

An Interview with  
LINA SHARP

An Oral History conducted and edited by  
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Board of Commissioners  
Nye County, Nevada  
Tonopah  
1992

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Lina Pinjuv Sharp, Blue Eagle Ranch,  
Railroad Valley, NV 1941



Jim Sharp, Blue Eagle Ranch,  
Railroad Valley, NV, 1941

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## PREFACE

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

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

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

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

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes — in many cases as a stranger — and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have known and admired since I was a teenager; this was 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 former Nye County Commission Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., and former Commissioners Robert "Bobby" N. Revert, and Pat Mankins, 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 Richard L. Carver, Barbara J. Raper, Dave Hannigan, Cameron McRae, Joe Maslach, and Ira "Red" Copass, who subsequently became commissioners and 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 (DOE); 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 making himself available as a sounding board as methodological problems were worked out. In 1993, Les W. Bradshaw replaced Mr. Bradhurst as project supervisor, and continued to provide strong backing. This project would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners, Mr. Bradhurst, and Mr. Bradshaw.

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, Adam Karpel, and Elizabeth Townsend also transcribed a number of interviews. Transcribing, typing, and indexing were provided at various times by Cynthia Tremblay, Jodie Hanson, Connie Oehring and Bobette Host. Jared Charney contributed essential word processing skills. Maire Hayes, Michelle Starika, Anita Coryell, Michelle Walsh, 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. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

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— Robert D. McCracken  
Tonopah, Nevada  
November 1992



## INTRODUCTION

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

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

The 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, much of it essentially untouched by humans.

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

The Nye County Town History Project (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 knowledgeable on local history. Interviews were obtained from individuals familiar with those Nye County communities that are the subject of the NCTHP. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then lightly edited, preserving the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. The final form of each interview was then approved by the interviewee, and an index to each volume was prepared. The oral histories have been conducted with the intention that they will be archived and available to historians and others for generations to all oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, the Special Collections Department at the James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada.

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

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history.

These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 700 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories. Using the oral histories as well as existing written sources, histories have been prepared for the major communities in Nye County. These histories have also been archived.

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impact of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository is to be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain) and it will be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County

Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions and quality of life of Nye County communities that may be impacted by the repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided at the site. And in the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--RDM

This is Robert McCracken talking to Lina Sharp at her home in Railroad Valley, Nevada, August 14, 1992.

## CHAPTER ONE

RM: Lina, let's start by you telling me your name as it reads on your birth certificate.

LS: Lina Pinjuv. I was actually born in Los Angeles and my folks moved to Las Vegas.

RM: What was your birth date?

LS: November 16, 1919.

RM: And what was your father's name?

LS: Ivan Pinjuv.

RM: What nationality is that?

LS: Croatian.

RM: And where was he born?

LS: In Yugoslavia, in a little town called Cergai [pronounced Cherigai].

RM: Do you know his birth date?

LS: April the 15th, 1886.

RM: What was your mother's maiden name?

LS: Anna Lalich. She's from Dubrovnik, Yugoslavia.

RM: Do you know her birth date?

LS: Yes, November 16, 1886.

RM: And did they come over here separately?

LS: Yes.

RM: When did they come over?

LS: In 1910 and 1911.

RM: Your father came in 1910?

LS: Yes.

RM: Where did he go when he landed here?

LS: Pittsburgh. He stayed there and went to night school and learned to speak English and then came west to Los Angeles.

RM: Did your mother go to Pittsburgh, too?

LS: No. She came directly to Los Angeles.

RM: Did she have relatives there?

LS: Yes, a sister.

RM: What was your father's occupation?

LS: He was a welder.

RM: Was he a welder in L.A.?

LS: For a short while. Then we moved to Las Vegas.

RM: How many children did your parents have?

LS: They had 6. One girl, the eldest one, was born in Chicago. He was with the railroad when he first started out, and then he became independent and became a welder, and worked for the Union Pacific Railroad.

RM: So he was working with them in Chicago and then in Los Angeles and Las Vegas?

LS: Yes. And then he became independent; he had his own business.

RM: How old were you when you left Los Angeles?

LS: I might have been 9.

RM: Would you share a few recollections of Los Angeles and what it was like in those days? Where did you live?

LS: On 85th and Hoover, between Hoover and Vermont, just off Manchester. I guess it's an all black neighborhood now. We were the only family there at the time.

RM: What stands out in your mind about Los Angeles at that time?

LS: Oh, streetcars. And I remember when See's Candies first opened up and they used to give free samples to kids. [Chuckles] I remember she charged 60 cents a pound and people thought it was high, sort of. It's one of the things I remember clearly, along with good times with relatives, and doing things.

RM: Were you pretty well mapped into the Yugoslavian community there?

LS: There was no community—they were all scattered — but we did [have a] bilingual home.

RM: You're Croatian on both sides?

LS: We're Croatian — definitely. Dubrovnik is in Croatia and so is Cergai — that's a small town out of Mostar, if you know your history of Yugoslavia.

RM: I'm a little deficient in that area.

LS: It's in central north Yugoslavia.

RM: And they're Christian, right?

LS: Right, Roman Catholic. Serbs are Orthodox.

RM: Is there anything else you'd want to say about Los Angeles that stands out in your mind?

LS: Oh, I was just talking to my daughters the other day. I told them that on Sundays we used to go out to a place — I think it was called Western Avenue — where the airport is, perhaps, today. They had about a mile of little hills that you paid a dime to go on. We had same kind of old touring car, and you went up and down the hills, and it gave the kids a thrill.

RM: I'll be darned.

LS: The airport was around there and we used to watch the little planes and guys parachute off and do tricks in the planes. I think that's where L.A.X. is today.

RM: Isn't that amazing? Was there smog there then?

LS: I don't remember that. There could have been, but there weren't that many cars then. That was in the early '20s.

RM: So your dad was transferred by the Union Pacific to Las Vegas?

LS: He became independent in Los Angeles. I think during the Depression when everything became broke he moved to Las Vegas.

RM: What year did he move?

LS: In '28 or '29. He came to Las Vegas and then the family followed.

RM: And where did you live in Las Vegas?

LS: Oh, on 10th . . . it's not the same now it was then. We lived on 10th a block below where Sebastian Mikulich had his LTR [a transport company].

RM: Is that right? Was he Yugoslavian, too?

LS: Oh, yes. He came from close to where my dad did.

RM: Did you know him?

LS: Oh, definitely.

RM: Tell me a little bit about him.

LS: He was the guy who started out with a horse and buggy hauling things around Las Vegas. This was 1916, and he would do things, then he got a car and then a little truck, and then finally, I think in '29, he got a big Buick, a big touring car, and got a mail contract to Tonopah. He went one day to Tonopah and the next day back. He made a round trip in 2 days and took passengers, mail and any freight.

RM: Oh — and that's how the LTR got started?

LS: That's how he got started; right. That was years ago.

RM: He's an important figure in the history of transportation of this part of Nevada.

LS: He was, very. He had what they called a draying outfit. He was a drayer.

