awful lot of Beatty, and the water and things, and Ralph Lisle owned the hot springs and quite a lot around town, and it just never really expanded. There's so much federal land there that there was hardly anything to expand on. As of this time, I think the BLM is going to open up land around where towns like that can expand. Beatty would be a very nice town. The

year-round climate's good, it's kind of the gateway to Death Valley up in that area, and it's just a nice, quiet town. It would be a nice town to live in. Everyone still knows everyone. It seems like that's kind of what people like nowadays, getting away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

We have high hopes, naturally, here in the Amargosa Valley. We finally became a registered town site about 2 years ago or 3. This post office is now Amargosa Valley, Nevada, and we just built a new post office.

RM: Sure. Especially if the repository, and. . .

HR: Yes. And I don't believe they'll ever. . . There'll always be some kind of testing, whether it's star wars, or. . . I know they have the EMAD building here on the Test Site, which is the only one I know of in the western world, and things like that you just don't do away with.

CHAPTER FIVE

[Records and McCracken are discussing a document.]

RM: How did people get Ar-ma-go-sa out of it?

BR: They don't realize the spelling of it so much, so that when you look this is kind of - Amagosa, Armagosa, and Amargosa. It's an Indian word - bitterbrush; you know, bitter waters.

RM: I have a couple of questions to clear up. You mentioned that your folks came in a wagon train and the wagon train went on and there was a massacre at Clayton, New Mexico?

HR: What is Clayton, New Mexico today. My grandfather was only 13 years old, and his older brother was 18. My grandfather's name was Maxwell Grant Records, after General Grant. The wagon they were with broke down, and something needed repairs on the Tabor wagon, so they stayed on the Cimarron River. The rest of the wagon train went on over by what is today Clayton, New Mexico and were massacred. And this shows in the records what's in there. As time went on, I guess other people started stopping there and started ranching. Quite a few years later my grandfather married one of the Tabor girls. Folsom was what this town where they settled on the Little Cimarron there became known as.

Then my father was born in Folsom, New Mexico in 1882.

My mother was from Cherry Vale, Kansas, pretty close to the Oklahoma border. I remember her saying about some of the outlaws back there in those times that they lived actually in Oklahoma - the house was in Oklahoma - and the other . . . er father and mother came to Folsom, New Mexico and I don't know whether they built it or not, but they ran the Folsom Hotel. My mother was a young girl when she came there - her name was Morna Nevada Johns.

RM: Nevada! Isn't that interesting. Was that a family name?

HR: Well, no I think Nevada was quite a name in those days because of the silver, and joining the Union. Back in there, all that was still a territory. I guess it was just someone's whim, but they named my mother Morna Nevada Johns.

RM: And then you wind up in Nevada.

BR: Yes. It's like an amen, sometimes [laughter].

RM: You spent part of your youth in Folsom, then?

HR: We were on a cattle ranch. My dad had a homestead, and then my granddad had - you wouldn't call it a real big ranch, but he had 800 acres of patented land, and springs and water and creeks. Then he had 2 or 3 sections of school land leased where we ran cattle.

The only other place that we ever lived was Raton, New Mexico. We went over there and took over a ranch. The dust bowl and Depression drove us out of Folsom. There just wasn't anything to do. My father finally sold the homestead.

You know, people can't realize today, I guess, the amount of . . . I remember during the Depression when President Roosevelt said nothing should be under $1.25 an acre; he tried to set a price. My grandfather sold his ranch for $800 cash. And that was a pretty good-sized ranch. We probably ran 350 head of cows. I don't remember what my dad got for his homestead, but he sold it to the Newkirks, and the Newkirk family got quite big there, and were finally bought out, I understand, by some oil company. Mobil Oil, I believe, has moved into that country. And then there's one big ranching outfit. My cousin in Vegas who's 75 years old said that you couldn't even get in to the old ranch now. They have it all fenced and the roads cut off. I'd have to go 'way down on the Cimarron and back in on the creek up there going in.

RM: What did you do in Raton?

HR: My dad leased a ranch out there, and he worked on the big swimming pool and the power plant that's a cooling plant of some kind there. I remember we kids used to have to ride the horses into town - the work horses - and leave them. And my dad used the old Fresnos and things. In those days, they didn't have Caterpillars. We built that, and we went to school. We were 8 miles from town and we went to school on a bus. And then we moved over to Morley. He was stable boss there. He had 300. .

RM: Now I have a better understanding of how you got in to ranching and farming, but where did your interest in metallurgy and mining come from? HR: When I came to California and worked for Wallace China Company, I just couldn't stand the factory. One day I went down and I asked for my check. And the man said, "Hank, what do you mean? Are you going back home?"

And I said, "No, I just can't stand this time clock."

So he said, "Well, you know, hell, there's 12 people outside waiting for your job."

I said, "Well give one of them my job." So I had to go back about noon and get my check, and I got ahold of my cousin up in Wasco California. He was in the oil fields with Continental Oil Company. And they had me come on up there. That's how I went up and went to work in the oil fields. And I worked on the world's deepest well at that time - 15,004 foot. It was unheard of in those days. So then I got to pitching ball.

Things slowed down in the oil fields, and they were laying off a few crews. I was at Bellridge, and my father was in the hospital in Pueblo Colorado and they called me and wanted me to come back home. I went and saw my father, and he seemed to be doing much better, so I thought, 'I'm going to get my dad, I've got a good job, I'm going back out, and I'm going to move my family to California.' My dad passed away about a month after that. I was on my week off from the oil fields and I was down in Long Beach. I didn't know my dad had died till after he was buried. I went back and got my mother and my two younger brothers and brought them out to Salinas, California. In the meantime, I'd gone up there and gone to pitching for General Box Distributors.

RM: Were you full time?

HR: Yes, I was full time. I used to go from there during the big lettuce deal there, and then in the winter we'd go down to El Centro and down in that country with the winter lettuce.

RM: So you worked the lettuce part but you also pitched on weekends?

HR: Oh, yes. It was just the weekends. You got a pretty good job out of it, [laughs] pitching, in those days.

RM: What did you do in the lettuce fields?

HR: I was a box maker. And then I went on a machine and made lettuce crates. It was known as a lettuce tramp in those days.

The way I got into mining was, a man who was one of the roughnecks on the drilling crew that I was on was a mining engineer. He wanted to go mining so bad, and finally he quit the oilfields and went up to White River, California and started a mine. And I went down one time and he talked me into going to work for him driving tunnel and . .

RM: And you'd never had any mining experience.

HR: I was around the coal mines, but I was never in a mine; I didn't know what it was. So he taught e, and we'd drag these old compressors and pulleys by hook and crook some way up the mountainsides, and drill these prospect tunnels and find the vein, and follow it, and . . . He started teaching them with books and everything. I'd panned for gold when I was in Colorado and thought it was interesting. It's a disease, as bad as farming [chuckles].

RM: Where is the White River, Hank?

HR: White River's south and east of Porterville, California. It'd be north and east of Bakersfield, up in the mountains

RM: Where's Wasco California? Is that around Bakersfield?

HR: It's kind of a triangle from Bakersfield to Wasco back to Taft; in that country there.

RM: Why did the White River Mine close?

HR: It wasn't there at that time. And the price of gold at that time was pegged at $35 an ounce. You didn't get more.

I went back to Salinas and got married. I met my wife in Long Beach, California. After I quit General Box, I had a friend there who'd lived there quite a while, and he introduced them to my wife. He was going with her sister there in Long Beach. I saw her quite a while, and every time I had time off I'd go down and see her. We went to Yuma, Arizona and got married because they didn't have any waiting - you just left and got married. It was kind of the thing to

do to go to Yuma, in those days. In Salinas I had bought some land and had a fellow build a new house and brought my mother out, as I told you, from Colorado.

Then when my wife came up, my mother and the younger brothers lived with us for quite a while in Salinas. Then I went down and went to work for Lockheed, as I told you, and that gets you up to there.

First I went to Lockheed, and then went back up mining. Because I figured I knew where that vein was [chuckles].

RM: Back to the same mine.

HR: Back up to the White River country, and in on a different vein. And we hit a pretty good-sized copper deposit, and we put in a mill, and were milling and making copper concentrate when I was drafted into the army. They wanted to let me out of the army, to go back to my mine. And I thought, 'God - opening that all up again and everything!' The army was easier.

RM: When you first went up to the mine in White River, you started on your metallurgy course.

HR: Yes. Burt Benson was a very good man and he got me started reading books and going into it, and then would explain like a teacher. Frankly, it was better than going to school in a way, because it was one-on-one. My brother Rob worked in the coal mines in Colorado. Then he got into different kinds of mining around Grants, New Mexico. I think he was mining copper, and then had a gold prospect out of Gallup, New Mexico. So he got into mining pretty well, too - it's an alluring game.

I just kept on, and overseas, even, I took what they called a USAFI Course, or the U.S. Armed Forces Institute. You had to have a priority thing, so that they could mail books and materials over there, because it was all APO numbers. I used to get books over there and do my tests and things, and I taught mining a little bit, just more or less bringing it up to them. There were some coal miners in my outfit, and we used to get together. I finally got one of the who was really a good miner to tell the men and show them about mining and everything. This was just something for the men. It kind of was interesting to them, and [helped] to break that monotony over there. We had plenty of work, but we still had monotony.

Then when I came back out of the army, we went back to mining and went over to take over a big mine in Prescott, up at the Big Bug.

RM: How did you hear about that mine in Prescott?

HR: A man in Los Angeles told us about it. We went over and he wanted us to look at another mine over there, and we did, and while we were over there we looked at the Big Bug and the Little Poland mine, and went in and sampled it. So we leased it from an older fellow-who owned that and lived in Prescott. We went over there and went to work, and then we got in to the big [pit?] copper deposit, because Shadduck owned some claims up on the Navajo Reservation. So we went up there and looked at them and bought those from Shadduck Mining Corporation and put in that big mill I was telling you about up there.

We called it White Mesa Mining Company and put a mill in there and that's the way we got started mining over in that country. As I said, DuMontier wanted us to look at this mine over here in Death Valley, and we finally sold our interest to Vaughey and Vaughey. We came over and looked at it, but we sold our interest in the copper mine on White Mesa to Vaughey and Vaughey Oil Company, and then came over to look at this property for DuMontier, and that's when we found the Amargosa Valley.

RM: Meanwhile your wife was staying in California?

HR: Yes. We bought a home in Downey, California in 1950. We'd been living in apartments, friends of ours, but I just wanted a home and we bought there - Priscilla Avenue in Downey, which my ex-wife still owns. My sons all went to the Downey Unified School District, then went on to junior college in Anaheim, and then they went to Long Beach State and then graduated from Pepperdine. Lon was with the Exxon Corporation for a long time and he did work for oil companies. One of the big men for one of the oil companies, one time when I was down and saw him, wanted to know if I couldn't talk Lon into oil instead of veterinary medicine. Lon wanted to be a veterinarian.

RM: When were your sons born?

HR: Lon was born when I was in the army. In fact, I was at Officer's School at Fort Bellmore when Lon was born, so I didn't see him 'till he was 3 months old. You didn't get a pass or anything to get out of school unless it was an emergency. [chuckles] When I got the telegram Lon was born I went and got a box of cigars and I went down. You didn't talk to those they call attack officers. In OCS they were on you every minute; they'd come out from behind buildings: "Why aren't you running?" And "Doing this?" And they just harassed you all the time, I guess trying to break you down. And then you had your classes too but . . . I went in to the office that night and all the attack officers in there [were] kind of laughing about what some of those stupid guys would do that day when they'd give them some drill commands, and I had the box of cigars behind me, and I asked the first sergeant for permission to see the company commander and he said, "What about?"

And I said, "I want an emergency furlough." He passed me in to the captain, and there were three attack officers - lieutenants - in there and I saluted, and still kind of had my arm behind me, and I said, "Sir, they told me when we came here that the only way we'd get out of here was graduating or having an emergency at home." And I said, "My wife just had a baby, and I haven't been home in over 11 months. [chuckles] I want an emergency furlough." And he didn't know what to say. About that time I saw I'd gone as far as I'd better. I took the box of cigars and I said, "Well, sir, it's not an emergency, but have a cigar. It was a baby boy!" And from then on, I think, my life got a little easier in there, because they figured that anybody that would go down . .

And after I graduated I was sent to equipment school for about 3 weeks, at Richmond, Virginia. And then I got to come out and see my son.

RM: When was your second son born?

HR: Richard was about 3 months old when we moved to Downey, so it had to be in 1950.

RM: Could you discuss some of the hardships that you faced when your first came into the valley, and how those hardships changed over time.

HR: Well, I don't know that hardships actually changed too much, but when you came here, to the ordinary man, to be a little polite, you were a damn fool to come out here. There was nothing - no precedent set. You had the winds and the raw desert and . . . But when I got to looking at what Pacific Coast Borax had done with their old things, and where they'd started to put in windbreaks on the T&T - these little old plots of land that they had done - I thought that would be the way. We started planting trees and as I say, asking a million questions. . . Anybody who would stop that we could talk to, about what to do.

CHAPTER SIX

RM: We were talking about what kinds of hardships and struggles you faced here taming a pretty wild land.

HR: Well, it was taming it, and not knowing what to do. I still contend that nations are built on the shoulders of other men, but there weren't other men here to tell us what to do. We'd got over to Pahrump and none of them knew what to plant in here. Even though they are that close, their conditions are different; the soil is different. I started by going to Professor Decker at Germaine Seeds and trying to get his involvement in it. He became very interested and helped, and we happened to plant Ramona wheat, which he suggested as a hard wheat, and it turned out good, and we shipped it. Then we tried Sudan grasses in here - we tried melons - and different hays. And they did beautifully. But there was just no market for that at that time. There is today; there's a big market for it. We wanted to get into higher-priced things, so we grew 15 acres of cantaloupes and 15 acres of watermelon one year. And we had watermelon. My niece said that the coyotes would eat it, but they really didn't - it wasn't that bad. They'd eat a few, but in that big a patch you didn't even notice it.

But then we went in and Vegas was a very small place compared to today, and the man at the grocery stores in there would say, "Well, we can't hardly buy that from you, Hank. You'll have to sell them in L.A. and then they'd come back to us and they'd order through that. Produce is pretty well tied up." He said, "If I bought those melons direct from you, out in the Amargosa Valley, along about February when I needed tomatoes and things, they'd tell me, 'Go see Hank Records at the Amargosa for it. He said, "It is pretty well tied up." So we'd have people buy truckloads and take them in to Las Vegas and sell them on the corners [chuckles], and people would pay 10 cents, 25 cents for a watermelon in those days, but that was it. The market whipped us there. We have tried different ways of getting things in here. I planted peanuts one year - about 4 acres. They Just did marvelously. We planted sugar beets.

RM: What happened on the peanuts?

HR: The peanuts just did beautifully, but there again, you have to have your market, and we weren't in that size. So I went in and got contracts. I remember we had a contract from an onion outfit in Gilroy, California for 200 acres of onions. They'd come over and tested the soil. Well, to get your onion seed and your labor (it's a lot of labor getting those all in and everything) it took quite a lot of money. I went in to Mr. Manetti at the First National Bank and talked to him, and he said, "Well, we'll have our farm man come down and check everything." When I went back in, the farm man was here, and he was strictly a cattle and sheep man. He wasn't a farmer - there were very few big farms in Nevada. Mr. Manetti said, "Well, he just kind of turned it down, Hank. The amount of money you'd have to came up with for seed," and everything, until . . . But here I had a contract. But no one had ever grown onions here, so you had nothing to go back on.

There's a man in this valley right now who has probably 40,000 catfish. He can't get a nickel's worth of backing. And they're growing beautifully. He cannot get backing, because the FHA says, "Well, they've never been raised there before. We don't know. Blah, blah . . . There's

no history." But, how do you ever get a history if you don't do it? Anyway, I'll never forget - you could hear me in the bank that morning, I was so mad. I said, "You know, Mr. Manetti, the man you sent down there could count sheep or cows and knows them forwards and backwards." I said, "e probably counts their legs and divides by 4, that's how good a cowman and sheep man he is," but he didn't know a damn thing about farming. And I never could get the money for that.