RM: I don't know what that is.

LS: To dray is to haul. So he was a hauler, he just did things around town, if anybody needed something hauled. That was his business, and he worked up from there.

RM: Did his kids take over the business or did he stay with it to the end?

LS: He stayed till he died. Then the kids just weren't together on it and they lost it. They were gypped on it.

RM: When did they lose it?

LS: They're still in court over it; it's not done yet.

RM: It's been in recent years, hasn't it?

LS: Very recent.

RM: Does it exist anymore?

LS: No, I think it's called KT right now.

RM: Is it the same company that somebody has taken over?

LS: Well, the guy took over and then just stripped the company — sold off everything — and that was wrong. He stole everything he wanted and then gave it back. Then [the family] tried to sell it and just went bankrupt.

RM: You were telling me, before we started taping, about the heat in Las Vegas and what you recall about that, before air conditioning.

LS: We never thought too much about it; we just accepted it. We moved, Bob, out to what was called Artesian Heights, about 4 miles out of town.

RM: Which way? South?

LS: West, up towards Charleston. Del Monte's up there now. We got an acre of land — people bought acreages — and we lived most of our life there.

RM: Did you go to high school in Vegas?

LS: Yes, and grade school.

RM: What did you think in moving from Los Angeles to Las Vegas? How did that strike you?

LS: It didn't bother me much because I was too young to realize what was happening, I think. It wasn't a major incident in my life. I knew kids in Las Vegas and there was no problem. It was a small town, with one class for every grade.

RM: What stands out in your mind about Las Vegas at that time, living there as a kid?

LS: The electrical storms. They were fierce desert storms with just lightning. It was terrible — you'd try to hide from it, and you couldn't; and it followed you everywhere. [Laughs] But we kids played and had a good time, went to school, went to catechism, church.

RM: What church did you go to?

LS: St. Joan of Arc; there was only one.

RM: Where is it located?

LS: It's on Second Street and I guess maybe Bridger or Carson.

RM: Fremont was the center of town, wasn't it?

LS: There were only about 4 blocks; yes, that was everything.

RM: What do you recall about Fremont? Does anything stand out in your mind there?

LS: No, it was just homes. One woman had a dress shop, and I guess she ran that shop for years, until she died. And there was a White Cross Drug Store, the Sal Sagev Hotel and the Nevada Hotel. And there was a men's shop at the Beckley Building. Craigen was the mayor and his boy was in our classroom. He owned the movie theater, so we used to see movies as guests.

RM: Was Block 16 a notorious district that you kids had to stay away from, or did you even know about it?

LS: Evidently we didn't know about it, but I remember that when relatives and people came to visit us in Las Vegas everybody went to Second Street.

RM: [Chuckles] And that was Block 16.

LS: That's Block 16. I remember them going there but I didn't know why they went. And they would all laugh and talk about it, so there was something funny going on. [Chuckles] Later of course I realized what they were doing, shaving off legalized [prostitution], and they would talk about it. It was there, but I wasn't aware of it.

RM: It wasn't part of you kids' thinking.

LS: No; it wasn't discussed at the table or anything.

RM: Was Second Street off limits to you kids? Were you told, "Don't you go down that street," or anything like that?



LS: I don't think we were told; we just didn't go. We had no reason to go; there were no stores, no shops or anything. Everything was on Fremont and Carson; the post office was on Stewart and Third.

RM: Did you ever come across Guy McAfee or Tony Carnero or any of the early gambling figures there?

LS: I didn't, but my dad probably did. I know he did meet Death Valley Scotty. And Rex Bell and Clara Bow were there.

RM: Do you remember Clara Bow?

LS: Yes, she was in the hospital at the same time that I was. She was an alcoholic and she was there, I guess, for sort of a cure. I told you about that new hospital that had the air conditioning in it.

RM: Where was that hospital?

LS: Eighth and Ogden. I'm not sure when it was built, perhaps '35. They had an open house and everybody came, and they had those little gunny sack coolers in the windows.

RM: Swamp coolers?

LS: I don't know if they called them swamp coolers then. I know they were air conditioning, and people would just brag, oh, how wonderful it was. I think that was the only air conditioning we had in town at the time. Everybody came and everybody talked about how wonderfully cool it was in the summer. [Chuckles]

RM: And of course the humidity was so low then that the swamp coolers really worked well, I've heard.

LS: Yes, it was always dry then. I don't know if there's humidity there now; I think there is.

RM: Yes, there is.

LS: It was really hot.

RM: They say that swamp coolers don't work that well in Las Vegas now because the humidity is higher due to all the lawn-watering and all of that.

LS: Yes. My dad did all the ironwork on the hospital stairs — the railings and the ornamental ironwork.

RM: Why did he move to Las Vegas?

LS: That wasn't discussed; we were too young to know anything. I know that he came and opened up a shop between Ogden and Fremont on Eighth, I guess just off Ogden. He called it The Desert Ironworks and he was there for years. And he went to work for the state highway department as a welder.

RM: Did your mother ever work outside the home?

LS: No, she was just a good mother and homemaker.

RM: So you graduated from high school from Las Vegas; then what did you do?

LS: Went to the University of Nevada at Reno. There was only one university in the state then.

RM: What stands out in your mind about going up there from Las Vegas? That was the first time you ever experienced winter, wasn't it?

LS: Yes. I remember one day in high school somebody looked out the window and they said "snow" and everybody ran out to see it, but by the time we got there it was gone. [Laughter] Mount Charleston had snow, but in those days the cars weren't . .

RM: You didn't get up there that much?

LS: Not that often, but we did go. I don't think we went up during the winter, just mostly summertime. Sebastian Mikulich had a little cabin there and we all always went up there.

RM: So you were close to his family?

LS: Very close. He was godfather to some of the kids in my [family]. As I said, he came from a village about 20 miles from where my dad did.

RM: Do you recall the name?

LS: Right offhand, no. But I've been over there at least 7 times, and I went to visit Sebastian's place, too, and I met his relatives.

RM: How many children did he have?

LS: Five.

RM: Did they all stay with the business?

LS: Yes.

RM: But they didn't see eye to eye?

LS: Well, it's pretty hard when you've got 5 kids and each one thinks he should . . . it was kind of an unfortunate thing that they got talked into selling to that guy.

RM: Do you remember when they sold out?

LS: I'm not going to say, because I don't know.

RM: Do you recall when he passed away?

LS: Not offhand, no.

RM: Well, then you went to UNR - and what did you study there?

LS: Education.

RM: Did you attend the normal school?

LS: Yes, for 2 years.

BM: It was a 2-year program, wasn't it?

LS: Right.

RM: And when you graduated, then you could teach?

LS: Yes.

RM: What did you do when you were getting ready to graduate?

LS: I got a school. I believe the university gave us lists of little country schools and little places; you couldn't get a [position in a] school in town — I think they were already filled. You know, some of the teachers were there forever.

RM: So if you wanted to teach, you had to go to the rural areas.

LS: Yes.

RM: What year did you graduate?

LS: In 1939.

RM: What was the school that you picked to teach in?

LS: Blue Eagle.

RM: Why don't you say where Blue Eagle is, for the tape.

LS: One geographer came out when he was doing a pilot program for the university and he said this is the "empty core" . . . so it's in the middle of the empty core of Nevada.

RM: [Laughs]

LS: But it is in Railroad Valley, between Tonopah and Ely.

RM: And where is Blue Eagle in the valley?

LS: It's 12 miles east of US 6 and 17 miles south of Currant on dirt roads.

RM: You're at Blue Eagle now?

LS: Yes.

RM: Oh, you live at Blue Eagle.

LS: We're at Blue Eagle right now; this is Blue Eagle Ranch. This place used to be called Butterfield, but when Sharps bought all the ranches we called it all Blue Eagle. Originally Blue Eagle was 3 miles north of here.

RM: Did you come here the September after you graduated?

LS: Yes. In the meantime I had been in a car accident with some of the kids from Las Vegas and I was in that hospital with the air cooler for a long time, so I lost a year; then the next year I came here.

I was picked up in Tonopah by Jack Bordoli, who lived up in Bordoli Basin. I think they call it Mountain Meadow now, but we still call it Bordoli's place. You might have gone by it as you went over Cherry Creek, or did you go to Cherry Creek? Oh, it was the other guy—Art Judge. OK. It's maybe 30 miles south of here. It's just on the foothills, and it overlooks the whole valley. I came with him to his place and then Howard Sharp from Blue Eagle came and picked me up and brought me down here.

RM: Oh, he brought you around through Twin Springs to his place.

LS: Yes. Jack was in town that day so he picked me up and brought me out and then Howard and his family picked me up and brought me down.

RM: What was happening at the Bordoli place?

LS: Just ranching.

RM: Who all lived there at that time?

LS: Jack and his mother.

RM: Had Jack been married or anything?

LS: No, he married Helen Fallini's sister, Martha Baird, much later.

RM: Had Bordoli's mother been at the ranch a long time?

LS: Yes. I don't know if there was anybody before them, but they were from Duckwater also — the Bordoli place on Duckwater.

RM: And then they started that place down there? Did they buy it, or what?

LS: I don't know whether it was a land grant or picked up or what. Where they lived is called the Bordoli Basin or the Macaroni Basin.

RM: How long did the Bordolis stay there?

LS: I don't know. I don't know whether Jack's mother died up there or in town, but she did die, and then Jack married Martha. She had been married to Eddie Scribbens before. Eddie was not the shining character that he should have been, so Martha left him and married Jack, and they lived up there.

RM: And they had a little boy who died of leukemia back in the .

LS: Well, he was 8 years old; let me see, he died about 35 years ago. He was 8 years old, I know, because Martha had the same-aged kids as I did.

RM: Whatever happened to Jack?

LS: He had heart problems and then they moved to Carson and he died there, I think about a year after he left here. After his boy died, I think he just sort of . . .

RM: That kind of broke him?

LS: Yes, kind of. It was kind of hard to take. And she miscarried another boy, so . . .

RM: Was he the only child they had?

LS: No, Martha had a girl and then they had a boy and a girl, and then another boy died prematurely.

RM: What happened to Martha?

LS: She's in Carson City. She's an artist; does beautiful work.

RM: I think Helen [Fallini] was living with her right before she died; I talked to Helen on the phone.

LS: Martha took care of her a lot in Carson, yes.

RM: So Howard Sharp went down and got you and brought you up here. Tell me what Blue Eagle consisted of at that time.

LS: When you came up, did you see a cluster of little houses down about 3 miles?

RM: North of here about 3 miles? Yes.

LS: That was it — that's where the school was. Grandma lived here — this is the original [home].

RM: What was Grandma Sharp's maiden name?

LS: Mary — a pretty name. She was Mary McCann from Tybo.

RM: So she was a McCann who had married a Sharp.

LS: Yes. She was born in Tybo, and they had McCann Station out of Tybo. The route went from Tybo and Hot Creek to Belmont through the canyons, and she had a toll station that's still there. Jeanne has many very good pictures of it.

RM: Let's give your daughter Jeanne's last name.

LS: My daughter Jeanne Howerton — the one who talked to you.

RM: Right, I just wanted to get her name on tape. How old was Grandma Sharp when you got here? Was she an old lady?

LS: Well, she was just always seemed kind of old to me.

RM: Yes. [Laughter] They all seem old.

LS: Well, you can figure it out. She was born in '77 and I got here in '40, so that'd be 63. Jim and I bought the place from her, then she moved to Tonopah. We got her to run for the state assembly and she was elected.

RM: Oh, really — as a woman in her 60s? When was that — in the '40s?

LS: Yes. She died in '64.

RM: So you started here as a teacher. Tell me, whom did you live with?

LS: I lived up above, at Howard's place. I had a little cabin and I lived by myself and ate with them.

RM: That was Howard Sharp and his family. What was his wife's name?

LS: Minnie. Their children were the kids I was teaching. There were 4 of them — Miriam, Gerald, Melvin and Norman.

RM: And these are the Sharp boys who are here now.

LS: Right, some of them. They're old men now but they were boys then.

RM: Did you have any other children in your class?

LS: Yes. The first year I went up, a sister of theirs lived at Idledell. Did you notice a little cabin all by itself as you came?

RM: That little stone remnant?

LS: Yes. Well, there was a sister who lived there, and she had 4 kids.

RM: And what was her name?

LS: Inez Holloway. She lived in Tonopah for years and died there.

RM: Is she any relation to the Holloway that Sue Locke married?

LS: No. It's the same name, but no relation that was apparent to us here.

RM: So you taught 8 children?

LS: Then I had a boy from a mine at Willow Creek across from Nyala and a girl came down from Irwin Canyon. The boy from the Nyala area lived here during the week with people, and the girl commuted every day. So I had actually 10 kids.

RM: That's a pretty good-sized country school. What was it like, teaching in a country school like that?

LS: I was independent; there was nobody there to tell me what to do, and how, when, and why. We did many, many things.



## CHAPTER TWO

RM: You were saying that you had independence.

LS: Yes, I did what I wanted, more or less, and I taught differently. If something exciting happened we went out to see what it was. Later on, I had a new movie camera. Some gophers lived under the schoolhouse. They would come out and the kids would feed them, and I took pictures of them coming out during the free periods; they were friends. We had cottontails sleeping on our steps while we were in school, and chipmunks — I left the door open and the chipmunks would come in and out. We were pretty free and easy.

There was a stream running and an outhouse for a bathroom. Nowadays it's real excitable if you only have one bathroom for boys and girls. It was an exciting time.

RM: And you lived in a cabin. What was it like, living in a cabin alone way out in rural Nevada?

LS: Well, it was different. I didn't know how to make a fire [chuckles] to warm up the cabin. It was kind of like a miner's but — just a bed and a big stove in the middle. I burned up lots of catalogues trying to make a fire; I didn't realize you had to put the paper underneath the wood.

RM: Oh, you put the paper on top?

LS: But I did learn; it didn't take too long. [Laughter]

RM: Did you suffer with the cold?