People don't realize here it costs you about $600 - $700 an acre to put potatoes in. By the time you plant 20-22 sacks per acre of seed potatoes . . . The year I raised potatoes here, they were $20 a sack. There's $400 or better in just seed. And I bought the planters and everything, and. . . Then, there again, is your market. The year that we made pretty good potatoes here I only put in about 3 acres. And they were good - people came and picked them. I didn't side dress them, I didn't treat them like potatoes should have been treated, but they still made a beautiful potato. Good potato: solid, and nice, and . . . I went into town and started looking around, and the outfit in there that makes all the salads for the Strip hotels said, "If it was some times in the year, if it's a good potato year and cheap as we say, you know, good for us," he said, "there's plenty of potatoes. But let there be kind of a shortage, and that, and we have a hard time getting potatoes. I will give you 160-acre contract for potatoes." He wouldn't put a price on them of $5 a sack, $10 a sack or $15. He would go by market. Well, I wasn't big enough to gamble that amount of roomy without knowing the set figure that I was going to at least break even or make a dollar a sack.

I have some potato people I'm talking to now, but in this valley, we're going to have to eventually grow, because we have had alfalfa in here for years, and it just about makes you a living. You can't accumulate, and then if you have a bad year and it rains at the wrong time, when your hay's down, and different things, you can lose money in here. So you're back to the bank borrowing the next year, to start over. I hate to say it, but there hasn't been a successful farmer in this valley. And there have been some pretty good-sized people.

RM: What do you mean by successful?

HR: I mean people who have started farming 5 big circles, or 2 or 3 sections, that didn't finally go under some way. From just the weight of debt and interest.

RM: And the reason is the market?

HR: It is the market, right here. If I went down to the Los Angeles market, and went to a purveyor - or a middleman - whatever you want to call him, for consignment sale, and I said I had 160 acres, he would buy my coffee and thank me for coming down, but that's it. He's not interested in something that little. If you went down and said that you had 2 sections of potatoes, then he would take them on consignment right now and do all of your selling for you. And that lets you out of the market. All you have to do is raise 'em, truck 'em and . . . We have plenty of labor in this valley. We have quite a lot of good Mexican people in here who are working at the mines - their families would help on anything like that, fruit, or potatoes, or melons.

But then, when you're talking about something like that, you're talking quite a high price per acre of planting and side dressing and then digging and sacking and everything before you ever have a dime coming in. And your banks, and FHA, just will not, because they say it's never been done in there. The Norton Company went into Pahrump over there, and put in all that lettuce. Never been done in Pahrump, but here's the Norton Company out of Phoenix that had the money to do it. They raised some of the finest lettuce that's ever been seen in this country. [But] these people wouldn't sign a long-term contract with Norton. They used the old cotton gin over there and they had their own cooling plants and everything in there, but none of the landowners would sign a long-term contract before Cal-Vada, and the price of the land . . .

Pahrump is really growing. They didn't want to tie themselves up for a number of years, when somebody [might] came along and offer them $1500 -$2000 an acre. I know Ted Blosser's sold. He's still farming what hasn't gone into subdivision yet, but when it comes he'll do away with the alfalfa and subdivide. This valley is not ripe for subdivision yet, because people and growth have not reached it. It is coming, slowly but surely. I would say that, oh, probably 40 percent of the population in here now are retired people. There are people from Las Vegas who have bought some land from me who just couldn't wait to get out here. We have a very nice senior citizens' thing now.

It's hard for women to come out in this environment - and you have your wind (and of course you have your wonderful weather here, too) - and they don't know what hardships are, with the electricity that you have now and everything.

We don't like the atom bomb, necessarily, in our back yard, but it's been here since 1950. It's the most contaminated spot in the world, and yet [chuckles] we live with it - someone has to live with it. So we're pioneering the A-bomb. And if the Test Site, if they quit testing, and if they get some of our other things in here . . . If our governor would only get behind some of these things, and do some trading, and get some of these nice high-tech things coming in here . . . If we could get some of those things in here . . . Basically, farming is a good thing if you're in the higher range of farming.

RM: What do you mean, "the higher range?"

HR: The higher-priced crops like potatoes, and onions, and things like that. The edibles.

RM: What are the lower range?

HR: Alfalfa. Alfalfa's raised all over the United States, in every state. And we're competing with growers down in the Phoenix area. We're still trucking 100 miles to Las Vegas, 300 miles to Harbor. They have about the same distance to different place, so a lot of times they can buy hay in Phoenix, Arizona cheaper than they can buy it from me. Or, for me to make some money. And not only that, they have a longer growing season. They make more tons per acre. Their water costs are a lot higher, but . . . I don't know why it doesn't stem out. It seems like everyone who has come in here has spent a lot of money on their systems and everything, and then a bad year will come up in hay.

RM: What makes a bad year, Hank?

HR: When it rains after you've cut it. But - kind of on the side ¬Reverend Bob Fox is a farmer up here and he's our Reverend in the local church, and he was cutting, and the weather reports didn't look the best in the world, so I came back down and cut. Sure enough, we got a rain. So I went up and saw Bob, and I said, "You know, Bob, you being a Reverend and everything, I thought you had a kind of little 'in' up above there, and I was kind of watching. When you cut, I cut my hay."

He just looked at me and said, "Hank, you know, that's the trouble. Too many of you heathens all cut at the same time!" [laughter]

RM: When did cubing come in?

HR: They've been cubing in here probably 5 or 6 years now. Cubing has been the best way to go. It cleans up your field, you have a ready market for it (up until this year; they will not sign a contract this year). The buyers claim that shipping was going up, so they really bought last year, they shipped over 400,000 tons to Japan last year - that's not counting any of the others - and then the freight people decided not to raise the price, and so here they have really an overstock of cubes in Japan, and they also ship to Hawaii.

RM: What do they do with the cubes?

HR: Feed them to cattle, and they made a bunch of shrimp farms right in the offshore waters of Japan, and they're feeding the shrimp some of the alfalfa. And the market right now is $90, and then you have $20 truck, so that leaves $70. At this time last year it was $130, and $20 left us $110. By our first cutting we always - for years - have got $110 to $120 for our cubes out at the ranch. Bale hay, now, is up, but then, everyone doesn't have any, now. Naturally, everyone - along this time of the year - needs hay. There's a lot to storing hay, too because you have all your money wrapped up in all your hay, and it has to be covered and really taken care of, or your rains ruin some. If you do have baled hay, and you are baling, then you have to have cattle. Because you are going to have some waste, you're going to have #2 hay that will not bring you the right price, so you put it through cattle. That's the way I've always done; I've always had cattle. This is the first time that I've been in the valley that I haven't had cattle for at least my ranch. Two years ago when I sold all my cattle because I frankly didn't have the feed . . . And then when my lease was turned back, now I'm without cattle. But I'm still going to bale, and probably get cattle to farm off to it.

RM: And you're going to try and grow potatoes and peaches . . .

HR: I'm trying to get the potato people in here. As of right now I have 1000 trees coming tomorrow morning, and they want to put in about 15,000 to 20,000 here. This year they're just trying to show e. It's a new peach, and they're trying to get me to go with it. They have marketing all ready for their peaches - the Sprague Peach Company. If my peaches make good, I can sell then right here, in Las Vegas or here. But if you get into it big, then you truck right to Los Angeles and they're shipped, or they can be shipped directly out of Las Vegas to wherever

the consignee wants it, because they're a big outfit, and the Moore Brothers, in Los Angeles, handle all those peaches. They call it the Last Chance peach over in the Antelope Valley, because things got so high-priced there in deep water that they went out of . . . They used to make a lot of alfalfa and there's no way you can grow alfalfa in that high-priced water.

RM: Is it high priced because it's so deep?

HR: It's so deep, yes. The electricity and the electric rates . .

RM: Your water's still cheap here?

HR: Very cheap. I don't know of any place that is cheaper water in the west. All of your Arizona water is very deep and very high priced. Your San Joaquin water - the federal's taken over a lot of those rivers and things, and those wells are being depleted, and they're pumping deeper and deeper, and the canals in there are not handling all they're farming.

RM: Is the water here good quality?

HR: We have quite a lot of sodium in our water here, but it's probably the easiest thing there is in water to treat, because all it takes is some gypsum. We put gyp on our land here. You have your big gyp deposit over at Blue Diamond. There's probably a million ton of waste gyp out there that's come off the board you can get very reasonably. It's already ground and when you treat your land, like for a year, you'll put probably 700 ¬1000 pounds to an acre. It will take 3 years to use it up, so you do it about every 3 years.

RM: What else do you put on your land?

HR: When we first started here, 16-20-0 fertilizer. We put about 200 pounds to the acre on that. Then you need a good phosphate application

about every 2 years. I have raised a lot of alfalfa in here, though, where for 4 years I didn't put a thing on it - any type of fertilizer or gypsum - but I did put water down 4 and 5 foot deep. I raised as good alfalfa as I've ever raised with all of the other. Alfalfa makes nitrogen. It's probably one of the best rotating crops there is, because you can take out alfalfa and plant anything behind that because you have your nitrogen. We have all the facilities here, now. The only thing that's coming up now is our water.

RM: What kinds of problems does the wind present?

HR: We can get as high as 45 to 50 mile an hour winds in here. If you have land torn up, and not wet down . . . I can't get it in some of the farmers' heads here that if they tear up a piece of land and get it ready for planting, they should have their systems set up where they can water it immediately and get that settled down. We'll have a wind here for 2 and 3 days some times. Even if you have it wet down it'll start moving on the top, and banking up, and if you have

anything to the north of it, if it's a south wind, it covers it, and blows out a lot of your seed. If you have anything to the south of it and you get a north wind . . . We get north and south winds.

RM: Is there any seasonal . . .

HR: Generally, we have real nice falls, and you can plant your fall crops in August and have everything in by September 10th. And you put a cover crop in. If you're planting alfalfa, you'll put a cover crop in of oats or barley or some other type. That way, it comes up fast and protects that little tiny 2 and 3 leaf alfalfa. Generally, your alfalfa will be into the 3rd and 4th leaf by the time your freeze comes. If it's in 2nd leaf it can be frozen if it's a bad freeze.

Now, in the spring any farmer starts getting the itch in February, and it gets worse in March. You need the money, so you think, 'If I can get planted, I can take it off in July, and I'll get . . So you rush out, and start planting in March, and that's probably the worse thing you can do. March might come in like a lamb as it did this year, so it gives you a false sense of security. And yet here in the last few days, we've had as high as 35 and 40 mile per hour winds so you are kind of taking a chance. Now if you wait 'till after March - go into April and even May, and plant, that's before your high heat, and it's still a good growing season; you get your stuff up.

It's not greed, the reason we plant at those time, it's just the farmer in you. You can't see that land sit out there and the weather as beautiful as it's been with all of our trees in bloom. You just go out there and start planting, and then you kind of cuss yourself when it blows you out. Farmers are funny individualists, and to get them all together and sit down in a room and try to come to some . . . Everyone has his own ideas, and I don't think there's any class of people in the world that's harder to get together and organize than a farmer. One of my sergeants in the army is a corn and soy bean farmer in Wapokoneta, Ohio. And he said, "You know, Hank, corn can be down to the point of breaking us this year, and 4 farmers can meet at 4 corners where they all come together, and they'll all stand there in line and they'll all say that they're not going to plant corn this year. They all go home, and they say, 'Wonder if they meant that,' so this guy says, 'Well, corn will be up, so those 3 don't plant, so I'm going to plant corn . . .'" [laughter] He said, "Everyone thinks the same thing, and next year they all plant corn and it's a drag on the market." [chuckles]

I know when we got electricity in here, Nevada Power already had a spite line in here that they brought in from Mercury. And it looked beautiful having those lines. I didn't even have a loan yet. There was one man over here, Joe Wymer, a well driller who lived over on the highway, and the Nevada Power line went practically over his house. And Babe was wanting to sign up in Nevada Power. She said, "Joe, it's power, no matter where it comes from."

And Joe said, "No, by God, I promised Hank that we're signing up with him."

But there were other people that didn't feel that way. And they'd bring those lines into the valley here, and pick up 2 or 3 ranches of different people who figured we'd never get our loan - they wouldn't hold out - and they would sign up with Nevada Power, which we did finally beat.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: What about other aspects of the climate? For instance, it's pretty hot here in the summer but it freezes in the winter.

HR: The general weather years ago in here was tough. We had whole deals to keep our milk and stuff before we put in butane refrigerators. You'd have water seeping over sacks and the old-type coolers. But if you got in the shade, without humidity (we only have as high as 3 percent humidity as a rule) then you were kind of cool. But you can't work the fields and be in the shade. So it is trying, especially for women and children. It is a harsh land, and any woman who will come out here and fight with it is a true pioneer. But since we've had electricity, we do have air conditioning and you can stay in out of it. Most of your equipment now has air conditioning on it. Probably the best job on the farm is running the swather with air conditioning, until you have to get out and change the sickle in 115 degree heat. We have beautiful springs here. As a general rule all of our trees come out in February; it's just beautiful. Then, though, we're looking at possibly a killing frost in March. I would say one out of 4 years we probably lose our fruit in here. Not all - there would be a little bit saved - but I'm talking about if you were doing it as a harvest.

That was something I brought up to the tree people, and they claim that if we can keep the air moving . . . I know at the T&T when we had the pistachios and things like that in, we watched it and your freeze will generally come about 1:30 to 2:00 in the morning. I turn my pumps on and run the water because there's enough heat in the water - that water comes out about 74 degrees - to keep things from freezing. California's had it for years - their smudge pots and things. If it does ever go to orchards and things like that, you are going to have to put in some type of fans or sprinkling system or something to do that with. I'm putting these new trees under sprinklers so that I will have my sprinklers . .

Eventually, when you get up to water them after the 3rd year, you will pit in a drip system but leave your sprinkling system in there in case of a freeze. Then you can save them. That's why it's expensive. You see, the old farmers in the San Joaquin Valley have made money - a lot of money - over the years. Their sons can step into that farm without buying it. Ib buy land now, you have big corporate setups that buy land as a tax write-off. The ordinary man buying a farm today has to pay [if] it's not handed down in the family, so you just don't get people coming out in this area where it's not proven. There is no history [here] outside of alfalfa. For instance, the man trying the fish now. The first thing the Farm Home Loan said to him was, "Well, it's never been done before." There's no gamble money in any kind of lending institution.

RM: Has he got a market for his fish?

HR: Oh, yes. Already signed and sealed. I think he'll start shipping his first fish about November. When that's gone I'm going over and do some fishing. [laughter]

We've tried so many things here but, as I tried to show you, we ran into the market problem. We've run into the planting/wind problem . . Then, there's the initial cost of clearing and leveling your land. We have this greasewood - bitterbrush - creosote bush. By the time you take it up after it gets dry, it's just like a metal, almost. If you try to plow it under you have so

much tire trouble and everything that you have to clear your land unless you really disc it 'way under deep, and there's hardly any way of getting that. Even though I cleaned all my land and burned it, I still find a lot of real hard wood at different times as I work the land. What you have to do is clear it off first - all the brush - and put it in a type of wind row.

RM: How did you originally clear it?

HR: We took a leveler, and pulled the brush up. In fact, Mr. Cook one time had a road grader, and he took his road grader and knocked the brush off about 120 acres for me and wind-rowed it.

Now people coming in here with grapes and pistachios, and different things that people have talked about, claim they wouldn't clear the land. They would just clear a strip down through it where they were going to plant their grapes. In other words, say, a blade wide. Get that all cleared good, leave the desert intact. Because if you notice, the land is rocky, but you have that little rock that comes up and that's the protection of your topsoil. Once you break that, you don't know if there are any rocks in it, and so you do have a terrible dusting and drifting problem. Whatever catches it is like snow catching it. Only, sand doesn't melt. [chuckles] So they're talking now of putting in just the rows, like here, of trees, and leave this desert. When your trees are up, they became a windbreak. Then they could go ahead and clear that out and put in other crops if they wanted to in between the tree rows.

They put this new peach, Last Chance, on 14 to 16 foot spacings, on rows. The trees themselves are 5 feet apart, which is unheard of. I thought they were crazy. But it looks like a big hedge when it's finished. Once you do that you would have an automatic windbreak.