LS: I was cold because I wasn't accustomed to cold weather.

RM: It's cold out here in the winter, isn't it?

LS: Yes. The weather was much worse than Vegas. But I had warm clothes; it wasn't that bad. I have a lot of pictures, but I'll let Jeanne get those. I have my pictures in big black bags downstairs. She's coming Labor Day weekend to find the school pictures from the '40s here.

RM: Do you have pictures that go back farther, like to the 1880s and 1890s?

LS: Yes, Jeanne has them. She's been collecting them. For Christmas she would enlarge some of them and frame them for the girls, like what the ranch house here looked like in 1910. She has big pictures for all the girls.

RM: Why do they call this place Blue Eagle?

LS: The mountain, I guess. People say that there's a certain time when you look that you can see an eagle on the face of Blue Eagle, but I don't see it and I've been here a long time. I look and they point it out and I just don't see it.

RM: It's the image of an eagle on the face of . .

LS: Shadows, yes.

RM: Blue Eagle is a mountain?

LS: Yes, this mountain to the east of us. On that slope of Grant from our door here in the winter there's . .

RM: You mean the Grant Range?

LS: Yes, this is all Grant Range, Grant Mountain.

RM: Grant Range is to the east of you?

LS: Right here, yes. And then Grant Mountain is this one — the first big one. In the winter when the snow is on it, it looks like a thunderbird. I've wondered if that wasn't what the eagle was. There are several stories, and I don't know which one is right.

RM: Are there eagles here?

LS: Yes, we have eagles.

RM: Maybe they named it after a living eagle?

LS: No, that never came up in our conversations through the years. It was an image on the mountain, supposedly. You talk to different people and they swear they can see it. I look and I see many things, but I don't see an eagle. Somebody said that on a certain day in the spring when the shadows are just right, it's there. But I still don't . .

RM: How long did you teach here in the little school with 10 children? LS: A couple of years; then I got married.

RM: And who did you marry?

LS: Jim Sharp, one of the Sharp sons. When we got married we bought Grandma's place, and we bought this place — Blue Eagle.

RM: Did you buy the whole ranch, or just a part of it?

LS: Just what Grandma had. When their dad died they divided the place, so we got whatever Grandma had, plus what we had, and we started from that.

RM: Let's talk about the Sharp family. The Sharps are descended from Henry Sharp of Hiko, in the Pahrnagat Valley, aren't they?

LS: Yes. They came from Wood River, Nebraska, when they came out to Nevada in 1867. They originally came from England.

RM: Do you know what prompted them to come there? I mean, the Pahrnagat Valley was a pretty remote place at that time.

LS: I don't know. I don't know if there was any involvement with the Mormons or not.

RM: Henry was a Mormon; I think he had been converted in England, hadn't he?

LS: I don't know.

RM: Can you name Henry's children? There was Henry, Jr. . . .

LS: George Henry was the grandpa here.

RM: And George was Henry's son.

LS: Yes, but he's George Henry.

RM: And then there was Hiram, who was a twin.

LS: Right. And I can't remember the other one. Then of the girls there was Mahalia and Lina and ....

RM: I've got their names. I interviewed [Henry's great-grandson] Joe Higbee over in Pahrnagat.

LS: OK, then you have all that.

RM: So most of the boys stayed in the Pahrnagat Valley, but George came over to Railroad Valley, didn't he?

LS: Right. He came over the hill and became a cowboy here.

RM: Why did he come over here, do you know?

LS: I guess he just . . . he wasn't a Mormon, to begin with.

RM: The others weren't, really, either.

LS: No, none of them were. Their uncle Lewis went to the Elko area, and I think that when Lewis left, Grandpa came with him.

RM: Oh, he went to Elko first?

LS: He stopped here and stayed.

RM: Oh, Lewis was heading for Elko and George was with him and he stopped here.

LS: Yes. I don't whether they were headed for Elko or that's just the way things happened. I don't know the details of that.

RM: There couldn't have been much here when he got here. What year did he arrive?

LS: Let's see, he was born in 1860 and he was about 15 or 16, so it'd be in the 1870s, I'd guess.

RM: OK. And what was here then?

LS: There was a guy named Alec Beaty who lived here. There's a mine up In Troy Canyon, and I guess there was a ranch here.

RM: And Beaty was operating that?

LS: Yes. I don't know how much he was doing with it, but there were a lot of prospectors who came and sat around here. Troy was quite a mining camp. They had an establishment in the '60s — it had a newspaper and a [post office] and some bars and a still house; remnants are still there, and some of them are pretty good.

RM: How far south from Blue Eagle is Troy Canyon?

LS: I would guess about 14 or 15 miles.

RM: And it's in the Grant Range?

LS: Yes.

RM: What is the dividing line between the Grant Range and the Quinn Canyon Range?

LS: Cherry Creek divides the ranges.

RM: Are they really the same range, or are they 2 different ranges?

LS: They're all one; it's one continuous thing. I think this is the Grant Range of the Quinn Canyon division.

RM: Oh, I see.

LS: But when you're paying government money you have to have a designation.

RM: Yes. So George was really just a kid . . .

LS: He was a kid in his teens when he came here.

RM: Who was ranching here in the valley when he got here?

LS: I'm not too aware if they were ranching or if they were just living up above — they were the Allreds.

RM: Up above — you mean in Railroad Valley?

LS: I mean the next ranch up here. The ranch is divided. There was a stop station there, and a blacksmith shop and something like an inn where people could go. This road from Los Angeles to Salt Lake was called the Midland Trail.

RM: Oh — this is on the Midland Trail.

LS: This is the Midland Trail. The road went down beyond, down by the springs. On the ranch we called it "the lane," but that was the road.

RM: Where are the springs? Are they down right here?

LS: Right.

RM: How did the Midland Trail go through Railroad Valley to the south of here?

LS: It came up through the canyons and the narrows at Warm Springs and that way.

RM: I'm trying to trace the route of the Midland Trail.

LS: OK. There was no road then; this highway out here -- Highway 6 — was not there until the '30s, I believe.

RM: This was the road to Ely.

LS: To Ely, Salt Lake . . . yes, and it was called the Midland Trail.

RM: Oh, I see. So in effect it served the same function as Highway 6 does today.

LS: Right.

RM: And it came down over the summit at Warm Springs?

LS: Someplace in there, yes.

RM: And then where did it go — over to Twin Springs?

LS: Well, Twin Springs wasn't there at the time. It was just a spring, I guess; there was nobody there.

RM: But there's an old stage stop there — is that related to it?

LS: Probably. You know there was that Bullwhackers Springs up here where the bullwhackers stopped to water their animals.

RM: Where is Bullwhacker?

LS: It's about 5 to 6 miles south of here.

RM: So they came across Warm Springs and probably Twin Springs?

LS: Through that canyon, yes.

RM: And then turned north up Railroad Valley.

LS.: Right.

RM: What would have been the first stop in Railroad Valley?

LS: I don't know, but Nyala was one. It was called Mormon Wells at the Nyala was later.