I have always tried to plant windbreak trees, around the property, but it gets . . . The only nice part about it, you can take cuttings off your Balm of Gileads, here, which is a cottonwood cross, and your old athel tree. But you give up a lot of your farm when you plant your athel, and we didn't know this when we came in here. It's such a nice tree. The athel tree is those big evergreens out there and . . . Now this big tree right here - the big, big one - is a Balm of Gilead. We brought those into the valley in 1959 from nurseries down in California. But we have taken cuttings and given them to everyone since, and we have that tree in probably 5 different states. Athel is one of the finest woods there is. Cut them down and they'll just keep coming back. But it takes quite a few years to get them up big.

The trouble in this valley, I guess, is that you don't have the time or the money for something that you have to wait 3 or 4 years on. You'll think, 'Well, I'm going to put in some alfalfa to carry me.' And then you're stuck in alfalfa, because you spend such a big chunk of money on equipment. And equipment is about 18 percent interest, on up, and the equipment companies are glad to sell you equipment. So many people are prone to go and buy big equipment to get this cleared and leveled and planted. Then the equipment's sitting out there. Then their crop has to make enough money to pay the interest on that big high-priced equipment. I tried to get farmers together here and show them that if some of us would go together on clearing and putting in, we could hire the big equipment for one week, 2 weeks, 3 weeks . . . get all of our work done, and it would be actually cheaper than the down payment on that equipment. Then we send it back. We don't have it sitting under the trees, and paying interest on it. But again, as I say, it's hard to get farmers together.

There are a lot of drawbacks here; there's no question. And it's still pioneering to a point. Now, when Fairfield Oil came in here, until Free died, he was drilling new wells, putting in pivots, and he put in a big nursery and planted the pistachios. They're bearing now, and doing real well, and they never were really taken care of the way they should've been, and butted with stalk. But it took money. Here was Free Fairfield throwing a million or two in and it wouldn't . . . As I told you before, when my brother and I came in here we had $35,000, we thought we were rich.

RM: What do you suppose was the thinking of people who wanted to pioneer in here?

HR: Well, I guess it's the pioneering in you, as we'd done in mining for many years. My dad . . . I was born on a homestead in New Mexico . . . There's a little bit of greed in all of us, and you're looking at land that you know you can make into something nice, and you can buy it for $1.25 an acre from the government. You feel that eventually you're going to make that land worth first $200, then $500, and then $1000, and today good land that's in will bring $1250 an acre. You come in with that thought in mind, I guess. You know you're going to pioneer. You're getting some cheap land, and you're taking money that would've been a down payment on a ranch somewhere, and you're getting full title to your land and you really don't know how to figure it when you come in, so . . . [chuckle] If we'd've had $105,000 instead of $35,000 that would've been more like it, if you follow me, because . . . there was no way of getting any financial support here. Number One, you didn't own the land. Till you actually did all of the work and developed all of the water, this had to be a cash outlay.

There has only been one FHA (Farm Hare Administration) loan in this valley in all the years, and I got it. I got that loan - $19,000 - in about '57, '58, and I still believe that if it hadn't been for the rapport that I had with Joel Hudson, who became a very good friend of mine, I don't think I could've ever got a loan through. I took one man and brought him out and sold him and showed him and he had enough faith in us to grant us a loan. Which was paid back. But these younger people coming in to Farm Home Administration now in Las Vegas will lend you some money to build a house anywhere, as long as it's out on a farm. But they still don't look at how you are going to pay for that house. I don't know how you could even go in and get money to buy a new pump from Farm Home Administration today. And it has been a bad thing in here.

For instance, Mankinen tried to raise chickens in here, but the heat got him. Chickens in a certain amount of heat just drop over. I know Ed just gave up, and was going to get out of the valley, and I put him and his son to work for awhile.

Well, if anyone came in here in those days, you'd shackle him and hold him. [laughter] I remember I would have men who wanted to come up here in the worst way (from Downey, California or wherever) and I'd talk to them and I'd sell them a bill of goods on how good it was, and they'd come up here and . . . A good example is Johnny Manse, the race driver. Johnny's been dead a few years - he lost an arm in the '50s - but he was quite a race drive in his time on the 500, and in the Mexico Baja race, and . . . He came in here and bought land, got some very cheap from somebody who wanted to get out. But we'd bring them in here, come up from L.A. and a trip to Las Vegas in those days was a big thing. And I'll never forget - I wish I had a picture of it - standing up on the corner of my property, [a woman who] had a little fur jacket with high

heeled shoes, saying, "Honey, let's go on into Las Vegas and we'll talk about this later." Well, that was the end of it because they never talked about it later. She just said no. [laughter]

And I remember my own experience. When I got the papers on my land in Reno we rushed back - my wife was with them - and, boy, I drove and drove and I got into Beatty and I wouldn't even stop to eat (my wife Jean will tell you now I hardly stop to eat either). I rushed into the old Andre's store in Beatty and got some bologna or lunch eat and some bread and something to drink and came on down. We came in the old T&T road. We were right next to the MT, so we could go right to our property but not up to the corner. I turned on this other little trail up to the corner of our property, where we joined on to the T&T Ranch, and it was starting to sprinkle a little bit. And my wife was dressed as . . . we'd been out somewhere up in Reno and that . . . I got out and it wasn't dark enough to really have lights, but I turned the car lights on and I said, "Honey, look at that. Isn't that beautiful! Just look at that. Look at that land!" er remark was, "Honey, you sure you know the way out of here?" [laughter]

There was no beauty in the eye of the beholden in that case but me. Out there in front of that, sprinkling, and saying "Isn't that beautiful!" I could just see trees and crops and cattle and . . . My eyes have gotten me in a lot of trouble over the years [laughter] But anyway, my wife did go along with it, and I thank her many times for not just . . . I realize, too that it was no place for a family, because there was no school. You'd have to drive through these old rutty dirt roads up to Lathrop Wells every day to catch a bus to go to Beatty. It was no place for a family until you could build it up.

I used to try to get people to sit down and do something with schools, but there weren't enough people for a school. It just takes time and advancement to get these things in. But, as I say, my eyes have gotten me in a lot of trouble, because I thought it was just beautiful country. I still do. My wife today, I think, would disagree with me, but at least we have trees, and an orchard, [laughter] and electricity, and air conditioning and it's pretty easy to go to Las Vegas now. We can go right out here on blacktop and go all the way to Las Vegas. [laughter]

RM: So basically in the early days a person just couldn't have a family life here.

HR: Yes. And it was bad. Then the Stricklands came in - they were young men. And Selbach. And they worked on the T&T for a while with me because they were developing up on some Desert Entry they'd got through their uncle and their dad. So they had to come in and prove up on it, which is drilling the wells, and that. But they were all . . . Well, Earl Selbach, for instance, had a television store in Lamont, over in California, so he had something to come in behind him to keep going. Then, when they got proved up on, they found that farming wouldn't pay completely, the way they'd had to go into it and use their money. So they went to work up on the Test Site. And now they're retired from the Test Site. Other people who have come into the valley were already working at the Test Site. But they came in and bought out some discouraged Desert Entry man who had proven up and just couldn't make it, but he did have the deed to the property, so they would buy some of the property. Maybe not all of it - they didn't come in per se as farmers. For instance, Okie Spears doesn't want to be a big farmer - he likes to have his cutting horses and the country type of life. He grows beautiful grapes and things like that over there. Okie buys all of his hay. He doesn't go out and try to farm it. But he's retired from the Test Site and loves it. There's Herb Schultz - Colonel Schultz - who came out

here. I got him interested by meeting him at the Test Site when I was working to get power into the Test Site. Colonel Schultz came down and looked at it, and he bought some land.

RM: So a lot of people who have come into the valley have not come in as farmers, as you originally did.

HR: This is right. No they didn't.

RM: Were there many that did come in to farm?

HR: Mankinens did for quite a while, and then they finally . . . He's the one who tried the chickens and everything. Finally he sold out. Of the original farmers in here, I just can't think of any original men outside of myself. Places have changed hands, you know. It's like the Oasis Ranch up here. That was a Desert Entry and homestead. Gordon Betties sold it to Helen Orr Watson, who was an author. She had the money to put some good people in there, and she had it for a long time, then she sold it. And Johnny Mills bought it, or was leasing at one time. There have been probably 7 different operators on the Oasis Ranch.

RM: Is that pretty typical of a Desert Entry property?

HR: Yes, it is. There's no question. That's how hard it was to get started in here. And as each man comes in, he builds a little more before he sells or goes broke, or whatever. He still has a little more in, so someone else can come in, like a damn fool like myself, and he can see: 'a little more . . . I'll do this.' Victor Milligan, who is very high up at the Test Site, a nice man . . . He and my attorney got a bunch together one time. One man and his brother farmed over in the Cuyama Valley and they just knew this would go, and there were 2 doctors who went into it. They came in and put in 5 beautiful new circle systems. They started cubing, and they were just doing great and then I guess the partners got into arguments, and . . . A partnership's probably a harder thing to keep together than a farm - or just as hard. I've yet to see a partnership . . . my attorney Pete Flangas and I have had a partnership for many, many years. I just said, "You take so much of this, and I'll take so much. You do the law work, and I'll do the farming."

One day, I said, "Pete, you've got to do this, that and the other." And this was talking about law, now.

He just leaned back in his chair, and he said, "You know, I'll take care of the damn law end of this thing. You just take care of the farming."

So I said "Touche, that's sure right." So I shut up. About a year or so ago Pete was telling me about something, about I'd do this, and do that, do this, that, and I just sat back and said, "Pete, I'll do the god-damned farming. You do the law work." [chuckles] Our partnership has lasted that way.

CHAPTER EIGHT

HR: We were talking about costs, and partnerships. Steve Wall of Wall & Sons of Bakersfield, California found his in-laws and other good friends of his that were in the law business. They bought Desert Entry in here from the original Desert Entry men in, probably, '59, and they still have it. As of this time, some people from Hawaii have bought 480 acres from the Palmers and Haycock, which was in the Wall group. They're going to put in, initially, 70 acres of turf, and the balance in alfalfa. And then they'll go on in turf. They'll have the land with the alfalfa in it and they can kill it out and go on with their turf, and rotate. Because you still have to rotate land, even with turf. And it's a very expensive thing to start. You have to have timers, you have to have a certain kind of seed and a certain kind of seeder, it has to be planted just like - it's just like wool when it comes up.

And there are your wild horses. They've held off trying to get these wild horses out of here. I go to BLM and try to get them out, because you can imagine what they would do on a turf farm, even when it was just barely coming up - and walk across it - just ruin it. Fencing is so high-priced. Even then, the honest men in BLM will tell you that if it's the only place to eat, a 6-foot chain-link fence will not keep the wild horses out. They'll eventually paw it down and get in. I know we have lost corner posts up here - 4-inch steel corner posts in cement. It was mares in heat, in this field, and 3 stallions fighting. They broke the fence in, came in, and bred registered saddle bred. Beautiful colt, but no blood lines. [laughter] Plus, the people that had the pure-breds here could've sued you, practically.

RM: Why doesn't somebody just shoot the horses?

HR: There's a federal law. Number One, though, it's not the horses' fault. I've been a horse-lover all my life. Oh, I call the head of the state BLM and swear I'm going to start shooting them tomorrow, and he knows I won't, because I've been threatening to do that for so many years. [laughter] The last U.S. News and World Report [reports] that Hodel, the head of the Interior Department, has one terrible problem, and he inherited it. He doesn't know what to do with those thousands and thousands of wild horses. And they are going to have to go to slaughter. They are going to have to go . . .

RM: When you drive up through Stone Cabin and Reveille Valley, there are more horse than cattle.

HR: There was a court order 2 weeks ago where they had to get 1400 head out of there in Reveille Valley and Stone Cabin right now - Fallini finally won his suit.

There are 77,000 head of wild horses in the state of Nevada. People just do not realize that. You know, they paint us as . . . I am one man to thousands of other type people. I'm a farmer out here. I'm not saying it's not great to sit in your front room, and look at your television, and see those wild mustangs.

RM: It is a beautiful picture.

HR: Years ago until the bills were passed, the ranchers in this country, like the Pete Petersons, would round these horses up, ship the stallions that were getting back to interbreeding and the old horses that were going to starve to death. They kept a nice herd of 20 or 25 horses. There was not a rancher in the state of Nevada that did not have his herd of wild horses.

But he contained them and they weren't a problem. Today, after the federal government got into it and passed that Wild Burro and Horse Act, it's survival of the fittest. The federal government can talk all they want to . . . I hated to hear it, but last night my attorney called me and told. me, "Get on Station 8 real quick." I got on Station 8 and it was very big news - someone had killed a bunch of wild horses up in central Nevada They said it was very good marksmen, because they'd shot them all in the chest or the neck. There's quite a furor over it, and I can see why.

I don't think that's the answer, but I guess what I'm trying to get at is that any urbanite, if they were encroached on their home in town, would do the same thing. If something was breaking down their fence and tearing up their yard, and tearing up their house, and things like that every day, they would do something about it. It would become an armed camp. And I believe that the individualists in Nevada - which is a tremendous state for individualists - I believe that it's going to come down to this, and I hate to see it. The wild horses should be shipped in an orderly fashion. Some good should be done with them. Take that money and keep your herds up - the smaller herds. That money would be an income, instead of a tremendous detriment on the taxpayer of the United States. These horses are costing millions and millions of dollars every year and doing no one any good.

It's a terrible law. It's a law against a certain segment of society in the United States, especially Nevada, Idaho Wyoming, Arizona, New Mexico Colorado. I remember, as a kid, the Navajos. They would get so many wild horses that they didn't have land for their sheep, so they'd have these tremendous wild horse roundups. And it didn't kill off all the wild horses. There have always been wild horses, but you've got to control anything. Sometimes, I think we ought to control people. [chuckles] But with the individualists that you have here in Nevada, you're going to find some more shootings, some more killings, some more of this. Then you're going to have a big massive man hunt and pull the FBI in on it because it's federal, and you're going to have . . Well, they killed those burros over around Blue Diamond, and, as I say, it's not the poor horses' fault. It puts a strain on me, for instance, to kill a horse because I love horses. I've had a horse all my life. But at the same time it's getting down to the point where I cannot afford the wild horse and me. If I go broke tomorrow, there's no alfalfa here for them to eat anyway. So it's better not to have the horses.

RM: Well, it's ridiculous for this valley to be filled with horses.

HR: Yes, it is. I think the federal courts now are starting to get in and look at it, and they're going to have to do something. Wild Horse Annie did one terrific job going back there and leading this . . . You know, that the ranchers were exterminating all of these wild horses and everything, which was a lie. Tex Gates [for] years and years and years trapped burros down in Death Valley, and sent them all over the United States. And never, never did away with a burro. Now they're having to catch them by helicopter, there are so many. People can't realize what it amounts to. If you did away with all the sheep and the cattle in the western states and let the

wild horses roam - where would they roam, anyway, because all the ranchers would be broke. And eventually they will ruin the range. I wonder what happens to the do-gooders if, instead of having 77,000 wild horses in Nevada, we had 577,000 horses. They would even be going into Vegas and Reno. Then what would the do-gooders do? That's what I'm getting at. What are they eventually going to do with the wild horse? [tape is off for awhile]

RM: You mentioned that you're basically the only one who started out here in the beginning who's lasted. What was it that made you last?

HR: I don't know. I guess it is the giving up. Like, Lou Dansby is still here and Cook is still here. But Lou Dansby doesn't farm - he used to farm a little bit, but he always worked at the Test Site, and all the others did. Cook, for instance, is not a farmer - has never farmed a thing. He's drilled wells and everything. He just loves to live here, so he has his land, and he's sold some land off. . . There are other people who are still here, so when I say that they got out, what I'm talking about are the big farmers who came in - the Fairfields and so forth.

Now, I went broke on the T&T in '64. Through, frankly, no fault of my own. I was declared in court to be a partner of a man who owed Free Fairfield of Fairfield Oil $200,000. We had not formed our corporation yet. I think, frankly, that I would still be going on the T&T if I hadn't lost it through bankruptcy. And even then I made them give a deed - I didn't really take bankruptcy, it was a sheriff's sale on equipment and stuff like that. I told then I wouldn't declare bankruptcy and tie them up if they would give a deed to Gordon Bettles for that 40 acres. And they did. And I've always felt good about that, because Gordon was a good friend of mine.

RM: Did you still have your original Desert Entry?

HR: No. We had taken and put it in to our partnership - all but . . . Rob [Records] sold his Desert Entry eventually. I had some of it proven up, but . . . No you'll see in there my wife and I signed into this partnership, and the corporation was formed 12th of December, but this pipe or something came up missing, and all the court things (I had nothing to do with it) in Long Beach came up. But all of this was supposed to have happened back in June and July. And we were a partnership. Dalton Pipe. Ralph Dalton came in with e. In fact, he was on the original board of directors on the coop and I got him some Desert Entry up here. He bought 640 of - paper, you know - and was proving up on it.

RM: When did you acquire this place, here?

HR: Well, I had the feed store in town after I took bankruptcy. I did some engineering around, and then I went in to town. I always owned this 40 acres up here - I bought it years ago - and my brother was out here. He was doing work for a guy up at the T&T. The [rumor] was going around the country then, that boy, it was really going to boom out here, and why? Well, Hughes had bought the T&T. Howard Hughes, at that time, was buying up all of Nevada, you know.

RM: Yes, right.

HR: Chuck Hughes and I had become very good friends over the years. And so I laugh at this story on him. He said that he had a bunch of land, but I guess a bunch of money was coming due down south, pretty high-priced land, and . . . Now, after Fairfield died, the man I still think broke us was in charge of the probate. So he had all this land he wanted . . . they had a bunch of land next to Charles Hughes' land, so they found out, and they said, "Well, we've got a ranch up in the Amargosa Valley." We traded, and had never seen the ranch.

So he said, "The worst thing I ever heard: When I came out the first time, (I came down after I made the trade)," he said, "I rented a car, and I come out, and I come out, and I kept going, kept going," and he said, "I got to Lathrop Wells and I decided I'd better fill up with gas, because I didn't know what . . . " (he had his directions from Lathrop Wells). He got out and was stretching, and he asked the guy who was putting the gas in, "What's going on? Anything going on new in the country here?" He said, "He looked all around, like it was a big secret, and said, 'Yeah,' he said, 'things are really going to boom here. Hughes bought the T&T.'" [laughter] He said, "I was the Hughes!" [laughter] "And," he said, "If that's the only thing that's going on in the country, you know . . ." [laughter]

So anyway, Dr. DeLee wanted a place, and Senator Hernstead, who had just sold a big bunch of property back east and come out, and he'd bought TV Station 5 in there. I went to see this Dr. DeLee and he was interested. I said, "Well, I'll find out who owns it." Rob finally got Chuck's address from a guy who was working for him on the T. And he just had a gravy train up there. Chuck was pouring money into it, and not getting too much out of it, I guess. . . . Anyway, I got his address finally, and I called him, and he came down, and we made a deal. And I told Doc I'd do the whole thing and everything, and I'd take 25 percent interest in it, and I'd run it, you know. So we finally made a deal with Hughes, and paid him his down payment, and I came back out here, then, in '70. And . . . So I was gone off . . . out of the valley for about 5 years.

RM: And you came back in '70, then.

HR: Yes. I still had my other little parcels of land around. I wasn't farming, but . .

RM: Where was your feed store located?

HR: Right off of Pecos, on Clifford, in that area where Lake Mead and Pecos . . . I had a big quonset but and a big A-frame home - a beautiful place. It's all gone, now. Somebody bought it for condominiums. I go by there, and all the trees I had and everything, and look at that . . . You kind of wonder if you aren't dreaming, sometimes.

RM: So you got back into farming here in '70.

HR: Yes. The friend I'm telling you about from the FHA, Joel Hudson, gave me my loan. He liked it so well out here, and he was retiring from Farm Home Administration, that he bought a place that a friend of mine, Paul Mann, bought from the original homesteader - Glessner - and he worked down in Death Valley. He was a carpenter. They did their living on it and everything and proved up. He bought it from Glessner and there again was a family that wouldn't move out

here, so he had it for sale. Joel Hudson asked me if there was any land up here that I knew that he could get, so I sent him to Paul, brought them together, and Joel Hudson bought it from Paul Mann in Downey. And Smotrich owned some of the other up here . . . Anyway, Joel put that all together. Joel and his daughter and the granddaughter and everything moved out and Joel wasn't farming - he just kind of wanted a place to mess around. He had all this property right above me, here, too - about 300 acres. And he put in a bunch of potatoes, I remember, and they were very good, because I was up at the other place and I used to pick them up. Joel finally had this for sale. He and his wife wanted to move back down to Texas where his daughter and grandson and all of them were. He got pretty sick, here, and so that's how I bought the place from him in '74.

RM: And you mentioned you took a fling at the Lounge up there?

HR: Yes, I bought the Mecca Club and leased it with an option to buy in 1968, so I had it in '68 and '69.

RM: You had that while you had the feed store?

HR: Yes. I still had this land down here, and I wanted to do something with it, and I wanted to farm, and do both of them. Well, this note here was made out on . . . amount of loans . . . it was in '76. But I bought it before that. But this is Smotrich, who held the original paper on it. I bought it from Joel in '74.

RM: The Desert Entry's closed here, isn't it.

HR: Yes. It's closed here.

RM: Can people still go get land?

HR: I think there's some in Alaska still.

They hint around every once in a while that they're going to open up some more land in here, which they did 4 years ago and then turned down on account of water. The federal and state evidently didn't get together on that. The federal opened up some, because I know my sons filed, and my daughter filed, and we still have that in abeyance. We have not taken the check back from the federal government yet. And we just had letters here the other day, did they want to still pursue it? If we get the legislation passed and the water is allowed in here, they will probably get those Desert Entries.

RM: What kind of social life was there when you first came in?

HR: Harry Pepping owned the bar and little restaurant at Lathrop Wells. And Mrs. Parita owned the other side of the street. And then Bill Martin came in and bought Parita out, and put the house [brothel] in there. And I frankly cannot say whether she had a house there or not. I know you were saying I was a young man and everything, why-wouldn't I know, but it wasn't my

habitat. Anyway, Bill Martin really put in a big house then - the Shamrock. Then Harry and his partner Bob - I can't think of his last name- moved across the street - on government land - and built where the post office is and where the bar is today. They never had a permit, never had anything. They just built it all. That's the way it was, then. [chuckles] Finally, the federal government came down and I guess they raised heck with them. They fined them $2000 and gave them a deed to it. [laughter]

And then there was Ash Meadows. That had a nice lodge. They had a little airfield, and everything. Anaconda Copper owns that now.

RM: Are the buildings still there?

HR: Some of them. But it's owned by Anaconda.

RM: That's not part of the Ash Meadows Ranch, then?

HR: No.

RM: Is it occupied?

HR: I think they have a certain kind of mineral that's like an asbestos. It's fireproof, and everything, and it's an insulator. They have a big deposit of that down in there and they're thinking of mining it. I think IMV's even done a little milling for them on it. But right now minerals and things are just not . . . I think eventually they'll get at it.

Also you went to Beatty, and Beatty had a big store. That was all that was here - Lathrop Wells, and Beatty. We went to Beatty a lot. I used to know everybody in Beatty. Or a bunch would come over to your house and you'd sit around, and play cards, and things like that, and . .

CHAPTER NINE

HR: I think your last question was about what we did when we socialized. We went to bars, and then when Joe Swink bought the Spring Meadows Ranch - it was called the Ash Meadows Ranch in those days - he brought in a lot of people, did a lot of work, and they had cattle and horses over there. At that time we started having a few little Fourth of July get-togethers and horse races. And in the late '60s my cousin gave them land up here for a community building. That was a lot of work - getting people together and putting the community building up - it's still here. We started having dances once in a while - the Fourth of July - and horse races. Senator Laxalt came down in this country in those days to any of these type of events. And that was about it.

Then families started moving in and you started having more dances and we finally got our school in about '69. That was just for the first 3 or 4 grades. Now they're up through the 8th grade. The kids going to high school still go to Beatty. If they took all of the high school kids out of Beatty, now, who live here, they actually couldn't operate the Beatty school.

We have the big multi-purpose building now, and the library and the sheriff's station and we have a medical service - all built in that complex. I know in dedicating that I tried to show the kids: We'll always remember the day that it was dedicated, because the valley is going to move forward. There are a lot of social events now. We have some of the clubs, like the Good Sam clubs and things like that not in here now.

[a pause in the tape]

April 29, 1987.

RM: Hank, I'd like to talk about bringing power into the Amargosa Valley. But before we do that, could you talk about what it was like here without any power, and how you made do?

HR: Well, we came in, and we tried different kinds of motors. We tried car motors and butane motors to run our pumps, and you had to have gear heads on your pumps. And you always had one going to be fixed and one coming, it seemed like, because you ran 24 hours a day. It was so much different than today that it's hard to explain to people. You had kerosene lamps. If you were lucky, you had butane lamps in your house. You had no water pressure because it's hard to put pressure up with an irrigation pump out of a ditch. Generally we built tanks up high and it'd give you around 12 pounds of pressure in the house, after you filled those tanks up. And then we went to big GC diesels. And as you put in more acreage you had to have bigger pumps.

Finally it just got to the point where everyone was trying to get power in here. I went in to Nevada Power Company and asked them if there was any way we could get power in this valley.

RM: About when was that, Hank?

HR: We tried to get them to come in about 1956, and Mr. Bowman of Pahrump had tried to get them to came in. They told me that when we were ready for power, why, they'd get to us. And I

remember, on our ranch alone, it would cost - if everyone in the whole valley and everyone in Pahrump who used power would sign up - it would cost our ranch $69,000 to put power in.

RM: Wow. That's from Nevada Power.

HR: Yes.

RM: They're located in Vegas?

HR: Yes. They built a line into Mercury, Nevada a little after the testing started, and the federal government actually paid for that line. However they want to put it, they charged double for the power until the power line was paid for. We tried to have them came out at the Test Site - we tried every way in the world of doing that, and they just wouldn't.

In the meantime, Pahrump Valley had formed what they called Pahrump Utility. Mr. Bowman was head of that, and Walt Williams from the Pahrump Ranch, Tim Hafen, Ted Blosser, and Bob Ruud were their board of directors. And I talked to them. And then there was someone who started a co-op up in Sarcobatus Flats and was trying to do something, because White Mountain Power Co-op had formed a co-op and got a loan from the government and were getting their power from Pacific Gas & Electric or one of the northern Nevada electric systems, and they were paying a pretty heavy price for it. They really couldn't make it, with that price on it all the tie. Nothing was happening, and I just got some men together in the valley here one night, and said, "Let's get our own organization going. And let's try to do something about it."

No one had any power. We had bought the T&T Ranch from Pacific Coast Borax Company, and they'd had no power in Death Valley. Scotty's Castle in Death Valley. Furnace Creek Inn. Furnace Creek Ranch. Tecopa. Shoshone. Death Valley Junction. Ash Meadows. Pahrump. No one. There was no power in this country as late as 1960, even. We formed a co-op in the valley - Amargosa Valley Electric Co-op. I went in to see an attorney about getting a corporation made. It was my attorney, and he knew we didn't have a lot, so he just gave me a corporate setup that we could copy - a nonprofit corporation. I had it all typed up, and Ralph Dalton of Dalton Pipe Supply out of Long Beach had some land up here, and Ed Mankinen. Gene Esterbrook had come in from Wyoming; he had some land here. [They] And my brother and I were the first directors on the Amargosa Valley Co-op. I got it typed up and went to Carson City with it, and Mr. Swackhammer who was the Secretary of State, looked it all over, and he said, "You know, it'd sure look a lot better if you had some attorney sign" - you know - "letterhead."

So we went down the street, and the first attorney we saw was upstairs In Carson City there; I don't remember his name. We went up and asked his secretary to read it over and see if it was all right, and to ask how much they'd charge to re-type the front page and put his name on it. [chuckles] She came out and said, "Fifteen dollars."

I said, "Oh, good." So they typed it and I took it back down to Swackhammer and he laughed about it, and said, well, it did look a lot better that way, and that's the way the co-op started.

RM: Now what did that give your organization a right to do?

HR: Well, like any corporation, I guess. I knew we'd try to get a rural electric loan - I'd read up on it a little bit. And rural electrification: I remember when it came into New Mexico when I was just a kid - they loaned the money, and it came into Folsom, New Mexico. Anyone who'd read about the Pedernales - that President Johnson, even, when he was a young man . . . the power companies would never come into any place that didn't have big power usage. And I know President Johnson helped get it into the Pedernales.

I just thought, 'Well, I'll give it a try.' I found out who to see [chuckles] and then I saw Senator Bible about it, and . .

RM: Here in the state?

HR: Here in Nevada. And he said, and I'll never forget his words: Dr. Scott was there (who had land down here; and Scotty and I served together over in the Pacific). Bible said, "Well, Hank, isn't that just a promotion down here in that valley? Can you guys raise anything?" [chuckles] Scotty spoke up and said, "Well, why don't you come down and take a look sometime? I'll show you what we're raising down there."

But I finally went back to Washington and no one seemed to be too interested in this little old co-op, so I went back and saw Walt Baring. I think Walter Baring was one of the pioneers - top men - in the state of Nevada.

To back up a little bit: when we originally put in Desert Entry here, they held it up and held it up and I went back to Washington. I was just an old farmer boy and I'd never . . . I'd been to Washington before because I'd gone to officer school at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. So I went into Washington, and I went and saw my congressman, who was, at that time, from California. And I knew how to get around and find the White House, anyway. [laughter] So I went back after they hadn't allowed our land here for about a year here and saw Senator McCarran - another great statesman. May I say at this time: I've been a life-long Republican, but those Democrats are the greatest men. [laughter] I hate to admit it, but the Democrats are pretty good. I went back and saw Senator McCarran on opening the valley up and he made a few calls, and as people know, in the state of Nevada he was a very, very powerful figure. Within 2 or 3 weeks the valley opened up on Desert Entry. That's how it started. They should've had it opened up before that, but they'd held us up over a year. At this time, then, Senator McCarran wasn't there - Senator Bible and Senator Cannon.

I went to Walt Paring and I had all the maps and this and that and the other, and I'll never forget Walt saying: "Well, don't confuse me with all that stuff. Just tell me what to do. Just be darn sure that you can back up everything that you bring up." And he knew it wasn't a scam. REA actually got interested at that point and I went and saw the National Rural Electric Co-op Association - every co-op is a member of that.

There are, today, a little over a thousand electric co-ops in the United States. In fact, maybe I'm wrong at this date, but I think they're about 80 percent co-op in the state of Nebraska. The farmers are the ones who started it. If you read the history of REA, it's a great, great thing. It started under the Roosevelt administration. And it is a great thing, because all of rural America was without power. And here you're calling on people and I think President Roosevelt figured that would be a good way of putting people to work and doing things like that. And you've had people - presidents - against it and for it and this and that, and . . .

But anyway, we got a pretty nice reception back there, and now came the part that I knew eventually would: you had to have engineers and you had to have [chuckles] your loans put in, and you had to have all kinds of work done by attorneys, and I didn't really have the money to do it [chuckles] out here struggling.

Governor List, at that time, was a young attorney just out of law school, and there was an ex-judge from Washoe County who we got kind of out front for the name. Figured [chuckles] maybe we could scare somebody. But Governor List did a lot of our work, and then Jim Adams, an attorney out of Lancaster, California, - a very good friend of mine - took us on. I said, "Well, I'll guarantee your bills and I'll pay for just out of pocket costs at this time." And an engineering concern out of New Mexico came up. And Phil Parker, who became our first general manager, was with them. He kind of helped me, and finally . . .

RM: He helped with the engineering?

HR: Their company did the engineering on this thing. I remember one day when we were going into town Phil said, "Hank, we've worked on this so hard, and so long. And," he said, "we're getting no place. I think the company's getting tired of sending me out here from Albuquerque." In the meantime I had met Mr. Johnson up at the Test Site through Bernard Menke, who was number two man in the AEC. And yes, they would like to have an alternate source of power. And our biggest block was: we did not have feasibility, as they called it. That's what these things were - feasibility studies, to see if we had enough to warrant a co-op.