RM: Was Nyala ever a town?

LS: No, never; just a stop.

RM.: Was there an inn there or anything?

LS: Well, they had a house and a post office.

RM: Who got their mail there?

LS: The canyons had people in them.

RM: Which canyons would that have been?

LS: Troy and Grant and Irwin — 3 canyons. There are still remnants of things in these canyons.

RM: Are there mines up all of the canyons?

LS: Yes, but they're not . . . the last mine that was worked for a dollar profit for the whole year was in Irwin Canyon.

RM: Is Irwin Canyon named for Ike Irwin?

LS: I'm not sure if it was for Ike or his boy Ralph, but it could be Ike. They were farmers at Duckwater and then I think the old guy came down from Duckwater.

RM: Are they gold and silver mines?

LS: There were lead mines up in these canyons, but I guess silver, probably.

RM: Do you remember Solan Terrell?

LS: Oh, yes.

RM: He had a mine up in one of these canyons.

LS: Yes, Camps Canyon. It was not too far up. He had a tungsten mine.

RM: Right. We used to go and see him when we were at Reveille Valley. There's a cold water spring there.

LS: Yes, Solan and his brothers were good neighbors of ours.

RM: So the Midland Trail came to Nyala and then Bullwhacker . .

LS: It just kept going up the flat.

RM: Let's mention the stops on the trail in the valley.

LS: I don't know what was between . . . there were springs called Willow Spring and then Thorn Spring before you get to Bullwhacker, and I don't know if it had a stop out of Bullwhacker. (That's where the bullwhackers stopped when they came through, as I said.) Then there was this place and then up above . .

RM: That'd be Blue Eagle.

LS: This is Blue Eagle — this is Butterfield Spring.

RM: Is it a good spring?

LS: Very. Then the trail went on up through the upper end of Blue Eagle. There are still some remnants left at the farthest end, the first place you might have been. You've seen a cabin — there was one little cabin. That was the farthest up, and then I guess it went on to Currant.

RM: Technically, what is Blue Eagle? Is it this whole meadow area?

LS: Blue Eagle is the name of a mountain and a spring, but this whole ranch is called Blue Eagle.

RM: And basically it's the green area along the valley; is that right?

LS: Yes, I suppose you could say so.

RM: It's kind of a meadow for several miles up . . .

LS: It's all meadow, right. And it's just divided.

RM: And then the trail went on to Currant?

LS: Yes.

RM: Do you know when this trail was functioning?

LS: It was functioning when Grandma was here, because she used to feed people. This was even up into the 1910s and '11s, I guess. She was here.

RM: She fed people here at Blue Eagle?

LS: Yes. Anybody who came through stopped, and sometimes they stayed overnight; it was kind of an inn way stop.

RM: Now, the trail went to Currant, and then did it turn up Currant Canyon and go on to Ely?

LS: Yes.

RM: Did it go on up to Eureka?

LS: There was a road down from Eureka because that was a big mining camp at the time. But they didn't go to Ely. There was no Ely, either, until later, so Eureka was the big . . .

RM: Did the Midland Trail go up north or did it go up Currant Canyon?



LS: I think that it went north.

RM: It went on up to Eureka.

LS: I think so, because there was no Ely at the time. We're assuming that these places were here. There was no Tonopah, either. There was nothing there, so we can have a different route entirely.

RM: Right. Then of course at Eureka they could have picked up the railroad to go on up to Elko — or actually Carlin. And then they could get the east west railroad [if they wanted to].

LS: Yes, but this was a horse highway — a wagon route.

RM: And where did it go west from Warm Springs? As you say, Tonopah wasn't there.

LS: I think it went up to Tybo and then to Hot Creek; it was a little active then. You went to Tybo. Tybo was a big thing — and then from Tybo you went through the canyons and into Belmont; it's the back road to get in.

RM: Why did it circle around like that? Isn't there a shorter way to get to Belmont from here than making a big loop like that?

LS: As you see it now there is, but at the time you followed water and you followed mines, and this wasn't all mapped out like it is now. RM: I'll bet that from Belmont, it went on up to Austin.

LS: No, to Sodaville.

RM: Oh, that way.

LS: I know they went to Sodaville because Grandpa used to order things from a catalogue from Sacramento and they came down the railroad to Sodaville when they lived in Belmont and then Grandpa used to bring it over on a buckboard.

RM: Now, Grandpa is George Sharp.

LS: Right.

RM: He lived in Belmont, too?

LS: Yes, for a while.

RM: Before he came here, or after?

LS: When he got married they lived in town.

RM: Let's talk about after he got here. He arrived here as this kid who was going to be a cowboy in the 1870s. What was here when he got here, do you ever recall him saying?

LS: I never met the gentleman; he died before I ever came.

RM: Do you recall anybody repeating his observations of what was here when he got here?

LS: I know Alec Beaty was here back then. He homesteaded. The [Homestead] Act came in, in the '60s, and he homesteaded and Grandpa bought it from him.

RM: Oh, that's how he got it. How much did he give him, do you know?

LS: I have no idea. It would be on the deed, I guess.

RM: I wonder how much land was transferred.

LS: This whole area here, this portion of the ranch.

RM: How many acres would that be?

LS: Maybe 320, but I'm guessing.

RM: And what do you know about Beaty?

LS: Not too much. He was a miner. I don't know if he was married or not. I think the girls have more things written on that because they interviewed and they kept writing. I never wrote things down, I just tried to remember.

RM: I wonder if he was any relation to Montelius Beatty, the man who founded the town of Beatty.

LS: Our Beaty only had one "t" in his name.

RM: Was he the first settler here?

LS: I don't know, because I know in the '60s Troy had lots of people, and Grant. So I don't know what was here.

RM: When did Troy fold?

LS: I don't know, but it was pretty big. As I said, it had a lot of businesses in it.

RM: Whenever you get a big town like that, then anyplace you can grow anything you get ranchers.

LS: Wherever there is water you get ranchers. That was the criterion.

RM: Yes. First you get the miners and then you get the ranchers, because the ranchers feed the miners.

LS: And some of them did take their cattle in a sly way.

RM: You mean, they'd rustle them?

LS: Yes, they did. They were caught at it. [Chuckles]

RM: I wonder what the penalty was for rustling.

LS: One of the gentlemen who rustled cattle here went to Carson City in the early 1900s. They say he was a good-looking man and he was easygoing and just a ladies' man, sort of. He was a nice guy and everything, but he was stealing cows, stealing anything he could. You know, he was one of those dandies.

RM: When did Beaty sell out to Grandfather Sharp?

LS: I think the deed is dated 1895.

RM: Oh. George was here quite awhile before he sold out, if he came in the '70s.

LS: Yes.

RM: Did he buy any other places before he bought Beaty's?

LS: I don't think so. In 1881 Grandpa was 21 and he registered his brand and he named the branding iron "21" [for his age]. And we still use the brand; it's still in use. It's been here all the time and it's one of the older brands still in the family.

RM: What happened to Beaty when he sold out?

LS: I don't know when he died.

RM: Did he stay on?