We were going to town and Phil said, "I just think, Hank, you might as well give up. I don't think you're ever going to be able to whip them." So as we came to the Mercury cutoff, I just pulled in, went into

Mercury, and I saw Mr. Johnson again. He was kind of the head of the power end of it up there, and I explained everything to him, and he called in another man and he said: "I want you to spend all the time that Hank needs on this thing and get an alternate source of power in here." He said, "We need it. There's certain outages and . . . " (which any power company has). Phil felt a lot better, that AEC was going to get behind us. So I went back to Washington, and in the atomic building I went and saw Captain Bowser - he was the liaison officer between Atomic Energy and the Congress. I went and saw him, and, like an old country boy, just told him what we needed, and he said, "Well, my golly," he didn't see why not. So that started in Congress back there. Next he sent some people out here from Sandia, New Mexico to look it over for AEC.

They spent about 3 or 4 days with Nevada Power, and probably were wined and dined a little bit, and had a meeting with us, and they just couldn't quite see . .

[tape is stopped for a while]

HR: Where was I?

RM: The AEC had just come out from Sandia.

HR: And so anyway, they had a meeting with us, and it was Mr. Bowman and Williams from the Pahrump Ranch, and myself at the meeting. I was kind of forewarned by the head of REA that if we'd all get together out here instead of having so darn many co-ops, we might have more power to do these things with. So we put 2 of the Pahrump Utility - Mr. Bowman and Williams - on our board. And my brother and Ralph Dalton resigned from our board.

RM: Did you have any from Sandy or Fish Lake?

HR: No not at that time. And the Sarcobatus never really went anywhere -there were just a few people up there, and we didn't take any of them in. But this was the board, then, that met in there.

We met up in a motel room and the attorney with them said, "Well, will you just . . . " You know, "We can't see that you're a viable . . . Until you get your loan, don't talk to us," and this kind of stuff.

And I said, "Well . . ." As I say, I could see their point in a way, but they weren't committing themselves to anything. But I couldn't get in their head that all I wanted them to do was to give us a contract to bring some of their power. The federal government is number one in federal power, and all we wanted to do was take their power from Hoover Dam and put it on our lines and charge them so much. This would give us feasibility, then, for the power line.

That morning, the man who was head of National Rural Electric Co-ops had sent me some stuff airmail. It was out at the airport, and we went out and got it that morning. He said in there: "Hank, let us know what we can do, and we're with you." It was quite a . . . And then he sent along some copies of other things.

I made my little spiel and speech, and this man said, "Well, you're kind of prejudiced in a lot of ways."

I said, "I'm damned prejudiced and, Gentlemen, here." And I just passed out these things from National Rural Electric Co-ops Association. said, "And I'll find out [if] you folks want our power up there. I know the Test Site wants it."

I got a little hostile, I guess. I know when they left, Mr. Bowman said, "Well, Hank, you went a little too far, telling them off like that." I told them I was going to get power in there despite them. Mr. Bowman said, "Well[chuckles] you get that contract and I'll buy-you the best Stetson hat in Las Vegas." [laughter]

I called Captain Bowser then, in Washington, and evidently somebody was told this and that and the other, and they said to come on back, and I had a meeting with AEC in Washington on getting their contract to put a line in.

And I remember, you couldn't do any work with the federal government without an attorney; that's just law. I didn't have one, so I talked to Norman Clapp, who was head of REA then, in Washington. In the meantime, I had met Ken Holum - the Undersecretary of Interior. And he was an old South Dakota farmboy. Owned a newspaper, went on up, and now he's Undersecretary of Interior. He knew how to kind of talk to an old farmer, I guess. He and Norman Clapp said, "Well, borrow an attorney. We have different ones here in the Agriculture Department, the Interior Department. You can borrow one." So I'd go down to the pool and borrow an attorney to sit in on these meetings.

I was just getting nowhere at this one meeting, about the second day, and I called Captain Bowser up (he was the liaison officer) and said, "Say, why don't you call me at the atomic building at that meeting." And then I said, "I won't say anything to get you in trouble, but just listen."

And he said, "all right." He kind of laughed. So in this meeting they'd type up something, bring it in, and everybody'd go over it and fight us a little on it. Finally the phone rang, and it was Captain Bowser. The man at the head of the table said, "It's for you."

I went back to the back of the room and I'd say, "Oh, yes, Captain Bowser. Oh, yes, this," and I'd explain something I wanted to get over, like he went along with it, and "Yes, sir. We're sure going to get that for you . . ." They were all listening pretty close, and I went back to the table. And he just laughed - he never had said much on the other end. I went back, and I finally just folded up my books. I knew this: you either make the move or not, and get out of there. I couldn't live in Washington [laughs]. I said, "Gentlemen, I guarantee you one thing. Our co-op will be an electric co-op. You give us a contract for your power. I guarantee you, we won't take it up there on a barbed-wire fence. It'll be on regular power poles, [laughs] just like any other company."

There was silence for about a half minute, and the man at end of the table said, "Gentlemen, is there any argument over that?" So finally we worked out a contract for the AEC power. They more or less said if we built our line, they would take power from us. We weren't selling them power, now; we were just bringing them federal power.

RM: And before that, Nevada Power was selling to them?

HR: Yes - Nevada Power still has their line in up there. We're interconnected now.

RM: But Nevada Power was selling them their power rather than just delivering it, like you were.

HR: That's right. They were selling them power. That's the only way they put it in.

RM: Is that the way it still works there?

HR: I really don't know.

RM: Does the AEC take power on your line?

HR: Oh, yes. And there's a trade-off there, too. If their line goes down they use all of ours, and if our line were to go down we could - we're all hooked in now.

I went back to Albuquerque, finally, and saw the head people of the National Rural Electric Co-op Association (NRECA) at their convention. I got [their next convention] called out of Dallas then, into the convention center in Las Vegas. That was when Johnson was Vice President. All co-ops belong to the NRECA. I said, "God, we need sate help so bad out there." And so they brought it out. At that time it was the largest convention that Las Vegas had hosted - in the Convention Center - 10,000 showed up. There are some very, very big co-ops. One big,

four motored plane came in there. They were from Michigan and Wisconsin and Nebraska. All your co-ops were there. And so I made my passioned plea at that convention - I got up and addressed the whole convention. We were down front there, and Ken Holum, Undersecretary of Interior, and Ellison Ross, and all of them were up on the stage. They had microphones around, and all of the co-op directors were right in the front row.

CHAPTER TEN

HR: We were all in the front row there, and there was a microphone, and I thought, 'Well, this is the time. I want to do it.' I didn't know how to get things on their agenda, so I got up and I gave a little story of the co-op and I said, "Gentlemen, I think that during this meeting of the national, I would like to see something put in and passed. We are a co-op now, but we have $45,000 worth of attorneys' fees that I've guaranteed, and I can't pay them, really. I'll see to it I will, over the years. But I think from now on if the co-ops could all put a dollar a month per customer for a while, and build up a fund to help small co-ops to get started, and to fight all these things." And I made quite an impassioned plea.

And there was some fellow way up in the balcony who got up and got over to a microphone and he said, (and now this was a southern drawl that I laugh - it brought down the house) he said: "Mah name is so-and-so and I" (God, I wish I knew to this day what his name was.) He said: "Ah'm from so-and-so co-op down in Gawgia." And he said, "I know exactly what you're going through. We did the same thing. Amagosa, how can we hep ya?" [laughter] And he just brought down the house.

Right after that they said they'd see if they could put it on the agenda and they called a half-hour recess. And Ken Holum came down off the stage and he said, "Well, my God, you're going to get your bill paid after all, aren't you?" We laughed about it, but they did. They took up enough collection to pay off all of our attorney bills.

We used to be in court in California against Edison Company one day, and then Nevada Power would have us in Tonopah the next day.

RM: Why did Edison have you in court?

HR: When we formed our co-op, we took in Tecopa, and Shoshone, and Furnace Creek to give them power. This is - a co-op's a co-op. If people could only realize that, and that the co-op was started to help people, not . . . I had a meeting with Pacific Coast Borax and they wanted power down there. They had a big old lugger diesel. And the Revert brothers in Beatty had diesel. There was no such thing as diesel down here. In fact, I looked over the old big diesel plant at Death Valley Junction, one time, thinking maybe we could move it in here [chuckles] to get their power going. Tecopa and Shoshone were real tickled about it, but Edison Company, then, said no, that that was their territory. So I called a few . . . Mr. Brown from Shoshone was a senator over in California, and he wanted it. So anyway, that's where the fight started: the Edison Company claimed that was their territory.

RM: But they weren't serving.

HR: They were serving no one. Baker was the nearest power. Pacific Coast Borax and Furnace Creek Ranch had signed up with us, and all the other townspeople down in the 2 different towns said they would sign up. So like I say, they were fighting in court, and then Nevada Power would have us up here that we were infringing on this and that. It was just that kind of thing - to keep you in court.

When we got our loan, Nevada Power went to building a spite line. They started coming out of the Mercury area over on this side with their line, and they had it made up with Edison Company where they hooked up - and it's still hooked up. Now we, a little co-op like the Amargosa Valley (now Valley Electric Co-op) serve the great Edison Company power. Because they built a line from the state line and went down to Furnace Creek Inn - the ranch - and their line went on down to Tecopa, and Shoshone, and then that part of the country. Otherwise, they'd have had to bring a line clear from Baker. RM: Oh, you deliver power to Edison now at the state line.

HR: Yes. After we bought out Nevada Power's spite lines.

RM: Let's talk about the spite line. First of all, just for the tape, define what a spite line is.

HR: They tried to come in and break the co-op. They figured if they got power in here first, that they'd sign up people. And a few people did sign up with them. I remember [chuckles] a well driller in here - Joe Wymer. The lines went right by his place, out his front window. And his wife would say, "Joe, why don't we sign up with them? The co-op will probably never get started, and we would have power."

And Joe says, "No by God, we won't. We'll wait for our power."

And there were other people. I remember there was one ranch here that signed up, and they had to come through the T&T to get to him, and when they hit our land, I shouldn't say who but somebody started cutting down their poles with a chain saw. So they threatened me, and I told them I didn't know who did it. I was a reserve deputy sheriff then, under Sheriff Barra - just if something happened down here. And he came down and said, "Hank, my God, we've got to stop these power poles from being cut down."

I said, "I know, George." And at that time there was a thing over holding my door open that you put power on - the glass thing on top - the insulator.

He said, "Where did that come from?"

And I said, "Geez, I don't know." It was kind of broken. I said, "It was out alongside of the road, and I just picked it up for a doorstop."

So they backed off there and went around the other way. And they came in, and Dr. Scott had given me power of attorney so they couldn't go through him to this ranch. And Charlie Barr of Northrop Aircraft owned the land in the other way going in. He gave me power of attorney. Finally, they declared the easiest way was 3/4 of a mile on Dr. Scott's land, and they used condemnation to get into that ranch. They went through Dr. Scott.

So they tried to get court orders. We got our loan and really started building a line. As soon as our loan was allowed, they started building their spite line.

RM: Now, when did you get your loan?

HR: In '60 . . . I believe, the latter part of 1960. Another thing we ran into was, there was no more power at Hoover Dam. It was all allocated. And there was some open power in Parker-Davis complex. And Mr. A. B. West, who was head of Region 4 of Bureau of Land Management, helped me so much. Because Nevada Power was using a lot of power out of Hoover Dam under

contract through the Colorado River Commission. So that was another fight. And I said, "We can't build at Parker-Davis complex. Our loan will not let us." It's so darn far, and we had a fixed loan. So I found out that Phoenix, Arizona was getting a lot of power out of Parker-Davis, and also out of Hoover. They gave us our power allotment out of Parker-Davis. So I got ahold of the power company in Arizona, and said, "Could we trade you 10,000 kw (or whatever we had coming) from Parker-Davis?" They already had lines in up there to that, and also to Hoover. I said, "Could we trade you, and you give us 10,000 from Hoover?"

And they agreed to that. Then I got together with the loan people - the engineers and everything. And somewhere down the line we had messed up and didn't have enough money to put in our big transfer station to take the power out of Hoover Dam. So Mr. A. B. West - he was just a great man - said, "My God, you've fought this so far. I'll see if we don't have enough in our budget this year to build your transfer line down here." It - what do they call it - a substation.

That was quite a few thousands. He did, and that's the way we got started. Then we had to get rights-of-way - you can imagine. You know, from Hoover Dam, we came right through Henderson, we came up over Warner Pass, up here. We used helicopters . .

RM: Where's Warner Pass?

HR: Warner Pass is between Pahrump and Las Vegas. Pop Warner owned the place up there.

RM: Where the highway is.

HR: Yes. In fact, for years that highway wasn't even in. Mr. Baldwin hauled those people across. They used to have to come clear up over an old gravel road, up to 95, and in through Indian Springs into Las Vegas.

We went into Pahrump - they had their substation in first. Then we came on over - and you can see our line, naturally, from here to Pahrump. Different ones worked on it. My son, and Peter Knight, who became District Attorney in Nye County, and any kids I could get on there, worked on it.

RM: When was it into Pahrump?

HR: It had to be in the latter part of '62, because we turned on power here in the valley in 1963. Ed Mankinen built a hate and he put in electricity as he went.

We were wired up, because we had a little generator we used to keep going. During the summer we had one off the side of our big diesel, so it run 24 hours a day - with a belt. Otherwise, in the winter when we weren't pumping, we'd try to go to this little Kohler generator.

We had, at that time, given up California, because Edison Company was taking off of Nevada Power. And they had won out in court in California.

RM: How did you come out in court with Nevada Power?

HR: Oh, we won. As you'll read in there, we got one ruling against us at first, before Judge Peter Breen. And then on his re-ruling on it, we were allowed to go ahead. We had dotted all of our i's and crossed our t's - you know, had done it right.

RM: And then eventually you went on up to Fish Lake with it. Is that what happened?

HR: Well, the head man of REA out of Salt Lake City said that they were paying such an exorbitant price for power - "Would you, if we (REA) would loan you the money, go on into Fish Lake and into Beatty, Nevada, and Sarcobatus Flats?"

So we went and asked White Mountain, then, and they said, "God," they'd "love to join," because it'd be such cheaper power. And Sarcobatus was darn glad to see us come through. And the Revert brothers then sold their diesels out at Beatty to the co-op. We just bought them, and swapped them to the power company.

RM: And then just tied into Revert's wires?

HR: We finally, I think, put all of our own stuff in. Because some of that stuff was kind of old.

Then we went on out to Rhyolite, and the station out there. The woman who had the old railroad station open out there, and the bottle house, and everything, just couldn't believe they were - you know - getting power going out there. And then the big Lida livestock ranch all up in there got power.

Now - it's kind of ornery, but I thought, 'Well, they want it all - Edison Company had all that area. So I got people started hollering for power at Scotty's Castle. [chuckles] Which meant - Edison had finally built around to where they ranch, but they didn't go to Scotty's. And there was power into these ranches right across the line.

RM: You mean, across the Amargosa.

HR: Yes. Right across the Amargosa over on that side. They've torn that out nom, on account of taxes, I guess - no one's operating. So I got people to start hollering about getting per into Scotty's Castle. They were supposed to. Our line went pretty close. It was in Nevada, but not far to drop over to Scotty's. So Edison finally made a deal with us on putting power into Scotty's Castle.

RM: So now do you put it in, or do you sell it to Edison and they carry it out?

HR: No we put the line in. And we trade off power with all of them, new. We kind of get along. They'd like to gobble up our co-op. In fact, after I got the co-op started, I was given an offer of quite a little bit of money, if I could get a percentage of the people in our co-op to sell out to Edison Company. They'd like to have bought our co-op - they and Nevada Power. That's been quite a few years ago, and we get along with both of them now. But we're still just a little thorn in their side. [chuckles] They'd still probably like to get rid of us, but anyway . .

RM: Does your power still came from Hoover?

HR: Yes. And under this new allocation of power, we're going to get 17 percent more. They're enlarging Hoover.

RM: Is there a shortage of power now? Do you have a shortage?

HR: Really, no; not right now, since Nevada Power's built a couple of . . The big power plant up around Overton, and the different ones. In fact, we were even going in on a big co-op power plant up in northern Nevada that they were going to build. And we would've gone in on it but . .

RM: That's not at Ely . . .

HR: Yes, it's the one that they were going to . . . At one time the head of REA tried to get me to go and I knew I couldn't get . . . (I shouldn't say it, I guess, but) it was Governor Sawyer who signed where we could come through Nevada. Bonneville Power had such an excess of power that they could've come down where it was. Otherwise, they went into California. And that's where their power went. If we could've ever got that through, the Bonneville Power Administration would've come clear down through the state of Nevada and hooked into Hoover Parker-Davis power. It would've been a round robin: Is Angeles clear up through California, then to Bonneville. All the dams and everything. That would probably have been one of the greatest things that ever happened to the state of Nevada.

RM: Yes. And you tried to pull that off and couldn't make it stick?

HR: No you finally had to come back to the farm once in a while, and I finally . . . I guess everyone's selfish at heart. We got our power and we got Beatty power and got White Mountain Co-op power, and by this time you're tired of fighting. It's a never-ending battle. I don't care what you're doing, you're fighting something all the time. And if somebody doesn't do it, then it's not done.

RM: Yes. Is Sandy in your grid? Sandy Valley?

HR: Oh, yes.

RM: OK. So that's the fourth. Sandy, Pahrump, Amargosa and Beatty.

HR: Fish Lake. White Mountain Co-op was Fish Lake Valley.

Beatty has a director, Fish Lake has a director, Amargosa has a director, and Pahrump has a director. And we're thinking seriously, now, of adding one so we could break a tie, because there are tie votes once in a while - 2 and 2 - on certain things.

Walt Williams didn't like the name Amargosa Valley Co-op, so at the first meeting of the co-op in Pahrump, the old membership, they tried to get the name changed. I was against it, and I won, and Walt could've hit me in the head, I guess. They didn't like the name because Pahrump was new, and they were building, and they didn't want the same [laughs] [name] as

Amargosa Valley Co-op. So at the next yearly meeting after I resigned as president, they did get the name changed to Valley Electric Association, which now would take in all valleys. I at least got our name - Amargosa - for a year or two. [laughs] But it was the Amargosa Valley Electric Co-op that got the first one. It was the only co-op.

RM: Did you have any problems getting rights-of-way?

HR: No we went primarily on federal land. We missed Henderson, and we missed Las Vegas quite a ways. You go out - oh, golly, how far would it be out of Henderson? But anytime you see a great big double - you know, the big main power lines going through, like over Highway 1-15, that's our big power line.

RM: That big, huge line going out on the south end of Vegas?

HR: That's our power line.

RM: That's a big system.

HR: Yes, it is. It makes you feel good to think that some time in history you've done a little something, not that it means anything, and I imagine you could ask the [chuckles] young kids in this valley who weren't born yet where power comes from, they'll tell you the switch. [chuckles] I didn't do it for any glory or anything. And I think per has made our . . . Look what Cal-Vada's done. Pahrump would never have done what they've done without power. The Amargosa wouldn't. Beatty wouldn't. We're kind of proud to have served the Test Site.

Now they're building a brand new line 8 miles out to a big mine up out of Beatty. They just got a contract. The outfit put up $100,000 cash to start with. Mel was telling me the other day that it was really going to press them to get it in and take care of the rest of the mines. I suggested to him (I should talk to some of the directors) why don't they get some independent outfit to build that line; it won't cost anymore than having our co-op do it. Plus we'll have to buy some equipment, and I think in the long run it'd probably be cheaper to hire an independent company to do that.

RM: If you went across that BIM land today, you'd have to do impact statements and everything.

HR: Oh, God. The way things have changed! In those days it was such a great country. Darn it, a man's word was good, and a handshake was good. Today, you have to have things written up and it seems like there's a lawsuit on every page. It's too bad, because you used to go to a meeting and you'd come out of it, and you'd agreed on something, and it was done. Today, it's . . . the EPA and everyone and all the tests and everything you have to have made . . . I think it practically would be impossible to get that co-op in today. And it wouldn't be as big if it hadn't been for the power. If you'd go back to the same time and everything was the same, I'd say it'd be awful hard to get it in.

RM: Well, Hank, could you tell about how you got your loan? That seems like the key to the thing, really.

HR: Well, just the onset of everything. I remember they sent a man out from REA to count our wells here that would take [power] and how big. At that time we had 169 big irrigation wells in here. We went down one mile of road and I'd point out the wells to him. We'd go down one mile - clear through the valley, and then down a mile and back through with a jeep that we had, showing him the wells, staying on what road we could (but there weren't roads all over). After about the third mile he said, "My God, you have enough in here," and he gave us feasibility. And our engineering - as I say, everything was up to snuff.

RM: Meanwhile, you'd done this engineering on the cuff, hadn't you?

HR: Yes. [chuckling]

RM: How did you get an engineering firm to take it on the cuff?

HR: Well, they had done a lot of REA work down in California, New Mexico and . .

When we got our loan, we thought we'd pay off everything, and REA, only allowed $7500 for all their [work]. [chuckles] So we were in debt about $45,000.

RM: How did you get the loan? And who did you get it from?

HR: From REA. Norman Clapp, who was head of Rural Electric Co-op at that time was the administrator. We signed all of the loan papers in Albuquerque, New Mexico - I went back to the engineers there and signed the loan and everything. I wish today I could sign for that big a loan. [laughs] I think our original loan was 7 million.

RM: What was your interest rate?

HR: Two percent.

RM: What was the process by which they finally agreed to loan you the money?

HR: Well, it went before the REA board in Washington, I guess, and The were notified that . .

RM: I see. So you made a proposal to REA through your co-op and then they approved it?

HR: The engineers in Albuquerque, and they approved it, and I went back to Albuquerque and signed it then.

A little sidelight here: Denny Wright was the manager of First National Bank at 3rd Street downtown. I'd always go in and get an operating loan at the first of the year at the First National Bank; I'd traded with them for years. When we were in this fight, that year, our loan

was just about to be allowed and I went in to get my operating loan, and Denny Wright said, "Hank, I'm sorry. We can't let you have the loan this year."

I said, "What do you mean?"

He said, "Well, come on." The bank had just opened. "Come on, let's go have a cup of coffee."

Well, we walked across on Fremont Street and had a cup of coffee, and I said, "Just what's the matter, Denny?"

And he said, "Well, Hank, the First National Bank is the stock transfer agent for Nevada Power. And Nevada Power is a pretty good-sized customer. And Frank So-and-so's on the board of Nevada Power. And this and that.

I said, 'Well, in other words, it's that."

"Yeah, Hank," he said, "It just came from higher up."

And I'll never forget, when I was notified by wire that we had our loan, this was only about 3 weeks after they'd refused me. I went in the bank, and I said, "Denny, take a look at this."

"Oh, my God! Give me that," he said (because we were friends). Back in those days, you went in and Mr. Manetti was head of the bank, and you knew him, and a handshake, he signed your note, and you always paid them. There's no way in God's world you'd do that today. He took it, and lo and behold! they wrote out a note [chuckles] and gave me my operating loan that year.

The funny part was, I went down to Mr. Bradshaw at 15th and Charleston First National Bank, and put the loan money in there. And Denny said, "Hank, why in the hell? You always bank here at our bank. Here we've helped you and everything, and you go down to 15th and Charleston, to Bradshaw." [laughs]

I said, "Yeah, Denny, but you've got the general account, which'll be from now on. That's the construction account. It'll be gone."

It's First Interstate now. I imagine they still have the account.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HR: I was talking to Reno Feruza the other day (well, the other day - it was 3 or 4 months ago) and he remembered that [incident], and he says they still laugh about it, because we could've put it in any bank at that time. But that's the way that they got the account. Reno is retired now, and so has Denny Wright. Now they call Reno in as one of the top loan men in the Security First National Bank in Las Vegas. Reno and I laughed about it. I saw him in town in the store. And, gee, I didn't know where he was, and he wondered if I was still out here, so we got together, and it was kind of nice.

We finally got it through. I know, when I left Nevada Power one time, when they'd more or less laughed at me [about] getting power out here, I said, "Well, by God, I'd go back and I'd get REA in here or something."

They just said, "Good luck."

But now I guess we go and talk to Nevada Power. I remember when I was going to marry my wife, and we were going together, she had the Lamb Inn. Lamb and Sahara in town - a bar. Something happened to the power down there, and they had to move some line and get her OK and everything, and the man who come out about it, even then, said, "Oh, Hank Records. Damn right we [chuckles] know him."

RM: Is there anything else on the power, Hank, that you would want to say? Since it's really important for the whole southern part of Nye County.

HR: The whole southern part. Yes, I think it is. I frankly think that we wouldn't be near where we are today if it hadn't been for power. I'm not saying that someone wouldn't have come along later and put it in, but the pioneers at that time - Elmer Bowman, and Tim Hafen is one of the old standbys in Pahrump now. And Bob Ruud is dead. And some of the other directors are still there. Tim Hafen's still there. Blosser is still there. I don't know where Williams is now. And Mr. Bowman's dead. And Mr. Mankinen, one of our top men, who was on the first board here, is dead. Rob and I are still here. And Gene Esterbrook is still alive - he lives in Beatty - he's up in his 80s. I don't know where Ralph Dalton is. I know he finally lost his land in here on Desert Entry - never proved up on it. It was quite pioneering in here, and it still is to a certain point, because we have to fight our water and a few battles like that. But I don't think the state would be what it is today in the southern part. I know Walt Williams said one time, when he sold his Pahrump Ranch to Cal-Vada, "I could have never done it if it hadn't been for electricity being in there." We finally did take our chips off our shoulders over the argument about renaming the co-op [chuckles]. Walt and I are very good friends, now, and I don't know where Walt is - he probably went back to Texas. I know- he was going to buy a ranch up in Montana somewhere, and whether he did or not, I don't know. Of course, the Bo mans are still in the valley over there.

RM: One of the other big problems that you had to fight from the beginning in the valley was roads. Could you talk a little bit about roads?

HR: Well, naturally, there wasn't a road in the valley. There was one old trail - road, if you wanted to call it - into the old T&T Ranch. And then up along the railroad you could go up to the old town of Leeland, which was a railroad stop on the T&T.

RM: And there was just the highway from Lathrop Wells to Death Valley Junction? Was that it?

HR: Yes, that was it. That was a dirt road.

RM: Was it a dirt road clear to Baker?

HR: The first time I ever came over it, it was gravel. Then they started paving from Baker up, and then they got a little bit to Shoshone, and so on down. And it seemed like it was around '57, '58, when they put this road in - it used to be old Highway 129, which is 373, now. They finally paved that. California always, naturally, had a lot more money, and they built their roads. They were ahead of Nevada. And then when Tenneco and others went in to operate the borax mines down in Death Valley - The Billy Mine - they really put that road in. Clear up here to us, and then really did a lot of work on it on down in California, even. That's a pretty good road. The first time we ever came in here it wasn't too great.

Right now, there are people in the federal government who are making overtures to private enterprise to buy the dams that the Bureau owns, and the electric - Parker; Davis; Hoover; Bonneville - and all. And if you'll look in the last Rural Life you'll see what is trying to take place. I don't believe anyway in the world they can ever get that on. There's not a state: Texas is REA, New Mexico is lots of REA. Nevada - they're not so big, but we do have 3 co-ops in Nevada Utah is big co-op country. Idaho - up in there, you have the Bonneville administration. And if you go down south: Georgia, all that country, with the Tennessee Valley Authority, is all federal. I don't see how they could ever get it on. But don't never underestimate anyone. Because the railroads were taken over, as you know, and I'd say the railroads were darned near as big as co-ops. Whether it can be done or not, I don't know.

RM To return to the road thing - in this part of the valley, north of the Lathrop Wells - Death Valley Junction highway, there was just one old road into the T&T. What did you do when you were proving up?

HR: We started brushing out the roads on section lines, because during the summer they'd get so dusty and bad that you'd get stuck in the dust Actual dust. Then we finally got - who was commissioner then? I think Ralph Lisle was County Commissioner for our district. He finally would put a grader down here once in a while if we'd kind of take care of it. The guy would bring his pickup along - tow it behind the grader - and he'd go home that night. I don't know how many hundreds of dollars worth of welding and bolts and everything we put on that grader, and they started trying to grade some roads in here. And they put in what is the Amargosa Farm Road now. That went clear over to the Stewart Ranch and to Mankinens, and all down that way.

RM: And then on down and hooked into the Lathrop Wells Highway?

HR: Yes. That was the first one they graded. Then the co-op - on Poleline Road over here - that's their main power line coming in to the substation and everything. The county finally took that over, but it was originally built by the co-op, to get in and service everything.

And then - like on the T&T - we built all of our own roads. Cook of Cook Drilling Company had a grader and we'd hire him to do it, or we'd use our land-leveler behind a tractor and level off the brush. They never were graveled; they just eventually would wear down to that gravel.

RM: And you tended to follow section lines at first?

RM: Yes.

RM: When did Mecca go in?

HR: '70. There was a real bad dirt road down there. Bob Ruud was County Commissioner then, and I called Bob one night - I tried to come down into here - and the darned trailer was bouncing, and it was so bad and so rutty that I lost the trailer, and I was mad, and I called Bob, said: "Bob, damn it, you know how hard it is farming. I can't even get truckers to come in here and get what damn hay I do raise." They finally then put a grader in, and built the Mecca Road. And they'd pave a little bit of it, and then a little more, and then finally . . .

RM: When did they start paving these roads within the valley? Do you remember?

HR: Oh, quite a few years ago. I think they were allocated 2 miles a year one time, and then one mile a year - whatever money there was. It's all county roads. Actually in those days, you didn't even get permission from BLM to go across their land. And now, they finally just gave the rights-of way and all to the county.

RM: You mentioned that President Kennedy came in to dedicate Jackass Flats. Could you discuss that a little bit?

HR: There was a post office at Jackass Flats.

RM: Did you have to get to it through Mercury?

HR: At that time? Yes. If you'll notice, just this side of Mercury, towards Lathrop Wells, after you go past the Mercury cutoff, you'll see a road turn to your right just past the Mercury cutoff. That used to go back into Jackass Flats. Then when they put the big EMAD building and all that in there, they finally have put a road out from up in there that comes out down by Lathrop, but that's closed again now. They've put a gate in there, but that's closed.

When he came out, though, he dedicated that post office at Jackass Flats. And after the first mailing of letters, they break the thing - or it's never done again. I sent envelopes to a few of the senators and to Walt Baring, and people like that, to kind of thank them for the co-op.

And I sent my son one. And why I never sent myself one, I'll never know. And the logo on that first letter - Lon still has it. And I know Walt Baring thanked me for it because it's something to keep. [It had] the name itself - Jackass Flats - and then the logo on it was a prospector and a burro with a pack thing on it. And in the middle was Hoover Dam and out on the right side was a picture of the atomic bomb. All on the front of that. I mailed big letters, you know. Regular. And, gee, it was a beautiful logo that they put on that opening day. That was the first and last time it was ever used.

RM: How long was the post office there?

HR: It might still - I don't know whether it's still there or not.

RM: You couldn't go to that ceremony, could you? Because that was on the Test Site.

HR: I doubt if you could. They might've opened it for that one day, I don't know. I know I used to have to get passes to go up there when I was working on getting the line in there. I saw a lot of the Test Site. Leo Woodruff was head engineer up there then. We used to have to come back in and go through decontamination.

RM: There's a couple of your lines that run over to the Test Site as you're driving down 95.

HR: Yes. The big double line that goes in is our line. We have a substation for that. That's the Jackass Substation - our AC substation over here. The other line in that you come by right at Lathrop Wells, about - that was the spite line of Nevada Power, which is our line, now. We bought that.

RM: So you've got 2 lines going in to the Test Site.

HR: Yes. That big double that you see going in was our original line going in. It wasn't a barbed-wire fence. [laughs]

RM: Originally, was Nevada Power serious about coming in here? After you started the co-op? Or were they just trying to squash you?

HR: No. They were just trying to squash us. It was between them and Edison Company. I think they would've charged so much for us to get power to our ranches in here that it would've been prohibitive.