LS: I don't know the details of it.

RM: Who else was ranching at Blue Eagle when George bought the place from Beaty?

LS: I mentioned Allreds — Vern H. Allred was one of them. And there were the Ned Turners. Do you remember Ned Turner? He worked for our state government in Carson. But his family started here; Sylvia Turner died in Carson years ago. Let's see, Allreds — I can't remember anybody else. There were Rutherfords on Currant.

RM: OK, we'll come to Currant in a minute. George Sharp bought the place and apparently he got married somewhere along the way. Who did he marry, again?

LS: Mary McCann from Tybo.

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

LS: She was born in Tybo and her mother was a widow — her father died in San Francisco. He went there to see a doctor and he's buried at old St. Mary's Churchyard in San Francisco. There were about 8 kids in the family.

HM: What was his name?

LS: Barney McCann. It was Bernard, I guess, but they called him Barney.

RM: When did George and Mary get married?

LS: I don't know.

Rt.!: Was it before or after he bought the ranch?

LS: Oh, he had the ranch before he married; it was about 1900 or 1899, or 1901 . .

RM: So he was about 40 years old or so when he got married.

LS: He was quite a bit older, yes. She was 24 and he was 16 years older.

RM: What had Barney McCann done up in Tybo? Was he a miner?

LS: No, he ran boardinghouses and ranched and farmed.

RM: And he'd probably gone to Tybo because of the strike?

LS: Probably, from Belmont. She was left with all these little kids, and that's when she opened up McCann Station. That was on a route from Hot Creek and Tybo to Belmont. It's in the narrow up there in the mountains.

RM: There hadn't been a station at that place before that?

LS: Not that I know of.

RM: Did she buy the land?

LS: I don't know. This was even before homesteading, I think.

RM: So this was a place where travelers who were going from Tybo to Belmont could stop.

LS: Right. She had a boardinghouse, and a room where people slept, and she had corrals to feed the animals and so on.

RM: Is there a ranch now at McCann Station?

LS: Just the ruins and remnants.

RM: But it had been a functioning ranch?

LS: It had been functioning, yes, when she was there. Jeanne will have a lot of good pictures of that area.

RM: What was Mary McCann's mother's name?

LS: Grace.

RM: So Grace McCann raised those kids out there at McCanns Station?

LS: Yes, but she went back to Belmont during the cold winter months, so he kids kind of grew up in Belmont.

RM: How did George meet Mary?

LS: She was a schoolteacher at a place called Grantsville. She was about 16.

RN: Where's Grantsville?

LS: Oh, it's up in that area. I'm not sure where exactly it is. It's an old mining town. By the way, there is a tape in the archives at the State Historical Society on her teaching.

RM: Do you have a copy of it?

LS: I have something. Did you know Helen Slavin?

RM: Yes. [Her widower] Ed has been a big help to me through the whole project.

LS: She did a bunch of interviews of the old-timers in Tonopah.

RM: I don't think Ed has those tapes. Do you have copies of them?

LS: I have some; Mary Ellen Glass was the person who got these things together.

### CHAPTER THREE

RM: So Helen Slavin did an [oral history interview] with Mary McCann Sharp?

LS: Right.

RM: I need to get hold of that.

LS: Helen had lots of pictures and stuff.

RM: Yes. Ed [Slavin] has been very helpful all the way through the project. I interviewed him.

LS: He's a good fellow to interview, and to save his comments, because he is Tonopah. He's very humorous when he talks about things. He's a very dear friend of ours.

RM: I really like Ed. Do you know Norman Coombs — Curly?

LS: Yes, Curly [chuckles] used to be out with Solan Terrell at his tungsten mine.

RM: Oh, really? I did a good interview with him, too. Now, Mary McCann came and was teaching school . .

LS: I don't know when he actually met her, but she was teaching school in Grantsville. I think she was 24 when they got married. She was considered an old maid at the time, because girls got married in their teens.

RM: Was she picky?

LS: Maybe the opportunity or the right guy hadn't come along.

RM: Did she move down to the ranch after they got married?

LS: They lived in Belmont for a while and then they came back here. Be had a livery stable in Belmont.

RM: So he wasn't really operating the ranch for a while?

LS: No, he had other people living here. There was a house down by the spring — you can see the spring from here. That's where the road was. This is all new up here. The people who were living there were kind of careless. Before Grandma would come here they built this house up here to get away from the mosquitoes, because there was always a dampness there, with water sitting and such. Grandma was one of those hard-willed ladies. They moved up here and started this place. Jeanne has some excellent pictures of this place when it was started. This was after the house by the spring burned.

RM: How far away is the spring from here?

LS: Just across the field a few yards.

RM: OK, 100 yards or so? But you didn't have a lot of mosquitoes up here?

LS: They came up here, but they're not really bad.

RM: What was in the valley when Mary McCann Sharp and George Sharp came back here? And about what year did they come back?

LS: It was in the early 1900s, because some of the kids were born here. He also went to Delamar to start a livery stable, and a couple of the kids were born there. He sort of followed the money — where the mining was. They went to Delamar, but this was here; this was in the background. And the ranch house that Carole is in was built in Belmont and wagoned over with horses from Belmont and put together.

RM: Boy, that'd be a job. [Laughter]

LS: Right. Some of the windows in that house have the original glass, with little holes and little bubbles and little rainbows in them. They're not pure beautiful modern glass, but the old-time. .

RM: That's nice. What route would they have taken?

LS: I suppose the only one there was — the Midland route, going from Belmont to Tybo through the canyons.

RM: And then down to Warm Springs?

LS: Yes. They might have gone down to Lockes' and then across.

RM: Do you consider Lockes' as being in Railroad Valley?

LS: Oh, definitely — right across here. Do you know Sue [Locke Holloway]?

RM: Yes, I interviewed her.

LS: She's in Ely.

RM: Oh, she moved out of Beatty? I knew Madison [Locke]. I wish somebody had interviewed him when I knew him. He knew a lot.

LS: Yes. He was quite a character.



RM: Could you name the children that George and Mary Sharp had?

LS: There was Howard. He was born in Delamar, I think. And Edna was born in Delamar; they were real close in age. They were here at the ranch when Inez and Roy were born. Then there was a span — I guess they thought that that was the family — and then 2 more boys were born, Jim and Lester.

RM: Did they all stay here on the ranch?

LS: No. They divided the place. George died in 1933. Grandma kept half and the kids each got their acreage and share of the estate. Grandma got this place and part of the north place and they divided the fields and so forth. Howard got that place where those buildings are because he was living there anyway. Inez, one of the girls, got the one with that stone cabin on it, and the other sister got another acreage up above that, and the 2 boys got the meadows. They were the youngest — they weren't even of legal age when their dad died. They got some land. Eventually we bought out Grandma and some of the sisters and brothers. Howard kept his.

RM: Were there any other ranchers at Blue Eagle in 1933? It was all in the Sharp family?

LS: Yes.

RM: So George Sharp had consolidated the whole thing?

LS: Yes, George did it all.