If they'd won, I guess we'd have had to go Nevada Power. They probably wouldn't have given me power. I had a man come out one time, and offer me ¬to kill the co-op - $25,000. I knew then that I was on the right track. Right at my table - at the ranch. He said they knew I'd spent a lot of money and time and effort, and they didn't want to see me . . . You see, the court order at the 5th Judicial Court at first was stopping us from building lines in here. And I had people come in and build anyway. Nevada Power started flying airplanes over here, and seeing us, and getting injunctions against us. And they'd go and hide. And then the sheriff would

always let me know when he was coming down, so I'd get them hid out in some ravine somewhere, off the [chuckles] - construction. It was quite an episode in life.

RM: When did you begin the search for power?

HR: Probably in '59 or '60. It took me about a year. It was about 8 trips to Washington. I guess it was about 2 years, so it was latter part of '61 when we got our loan. I remember that definitely it was '63 when we got our power. . . I think there are some dates in those articles that will put it right into the file. In those days, all you remembered was whether power was coming or not. You didn't put down the date.

RM: 'What are you most proud of when you think of the power? What stands out in your mind?

HR: Well, I don't know. I've never been one for big government; all of my life I've been for private enterprise. But when private enterprise will not serve I think what is their commitment . . . It has been proven in the United States that power companies would not - that's why your Tennessee Valley Authority and all your other things. And if you stop to think today Nellis Air Force Base, and places like that, might have not been made if it hadn't have been for power. And for the dams going in - Hoover Dam. It's the first time I ever went to the government. As I say, I believe in private business. But when they won't do their job, then it's time to go to the governments. Anymore, maybe, I think the government's sometimes a little too big, but still . . . I think that was the biggest achievement: just getting it in. It's too bad that you have to fight things like that.

RM: How, did you keep cool? What did you do before you had air conditioning?

HR: We kept our stuff out in the back at first there in an old thing. We put gunny sacks down over and water'd drip down and keep it cool.

RM: That was your original refrigerator.

HR: Yes. And then during the summer we put a regular old swamp cooler on, because when our diesels were running in the summer, they ran 24 hours a day, and we had that generator, as I was telling you, on the side. We couldn't use too much power, because we only had about a 3 or 4 kw plant. But that's the way we'd keep cool. And then plant trees like heck. [laughs] Start planting trees. I've been planting them ever since, as you see. [laughs] You can get in the shade here, and it's pretty cool - nice.

RM: Hank, you told a couple of really, really interesting stories. One of them was about a person in the valley who was hesitant to hook on to power. Then when he finally did, he wasn't using it.

HR: [laughs] I don't think he'd care about mentioning names, because I brought it up in a few meetings at different times.

RM: OK - good.

HR: Pete Peterson was one of the first men I met in this [area]. He lived in Ash Meadows and Pete been out here - he worked on Hoover Dam Then he was in Vegas for a while, and then came out here and started his cattle deal over in the [Ash] Meadows. And he had a running spring. It was - it just used to just make me want to bite my fingernails. I'd go over there, and he had this water running down through . . . he had water piped - enough to give him a little pressure - and it'd run all the time in his sink. And that used to just drive me crazy. me was wasting that water. Well, it went on out, went on down and went through his corrals - his cattle and everything could water off of that. He had butane lights, and water running through his house.

I went over to get Pete to sign up on the co-op. And Pete said, "My God, Hank, why do I want power? I've got everything I want here."

I said, "I know, Pete, but damn it, I need everybody I can get. And I want you to sign up."

And he said, "Weeell, I'll sign up."

I said, "I'll even pay the $10 for you."

"No." And he finally signed up.

So as time went on, they said, well, Pete wasn't using any power. The man from the co-op wondered if something was wrong.

And I said, "Well, I don't know. Go over and see him. And see what's happening."

So he went over and . . . as I tell it (I don't know exactly whether it was that exact way - but) Pete was milking. It was about sundown. And the man asked him how he liked his power, and he said, Oh, it was just fine. He just loved his power.

And he said, "Well, are you satisfied with it?"

And he said, "I sure am."

And the fellow - by now - is thinking, well, his meter's off. He's using power and not paying. So Pete finally - there were 2 buckets of milk and he banded him one - and they headed for the house. It was getting dark out and it was dark inside the house. He said Pete just got to the door and reached inside and turned on a switch and the power came on, and he went over and took the milk from him, and set it down on the sink, and went over and lit a kerosene lantern, and came back over, and turned the switch off. And he said, "Boy, you know I've never fell down and spilled any milk since I've had this power in here." [laughter]

And then the man knew why he wasn't using any power. He just used it to get his milk in the house. It would hardly turn over the meter.

When I used to tell that story on Pete, he went in and bought a flashlight battery charger and plugged it in. And he said, "You know, when I plugged that in, and filled it with batteries, Hank, I went out and that meter wasn't even turning." And, of course, that's line loss. A little bit of power like that wouldn't turn that meter. And he said, "By God, I get my flashlight battery charged for free. I'm kind of glad that you did get me to sign up for power."

Another kind of a cute story was when I was down at Furnace Creek with a meeting, and a man was here from Washington - REA. He was out here on the co-op - trying to get people. So I called down, and I got a meeting set up for down in Death Valley - at Furnace Creek Ranch. We were in there, and one of the men said, "My God," he said . . . [something] came up about how

big a user they'd be. Well, hell, all they had was a 75 kw generator down there. One of my wells took 100 kw. I have 100 horsepower motor on just one of my wells. There wasn't a one up there that I didn't have 100 horsepower on. So anyway, there was one guy kind of against signing up for the co-op. That was before we got knocked out of the box with Edison. And the REA man was here to see why we were having so much trouble and to try to help us out. So I finally got up, and said, "You know something? I use more damn power than you people dream of down here. If I strung lights all over the Amargosa Valley it'd look like a city with what power I use." You know, if you'd it up 100 watt or 40 watt light bulbs you could string them all over this valley with the per that I was using. And I just walked out of the meeting. I was just so tired of arguing with people, trying to get them . . .

And the guy said, "What do you mean, you'd use more power than us on that farm up there?" They were thinking probably back to the old T&T Ranch.

So anyway, the man from Washington (I can't remember his name - gee, he was a nice man) got up then and gave them quite a speech on how much power we did use up here, and so they finally signed up.

And that same night we went off the road at Death Valley Junction and went up that road to Ann Weller's at Ash Meadows. Ann had the Ash Meadows Lodge then, probably one of the biggest houses of ill-repute in the country at that time. They even had an airfield there. And Ann was a great lady. She was sitting at a table in the dining room as you went in to the bar and to the left was a table, and Ann was playing Sol. And I hollered at her and went over, and I introduced the man from Washington, and said, "Ann, you know something?" I think she had a 25 or 30 kw diesel generator over there. I said, "Ann, you have never signed up for the co-op yet, and while this gentleman's here I'd sure love to have you sign up."

She said, "Hank, I've signed up with Pahrump Utility. I've signed up with White Mountain. I've signed up with anybody that promised me electricity. So how much does it cost, and I might as well." She said, "I've always said that if you bet on every horse in the race you're bound to win. How much is it?"

And I said, "Ten dollars."

She went up, filled out the applications, went up to the bar and we had a drink, and when we were coming over to the ranch, this gentleman and I, he said, "Gy God, I see what you're going through." - getting people signed up and everything.

Because they thought - this was a bunch of them arguing: "We're not going to have power here. Why do this - why do that." But Ann bet on all the horses. And when we got power in, that was one of the first places we went - over to Ann. Weller's, in Ash Meadows.

RM: So you got people to sign up before you could get your loan, right? You had to show . . .

HR: Feasibility. And then we still didn't have enough signed up, because there were a lot of out-of-state owners of land in here then. I'd go all over and get them to sign up. And then we still - to get feasibility - the AEC contract gave us our feasibility. That's why I worked so hard on AEC, was to get that out there. It is quite a history, and I've met a lot of wonderful people. It was an accomplishment, I guess. To a point.

CHAPTER TWELVE

RM: Hank, you told me a couple of really interesting stories that we never got taped. One of them was your work for Senator Laxalt with the Basques.

HR: Oh, yes. Well, when a man like Paul Laxalt . . . God bless him, he just signed up to run for president; and I hope we have a Nevada president.

RM: That'd be something.

HR: That'd be absolutely wonderful. Well, I still think people here in the west kind of look at things a little differently.

Paul naturally, like everyone, would ride in a parade or come to the Pahrump Days or a barbeque or a horse race or whatever. When he first ran for office I believe it was for attorney general - he didn't just go in there and get governor. But anyway, I talked to Paul at a horse race up here one time. The Spring Meadows Ranch was running - they had horses over there and I pulled in a pretty good horse and had a guy ride it; just - kind of a rivalry. And Paul was down, and I don't know whether his kids will remember it or not, but I took them down to the ranch to see my horses and everything. I really liked Paul, and as I started around the state, I was in Elko. We went to a big Basque eating place there . . .

RM: Were you working for him?

HR: I wanted to see someone like Paul in.

RM: So you went out and started campaigning for him on your own?

HR: I'd run for county commissioner, and I kind of knew what politicians had to go through.

RM: You ran for county commissioner?

HR: In 1963. They kind of asked me to do that, and I didn't want to go out and say . . . I ran against Ralph Lisle in Beatty and, hell, Ralph is my friend. How are you going to go out and say Ralph Lisle's no good? I had certain ideas, and I figured I was an engineer, I was Captain in the Corps of Engineers, I thought I knew about road building and everything, and that I could offer something.

It was kind of like with Paul. People made a statement to me there in Elko that the Basque people weren't even going to vote for Paul. So at this Basque eating place in the hotel up there, I asked the owner or manager if I could talk to the people when they closed that night. And he asked me what about, and I said about Paul Laxalt

He said, "What do you want to talk about?"

And I said, "Well, I'd rather wait and talk to all your people, if I could." He wasn't for it at first, and I kept on. I said, "Well, you know, everybody ought to have a chance to talk a little bit."

So he finally OK'd the talk When the restaurant and bar closed, everyone came in. I gave my little spiel and then I was asking, "Any questions?" And there were different questions around, just mediocre things.

And finally the owner of the place said (he's getting tired of this keeping his help in there [chuckles]. It wasn't that long.) But he said, "I'll tell you. I'll tell you why we're not for Paul Laxalt."

I said, "Why?"

He said, "The Basque people in the State of Nevada have a real good name. We've always been the Basque people. We don't know about politics. But Paul Laxalt is a Basque, and the whole family." He said, "If he goes in to public office and does bad it will go against all of the Basque people in the State of Nevada."

And I said, "Yes, but what if Paul Laxalt went in and was the kind of man that I think Paul Laxalt would be. Then it's for all of you people - you Basque people - in the State of Nevada " And then we went on, really, for about another 20 or 30 minutes, and finally the people did say that they'd vote for Paul Laxalt. And I like that very well. Paul Laxalt has got 'way out of our little Amargosa sights and things like that, but I still think Paul Laxalt's a very, very top man.

And Governor List, I know, has done a lot of great work for us. I don't know, it used to just be such a different state altogether than it is now. In fact, one time I had the assistant attorney general of the state fight a case for me on something - it wasn't a personal thing. They could take cases on the outside years ago. I guess they can't, now, but . . . We've come quite a ways since those days, but I sure wish we had more politicians like we used to have. You could talk to them, and it wasn't - it seems like today it's who's backing you. If a man's backed by the big gaming establishments . .

God, when I came here there were 18,000 people in Las Vegas and you knew everyone downtown. I remember when they built the Desert Inn - they'd pour a little concrete, and there'd be some pipes sticking up out of it, and then they'd run out of money, and they'd start some more. And I remember when the Tropicana was built, you thought you had to go to L.A. to get to it. And I've seen a lot of those. I was here when the old El Rancho burned down. The El Cortez was the big hotel downtown, and the Plaza wasn't even thought of yet. There would just be one little spot of lights right downtown when I first came here as you go along the highway going into Vegas. And now you'll see lights for miles and miles and miles.

And there are a different type of people who vote now. They're from other states - lots of people from the east. The architecture in Las Vegas is a lot eastern now. People who I would definitely think, think differently than we do.

RM: How do you think they think differently, Hank?

HR: Well, just talking to my pharmacist down there: We trade at Von's in the pharmacy there. And I've asked the man - we've been trading with him for 3 years, ever since they opened that store. Since he's come out here, his folks have came out here, and some of their friends have come out here; through him there's about 10 or 15 people who've come to Las Vegas. I've asked him "Well, when you got out here, what did you think of Hoover Dam? Isn't that something to see?"

"I've never been to Hoover Dam."

I said, "What?" You know, I couldn't believe . . . What was it, the other night, we were asking if he'd ever been to Death Valley. Furnace Creek Inn. And the Furnace Creek Ranch. Well, no; he doesn't get that far out. I know when I was in New York on business one time Mark Ozaga, who I'd taken back in '37 - when you had passengers coming and would pay so much to go so far with you? I wanted to go down and see the Statue of Liberty and Wall Street, and things like that. He had never been to the Statue of Liberty. And lived in New York - the Bronx. Now, I guess it's the same way. One time [when] I had my home in Downey, California, an old rancher who was my cousin by marriage's brother was out with his family looking all over at the rose gardens in Los Angeles. He went up to the - what's the observatory?

RM: Oh, Griffith.

HR: Griffith Park. We went all over there. And he was saying, have you ever been there - he was down [chuckles] just the day before he left.

And I said, "My God, I wish I'd known you were out here - I'd have taken you around and showed you."

And he said, "Well, have you ever been up to that observatory?"

And I said, "No. I haven't, but . . ."

"Have you ever been here?"

And: "No I haven't, but . . ." You know it's there. You don't need to go to it. So finally when he left, I said, "Now by golly, you let us know next time you're coming out."

So he said, "Well, I'll tell you what, Hank. I think about a month from now I can take off a couple of weeks and come out. I'll come out and show you California." [laughs]

As a tourist, you see more than living there. This, I think, is the way they were raised, more or less, in a big city back there. But when you ask a man who's been here this many years if he's been to Death Valley or Hoover Dam and things like that and he hasn't . . . He said, "One of my biggest trips, I went to California." And he said, "I was kind of worried about that." Here's the Lida Livestock Ranch up here that's bigger than the State of Rhode Island. And you stop and think about things like that. And people - I know I've talked to Jack Vogt, people who were driving through there from the east, and they'd actually be scared at the expanse. You stop to think: going from here to Tonopah - to our county seat - is 133 miles from the ranch here. If you went back there you'd go across the State of Maine or Rhode Island, some of those - Connecticut - you'd go across 2 states. And towns. And cities.

The other night, I said, "What did you do in New York?" And he had his little things to do. He went, maybe, bowling, or doing this, or doing that. Went home to his apartment and then back to work and this, that . . . It's the way they're raised. They don't go all over and look. And we in the west think nothing of getting in the car and driving 500 miles. I'd think nothing of getting in the car and driving from here to Carson City. It's such a big expanse, I think it actually scares people.

But I think that our vote . . . Well, let's face it - if you carry Las Vegas you've carried the state. That's how big it is. And I think that's a little bit what is wrong with our politics here. Not wrong - you're always going to have - a vote's a vote. But I think people who have the power to vote think differently. Rural Nevada always votes a little differently than you'll see in Las Vegas. Everyone has the right to vote, but I don't think the people know the . . .

It's like your wild horse issue, where they went back and they got laws passed by eastern senators. They love to see the wild horses running on their television screen. They don't realize that the ranchers have always taken care of the mustang; the wild horse. We've kept them down into the right things where they don't destroy other things. We have even taken and sold some of the old horses off and bought good registered stallions to put in with the herds. Now they rounded up here, 2 years ago 251 wild horses. There's no way of fencing in the valley. And there's no way of fencing them out. But yet, you mention getting rid of the wild horses, and, boy, you'll see how many people jump down your throat. You know: "By God, they were here before us."

My answer is, "If they were here before e, they're damned old horses." [laughter] So now we have a bunch and you have them - people say that, well, they're California horses and Nevada can't pick them up. There's over 11,000 head up at Palomino Valley, and over 9,000 head at Ridgecrest. And they don't know what to do with them. It's too bad. If they'd let nature take its course . . . The world's being overrun by people, but that doesn't……

RM: Hank, how-would you characterize the values of people in the valley? I mean, say, in contrast to Vegas.

HR: Well, they're still a pioneering type. I just met a young couple with 4 children who moved out here and they think it's the greatest thing that ever happened to them. I wish there was a lot more young people like that who would come in. When I dedicated the multi-purpose building up here ¬it's a beautiful building. There are people who holler about the extra taxes we have to pay for that, but it's here. And as I told the kids up there that day, they ought to all get involved in it. But they will remember the day they opened that building.

It used to be so hard to get people to come into this valley. The wife would be with them - 2 couples - and I'd try to get someone in here on Desert Entry and they'd have, maybe, a little mink stole on, or a nice suit, and they're waiting to go in and spend their nice time in Vegas - which has always been a place to go. I know when they got back to the car, [chuckles] they'd tell their husbands, "No way are you going to get us up there!" I never figured on moving my family in here permanently. You used to have to take kids - if you had any - up to Lathrop Wells to catch a bus to go to Beatty. And no roads to get in and out of. So I used to fight for schools. My family never lived here per se. They worked here in the summer, they were here in all vacations, and my boys knew what it was to move lines by hand, and also by wheel lines. I never had to argue with them about going to college. To this day, I don't think they would farm. That's not their lifestyle.

What's happened in the country is our lifestyle has changed so much. I don't think people realize what farmers mean to this country. I know we have an overproduction of wheat and soybeans and things like that, but I'm talking about edibles. And you can't just do that overnight. You cannot, overnight, raise crops and things. I think some morning they're going to realize just what farmers are. If you had a big drought like the Dust Bowl of the '30s . . . People who live out here, to characterize them: they are pioneers. Even to this day - whether they're young people or what. There's a lot of older people in here.

RM: How would you describe the pioneering spirit of people?

HR: They're not scared to go out and do their work and build, and they have aspirations of what they want, and they're going to do that. That young couple this morning were so tickled. They had 2 little girls with them, and they had 2 others, one in the first grade, and one in kindergarten. And they were something . . .

Mrs. Records: Yes. They were cute.

HR: They were just so tickled to be out here. They have a horse. It's things that kids can't do in the city. I just can't get in my mind that kids are born and raised and never pet a horse.

But there are some young people . . . The trouble today, Bob, is that equipment costs so much and land cost so much. In my time, even though $10,000 was an awful lot of money, we could still buy smaller tractors, and do things like that. Nowadays you go down to buy a tractor and it's a big old thing - air conditioned - and kids just don't have that kind of money. I think the whole economy of the United States would be so much better off if we had more smaller farmers and less large farmers. I'm talking about big people like Tenneco and your oil companies and everything. It's just like your California water. Those canals were put through there for 160 acre - for the small farmer. They have got around it by putting management groups in on 160, and they own thousands and thousands and thousands of acres.

And then you take the parity on cotton that they pay you for not raising it. If I only have 200 acres of cotton, there's no way I could even live on the parity they pay. Yet, if you have thousands of acres, you'll make money on parity. It's been proven that they just take that out of production and take the government parity, and they make pretty good money on just that. And I think it's going to come back to the family farm. There are so many young people who would like to come in here, but they don't have the capital to do it. The people who are here I help all I can. I get a young man in here [chuckles] - anymore, I try to tie him up. [laughter]

RM: How have you handled the labor problem over the years?

HR: We used to get good - for a while, it was green cards. I remember when I had a man in here - J. Jesus Cervantes Mendoza. In those days we didn't ask the color of your hair or eyes. We hired him, and I hired quite a few Mexican workers. I had - white - Americans and everything. But I did hire quite a lot of Mexican labor. And I remember I was raided one time, and the sheriff, bless his . .

RM: By who?

HR: By the Immigration Service. And the sheriff, bless him, would let us know when they were coming; they finally quit letting him know, because everybody always was missing. But they came in here one time with a airplane and 2 or 3 cars, and they caught one man over at Spring Meadows ¬they'd been notified - and he was in a bunk house, because he had a broken arm. They came over, and my :man was down in the field watering, and I couldn't get him hidden fast enough and the airplane saw him (they had radio naturally) and so he landed and they

come up and got him. And I'd put him in the back apartment. And the man said, "What happened to the man you brought up to the house?"

And I said, "He's in having lunch."

He said, "Is he wet?"

And I said, "God, he was pretty dry when I looked at him last."

And he said, "Damn it, you know what I mean." And they wanted to search the house, and I wouldn't let them. He said, "Well, you can do it the easy way or the hard way. We can go up and get an order from the J.P. in Beatty."

And I knew he was right, so I said, "Well . . ." So I called Jesus out, and they talked to him in Mexican, and he said, yes, he'd come across the river. He was what they call a wetback. So right now they get his stuff; they're going to take him right now.

And I said, "Well, my God." I said, "You don't have to do that." I said, "The man's been here." I said, "I've been teaching him how to typewrite. he didn't know how to read or write or much. He's a hell of a nice man - he has a nice family. He takes all of his money and sends it to his family in Mexico. Why don't you let me get his pay and get his stuff packed and I'll bring him in tomorrow. Into Las Vegas."

They said, "Hell, no" and they took him and put him in a van-type thing, and then they broke out a lunch right on my place. And they were going to eat. Nice ice and cold stuff.

I went in the house and I fixed the other man something. I came out and said, "Unlock that damn door," and I fed him. The guy who was flying the airplane had landed on the road right north of the main house up there. They took my man, and I was pretty mad. So I said, "Well, I'll tell you what. The next time you come out here flying that plane around, I'm going to see if I can knock you down, by God, with a 30-06." I told them what I thought of them, which didn't do any good. And I said, "I'll be in and get my man."

And then he said, "Yeah, we've heard everybody say that."

So I rushed in and I saw my attorney, and he said, "Hank, you, you know," he said, "There's . . ."

I said, "Well," you know, I said, "You claimed that the only thing they generally held a man on was murder - that you couldn't get out. By God, he hasn't murdered anyone."

He said, "Yeah, but he's an illegal, and that's worse that that."

So I went down to a bail bondsman and I said, "Is there anything you can do about it?" That was the same day. I said, "Call me out at the ranch if you can."

The next day I kept staying at the house, and I had to now and cut hay, so I was back and forth. Finally I came in the door and the phone was ringing, and it was the man whose father moved out here - Bill Emory of Emory Bail Bond. It was his dad calling me, from here in the valley, and he said "God, where have you been? Bill's been trying to call you."

And I said, "Oh, my God, well get off the phone, then." And I called him.

He said, "When are you coming in to get your man? He's sitting right across from me - he's red-eyed and . . ."

I said, "Oh, my God. You got him?"

He said, "Yes. You'd better come on in, though, because the bus . . ." You know, they're going to take him and . .

So all I did was change shirts and jump in my pickup and took off for town, and got in there, and there was J. Jesus Cervantes. His stuff was already loaded up on a Greyhound Bus for

Mexico. So I got Jesus, and I got my order now - they'd made bond for him. I went down to the bus and here was one of the same guys who had been out to the ranch. I said, "I want this man's belongings."

He said, "Oh my God, how can we find all them?"

I said, "Mister, I don't know how in the hell you're going to find it, but start unloading."

The bus was full, and there were about 30 men on the bus.

So they started looking in there, and I'll never forget Jesus standing there: "Aye, ahi esta aqui." And he'd find one of his bags, and . . . I'd given him a yellow hard hat. I don't know why - he liked it. And they had that in there with his stuff.

And they couldn't find: "Oh, to hell with the hard hat."

I said, "No no. I want the hard hat." I was just as ornery as I could be. So they unloaded that bus on the sidewalk there by the Federal Building, and finally found it. And then I took him down to my attorney's [after] I took him for lunch somewhere. He didn't have to hide or anything then. I went into my attorney's, Bill Lynn. He'd been with the service at one time, the same as CIA. He couldn't believe what we'd done.

But the order said I would appear in court in San Francisco Immigration Office within 30 days. So I took Jesus and got him all ready to go to up there. He'd bought a $5 suit at a thrift store. It was made especially for somebody - a nice suit. I took him to San Francisco and the judge let me keep him until the end of the irrigation season. Then we went to work ¬he'd been in here so many years. I went to work and finally got him his papers and his family came up from Mexico. Well, that was the way you had to get help. Until they would raid you, you were all right. There were a lot of illegals in here, and that's where we got our labor.

RM: Has that changed any, over the years?

HR: Yes, it has. Because in here now you have your big plants down here, and they pay at least $7.50 an hour, and farmers can't afford it.

RM: What do you do now?

HR: Well, you just get whoever you can get, and they're trying to get it now where if you hire an illegal it's your fault. And they've got to have a card or something. But they are getting a little better on if they've been here so many years; they can stay in. It's hard to get labor.

Of course, you have a lot bigger and better equipment now. One man can do an awful lot more than they could in those days. We used to row irrigate - irrigate by flood. Now you have your big systems over here all automatic. In other words, I can water 640 acres, and it doesn't take too much time. Where it used to take, say, 18 men, you can probably do it with 3 now.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

RM: Hank, you were just making an interesting observation about how things have changed in terms of knowing people, and how this affects your doing business.

HR: Well, in the state, when I came here - of course, it was quite a few years ago, yet it's not that far either - you could go and see your representatives; you knew them. If you had a barbeque or something in any of our little valleys, your state people were there. I don't know - it's just like the dedication of the multi-purpose building up here. There's no way you could get someone down. They were going to have Governor Bryan come down, and I think they got turned down - he was busy. One guy who was head of the town board said, "There's only one man that's going to do it as far as I'm concerned. He knows the valley; he's been here all these years." So I did it. I have a thing from Lieutenant Governor Cashell that I showed you, I think. we sent them down a Nevada silver with his name on it. And they sent some woman down to represent the state. It used to be, years ago, the governor and Baring, if he was in the country, would be down here. You met them face-to-face. Our state's got to the point where, now, you don't know anyone personally; it doesn't mean anything. It used to be when I called someone in Washington, I had looked them in the eye, so I knew exactly - I'm seeing the person at the other end of the line. Today, I don't know those people.

It's just like - years ago, I had a man do some work for me on a mill that we patented. His name was Sandy Lucas. That's what I called him - he was a young attorney in Long Beach. He went to Arizona on 2 or 3 trips with he- we were mining down there. Today, Malcom Lucas is head of the Supreme Court in the State of California. I don't know whether he'd remember them or not. You see, I'm trying to it in perspective.

Like my wife - golly, we knew all the Lambs - good, bad, indifferent, everything. That was a dynasty at that time. Today, we can go into town - thank the Lord Jean still knows Sheriff Moran, because he worked in the police force when she was in business. And we know Roy Woofter. A few people like that. You used to be able to go to someone . .

I still think that people can work out things themselves by sitting down, instead of running down to an attorney and going to court on a bunch of this stuff that means nothing. We still do it here in our valley. I don't sue anybody and nobody sues e. If you don't like what a man says, you go tell him and see if you can't straighten it out in some way. And our state used to be that way. Today's it's not. I went up to talk about our water situation and I had to register as a lobbyist. [chuckles) They sent me a thing to fill out - how much money I spent. This is the one I had to use the day that I went up there.

RM: You're showing me a pin where you're a Registered Lobbyist - 1985.

HR: They sent me all these papers - now I have my name on a button.

RM: Now Hank's showing me a Registered Lobbyist Button: H.H. Records.

HR: Water.

RM: Water - he's a water lobbyist. Yes.

HR: But it shows you how things have changed. I used to be able to go and you saw a man, and went to his office, and talked to him. Now you have to go up and you register as a lobbyist, and you get somebody to make an appointment for you. They just don't have time for you anymore.

RM: Yes. Since you can't talk to people face-to-face, things don't move as well, do they?

HR: This is right. It takes a long time. And I think that's what happened to our state - whether good or bad. It's not the state I knew quite a few years ago.

I know I talked to my son. He's president of Tareet Chemical Company, and on the board of directors for University of California at Long Beach. He said, "Dad, what did all that fighting ever gain you? You know you can't whip city hall."

I said, "Lon, you can whip city hall."

I guess what it's done is give you the satisfaction of knowing that you've done what you thinks' right, and got some things done. I grant you, it didn't put any money in my pockets [laughter] and maybe that's wrong, too but I felt like sending back . . . Now they made me fill out to see how much I've spent on lobbying and everything, and I felt like putting a big amount in there, and I want this, that. But I didn't. Hell, all I did was go up to the state and was there that day and back that night. I just wanted to give my side of the water situation. As I say, it was nothing to meet Walt Baring or - you know Senator McCarran - or any of those.

Like Rex Bell was running for governor and he would've been governor if he hadn't died of a heart attack. I flew up to Carson City on the same plane as Rex Bell about 2 weeks before he had his attack. I knew him for years - I used to buy all my clothes there. I think he would've made a terrific governor for the state of Nevada. We've had some great governors and that, but we've had some bad ones, too.

Now, I guess we're fighting DOE and different things like that, which is completely wrong. We have the most contaminated spot in the world right now anyway. I think that DOE sometimes is a little wrong in the way they package it. If they would make a picture of the tour that I went on up there and show people how the stuff comes in there. There is no way in the world it could be in wrecks. It'd have to be another atomic bomb to even hurt the stuff. And if they could see how it comes in - see the precautions they've taken - and show this to the public. All they see is headlines in the paper that a bunch of uranium trash is coming through Las Vegas and if the car tipped over it's going to kill them all. It's so far from right. If the DOE would make a few films and get people out to see this. I know you can't open up the Test Site, but if you take them in there and show them.

I sometimes think they ought to take all those protestors up there and put them on a bus and take them for a tour of the Test Site.

RM: That's an interesting idea, Hank. Instead of taking them, throwing them on buses, and arresting them, put them under arrest and take them on the Test Site.

HR: You talk to DOE about that some time. I think if they'd see what has been done, and what . . . After all, you cannot take the United States and throw them back into the kerosene stage. And

you do have nuclear power plants. You have nuclear this and nuclear that. We even have - all your warheads - on all your missiles - everything. You have it - you're going to have to do away with that waste. Grant you, I don't want to be in a Nevada dump. But they can't understand that it's not taking up the state of Nevada. I forget how many millions of acres we have in this state, but it's . .

RM: It's over 100,000 square miles.

HR: Yes - square miles. And you multiply that by 640, why . . . Anyway, I've thought about that - and you might mention that sometime, Bob.

RM: It's a damn interesting idea.

HR: Put them in a bus and take them for a tour. And tell them, "You want on the Test Site? We're going to take you on the Test Site and show you." And if they'd only see that EMAD building up there - the only one in the western world. And realize what precautions - and what they have done. It'd make them stop and think. An educational tour. And explain it to them. It's like - standing in that tunnel up there that I did - down that shaft and in that tunnel where I stood 23 years ago. And they put off an atomic device in there. They filled the tunnel full of sand and the shaft full of sand, set the atomic device off, went in 10 years later and opened it up - took all the sand out - opened it up again - and it showed no damage at all to the equipment and things like that in there. Then they have drilled - they're awful sure of wherever they put atomic waste -they've made tests up there. I would say that if something went wrong with the waste disposal, Hanford, Washington would affect more people.

Thousands and thousands more. Deaf Smith, Texas would affect water forever, and all kind of people.

I'm not saying that . . . I've been here when they set off the first Above-ground test - I've seen those go. And I don't say that I was . . well, I don't know. I used to kind of . . . Being from World War II, and that's what ended that war and sent Me home, I guess I felt quite a lot of pride in seeing those things go off. I'm not saying it's good. And maybe we have contaminated. We never used to have cancer like we have today. But there's a lot of things The didn't have that we've found. We didn't have AIDS. And The didn't have this. And we didn't have that. So you can't blame everything on the atomic bomb. There are more atomic plants in France, and all these nations and everything. And here we are trying to say that you can't do this . . . We'll run out of coal oil if you want to go back to coal oil. It's just that simple.

I'll conclude with that. I think we ought to take all the protestors and send them on a tour of the Test Site. [chuckles]

RM: Sounds like that's a good way to end it, Hank.

HR: All right.

RM: Thanks a lot.

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