RM: Are there any non-Sharps at Blue Eagle now? Has the land remained within the Sharp family?

LS: Yes, it's still in the family.

RM: Then when we talk about the valley we only have to talk about the Sharp people.

LS: On this side; right.

RM: Who are the Sharp children that you taught?

LS: Howard had 4 kids and Inez had 5; she was Inez Sharp Holloway. Howard had a girl and 3 boys, and Inez had 5 kids, 2 girls and 3 boys. The others moved away. Lester went to California and worked, got jobs in town, and Edna just moved around. Her husband was kind of a drifter, and she followed him wherever he went.

RM: So when you were teaching school, you were teaching Howard and Inez' children.

LS: Right, plus some others.

RM: Could you name Howard's children in birth order?

LS: Miriam, Gerald, Melvin and Norman. And then Inez' family was Edgar (he's living at Nyala right now), Walter, Mary and George. Years later, when Holloway disappeared, she married another guy, Sherman Finnegan, and had a girl with him. She was in Tonopah then.

RM: How many of those children stayed on the ranch?

LS: Only Howard's 2 boys, actually. Miriam came back and bought some land — something like Desert Land Entry — as a farm down below. She got some land and then sold it to the boys, I think. (You can ask them about it.) The 3 boys got Howard's ranch, and then Melvin left. He was working on the university farm out of Austin for a long time, then he had some health problems and they moved to Idaho, but they're all back on the ranch at Nyala now.

RM: When did they move down to Nyala?

LS: It had to have been in the '50s.

RM: So when they bought that ranch they got the Nyala allotment and everything.

LS: Yes.

RM: Where is their allotment?

LS: Have you ever been up that road?

RM: Oh, a long time ago.

LS: There wasn't a cattle guard then but they cut off Fallinis' . . . the Sharps and Fallinis have a fence in common way down there — and then it's up. Then he has the Blue Eagle allotment up here, too, at Bullwhacker and Parney Spring.

RM: Does it go up into the mountains?

LS: No, it's just a flat.

RM: Are all of their pastures on the flat?

LS: On this end, because we have the mountains. From Troy north is our allotment.

RM: And then from Troy south is theirs?

LS: I think they have that mountain allotment, yes.

RM: And these are the only 2 ranches in the valley, aren't they?

LS: Other than Lockes' on the other side, yes.

RM: Now, you married Jim?

LS: Right. Jim was one of the 2 younger Sharp boys; Lester was the youngest. Roy worked at Kennecott for a long time and he finally came back out here. When he got older and a little bit sick they moved to Lund; his wife was a Mormon girl. He died in Lund. They're all dead now.

RM: What was ranch life like in Railroad Valley in 1940?

LS: When I came here I took many, many pictures because I was going to go back to Las Vegas, the big city, and show how people lived out here and what they did. But before I ever got home I got married [chuckles], so I stayed.

They hayed with horses; there was no mechanical equipment then, no electricity, no running water - it was all primitive. We had kerosene lamps, then later we got what they call Coleman lights. They gave a brighter light because they burned gasoline; that was modern. And we ironed with the old hand irons. You see one down there on the floor - my doorstep. I think they're called "Sadd irons."

RM: Because they made you sad?

LS: I don't know. I think it was S-A-D-D; I don't know if Mr. Sadd maybe invented them. We had several kinds; I've given them to the girls for keepsakes, but I have some left. You'd heat them on the wood stove.

I had 3 of them. You used big potholders to hold them so they wouldn't burn your hand. When it got cool you put it back on the stove and then took the next one. I kept 3 going.

RM: How long would it last before you had to put it back on the stove?

LS: It depended on what I was ironing, I guess. Sometimes I'd put little holes in things because the irons were too hot. You can't control the heat. I wasn't as good an ironer, I guess, as I wanted to be. Ironing was not one of my fun things in life.

RM: Did you wash on a board?

LS: No, I never did; we had a Maytag that you cranked. You pulled a little string.

RM: Oh, I see; but was it human-powered?

LS: No, gasoline. You pulled a little rope to start the motor.

RM: Did you have to wring the things out by hand?

LS: No, we had a powered wringer. But we had to haul all the water. The well where we got our water was right by the house.

RM: And you had to dry the clothes on the line, didn't you?

LS: Yes, and I still do.

RM: That's hard in the winter, isn't it?

LS: I guess it was, but I didn't think anything of it. It had to be done and I did it, and if something was damp you'd bring it in and dry it by the stove.

RM: Did you do a lot of canning and things like that?

LS: Yes, I learned how to can.

RM: Do you grow fruit here at the ranch?

LS: Yes. There's an interesting apricot tree at the place down there that must be about 80 or more years old. It's an enormous tree. (I don't know if it was accidental.) Carole has a lot of fruit trees; I have apricot trees all around here.

RM: Now, Carole is your ..... ?

LS: My eldest daughter.

RM: Is she married?

LS: Yes — her married name is Hanks.

RM: How many acres did you and your husband have?

LS: I really don't remember. We bought quite a lot. After the kids bought the place they've been getting more land, so it's expanded.

RM: And you had your deeded land here and your permits in the mountains?

LS: Right. We were government saturated. We had Fish and Wildlife, Forest Service and ELM. Gradually, they took everything away and we have to pay them all.

RM: By the time you came here the Taylor Grazing Act had already come in, hadn't it?

LS: We did not get that here till the mid-'40s. We were one of the last areas in the nation. I guess we were so isolated they even forgot about us. It's the empty core, as I said. There was nothing much here.

RM: What happened when the government came in?

LS: I know we had to start paying for the right to graze after we'd been here for 50 or 60 years. And then they told us how to do things, and when. We couldn't have existed if we had done things wrong. In dry years we didn't put the cows out, we put them in meadows; in good years we'd put them out. If you didn't do that you hurt yourself. Now they tell us what to do all the time.

RM: And they give you an allotment, I suppose?

LS: Yes.

M: Where was your allotment?

LS: Troy Canyon. You came across the cattle guard up here [when you drove to this place] — that's our northern limit. Down below there's a cattle guard, and from the cattle guard it goes clear up to Troy follows the foothill. That is our allotment.

RM: And part of it is on Fish and Game land?

LS: On the dry lake out there — that Pleistocene lake.

RM: Is there water in it?

LS: In 1911 the government was drilling potash wells down here, and I guess they got some water wells, too. Beyond here there is kind of a well and swamp region.

RM: And there's waterfowl there?

LS: Same, but it's not well known; it's not much of anything.

RM: But the U.S. Bureau of Fish and Wildlife manages it?

LS: They own it, yes. Remember, the federal government owns 88 percent of Nevada, so when they talk about doing this or that you have no choice; the final word is theirs.

RM: You don't use that land much, though, do you?

LS: No, but we pay grazing fees for it. It's in our range, although there's nothing there. Look out [the window].

RM: It looks like an alkali flat.

LS: It is; it's the dregs of a Pleistocene lake. You know, this was all under water at one time.

RM: Right, at the end of the last glacial era. Where are the fish?

LS: There's a kind of a marsh up in the northern part. The artesian wells were put in and left from when they were drilling for potash.

RM: Oh, I see; they were artesian. Is your big well here artesian?

LS: We don't have wells here; just springs. But the well they drilled was pretty good sized, and the government just took it over. And that's Fish and Wildlife down here.

RM: It made a little marsh down there?

LS: Yes. They drilled all through here, and that one happened to have water and it made a little area here for fish and waterfowl. I don't know anybody ever goes fishing there now — I think they used to.

RM: And the well is still flowing?

LS: As far as I know it is, yes.

RM: Did the government find any potash back in 1911?

LS: If they did find any, it was not worth developing.

RM: Martha Hawkins had a picture of them drilling down there. How long were they drilling here?

LS: I know they were here one winter because a few years ago . . . the girls and I have explored this whole area. We went out one time and found a mound by a well site. We dug in the mound and it was full of bottles that they had carried drinking water in. There were dozens of them, and they were all broken; I guess they froze and cracked. I have a box of those bottle scraps some place around here. Every one of them is broken.

RM: Did they drill a lot of holes?

LS: I don't know how many, but there were remnants — the mound I just mentioned, and maybe a corral — there might have been a corral there with horses and stuff — you can see the boards, but it's pretty much gone back to nature.

RM: What do you know about the history of the Locke place?

LS: We're sort of related to them, way back. Madison's mother was an Ernst and her brother married Grandma's sister Grace, one of the older girls. So the descendants would be relatives to both sides. They're old-timers in this area. How she got over here . . . the Ernsts were in Belmont, and Madison's dad was in Belmont before they came. I don't know if there was anything at their ranch site before Lockes' or not, or whether they just came and found the springs and settled. There's a nice stone house that the family lived in. I think it's in disrepair, because some transient had gone in and left a hose running and just ruined the floor. They had a beautiful floor and the water warped everything. But the house, I think, is still there. Madison's sister Jeannie lived there and they had their kids and all.

RM: Were the Lockes here when George Sharp came in?

LS: I don't know. But at that time they were related because, as I said, Grace married an Ernst.

RM: Where did Locke graze his cattle?

LS: On the other side of the valley. We were not mixing [our cattle] because of the expanse in the middle.

RM: The alkali flat kept them apart?

LS: Right. That's kind of natural; God did that. Sometimes there would be a stray from one end or the other, but [not often].

RM: Are there any other ranches south of here?

LS: Yes, at Nyala.

RM: What was at Nyala when you came here?

LS: A one-armed guy from Tonopah, Emery Garrett, lived there with his wife, Clara. They lived in the house that's still there. I'm not sure how long they had been there before I came out. They were up in Troy too; they have people buried in Troy. Emery's parents were living on our place when they burned the house.

RM: Oh, at Blue Eagle.

LS: Yes. It was Emery's parents, I think, who burned it. He and Clara were down there and I don't think they had any kids. He was a county commissioner for a long time.

RM: When was that?

LS: I was here — it must have been the '40s and '50s — '50, perhaps. RM: Did they have a large operation there, or was it small?

LS: I don't know. He eventually bought Currant and sold Nyala to Slick Lamb.

RM: Slick Lamb?

LS: Yes, he's related to the Lambs over in Pahrnagat Valley. He's Floyd Lamb's brother.

RM: They call him Slick?

LS: Yes. You can tell what kind of a guy he was. And he was slick. He was a nice guy, but his name tells it. I think Howard bought Nyala from Slick Lamb.

RM: Oh, Howard Sharp bought it eventually.

LS: Yes, from Slick Lamb. There was not much future here for him. [Chuckles] Lamb wasn't a worker; he lived on other people's . .

Garrett was a county commissioner. He spent a lot of time in town and he liked bars; he was a bartender up here.

RM: A bartender at Currant?

LS: Yes. They moved up there eventually.

RM: Do you know anything else about the history of Nyala?

LS: It was called Mormon Wells before because there was a stagecoach stop there.

RM: Were there Mormons there?

LS: I don't know if they just stopped there to get water and they called it Mormon Wells or what. Mrs. Reischke bought it and I think they named it. Do you know Erma Reischke from Tonopah?

RM: I don't know her, but I knew the Reischke store, and I knew the ladies who ran it.

LS: Erma was the daughter and they lived out here and had a little store or something. In Tonopah they had that ice cream parlor place.

RM: Yes, there on the south side of the street. But they had originally had a little store at Nyala?



LS: They had something at Nyala, and they could have been there when there was a post office; this was the route.

RM: Yes, coming from Belmont.

LS: Eventually from Tonopah to Ely, yes. I know Grandma said they went to Tonopah, the county seat, in 1917. They had a Model-T Ford, and Grandpa never did learn to drive. But in 1917 she drove the car. They'd go to Tonopah and it would take them 10 hours to get there.

RM: Oh!

LS: They followed the dirt road and they carried their gas and water in those 5-gallon square cans. They had all the tire-patching stuff they needed, and it would take 10 hours. You know where Five Mile is?

RM: Yes, that's the ranch house alongside Highway 6.

LS: Right; on the highway. That was the place to stop. And they had lots of problems getting up that hill because of the gravity flow for the gasoline.

RM: Oh, it wouldn't feed?

LS: Yes. She said lots of times she would have to back up the hill to keep the gasoline flowing.

## CHAPTER FOUR

LS: She would back up the hill to get to the top. They carried the water in case the car would boil over. They'd stay overnight, of course; they stayed at the Mizpah. You could get a room for \$1 or \$2 a night, and it had inside rooms. Were you ever in that hotel before it was remodeled?

RM: Yes, it did have inside rooms, didn't it?

LS: The rooms were around this way, and the ones in the middle, I guess, were the cheapest, and the windows opened out onto the halls while people passed by.

RM: I know! A terrible room to sleep in.

LS: Well, that's where they would stay. Then there was a lady named Christina Clifford who had the Golden Hotel up close to where the fire station is in Tonopah now. Grandma stayed [at the Golden Hotel] because [she and Christina] were dear friends, and she'd do her thing at the courthouse. She knew everybody. They had a nice visit and then she would come back the next day or maybe 2 days later.

RM: Would Grandpa be with her, or would she go alone?

LS: I guess he went sometimes, and sometimes she'd go alone. We used to have a little garage out here and they would jack the car up in the winter on blocks — they wouldn't take it out during the snow and winter. Jim, my husband, said his dad would go in there and pretend he was driving and try gears and stuff, but he never actually drove a car.

RM: [Chuckles]

LS: He liked horses better. I think he tried once and he told the car to "whoa" and, of course, it didn't, and that was the last time.

RM: Several people have told me about old-timers saying whoa to a car.

LS: He was a horseman all his life. He never was interested in driving.

RM: There probably wasn't much traffic on the road either, was there?

LS: Absolutely nothing.

RM: If you'd break down, you might be there quite a while before help would come.

LS: The only thing . . . when I came we were guaranteed, 3 times a week, mail. So if you broke down on Friday, you'd have been stuck out here until Monday unless you walked.

RM: So they were delivering mail when you came here?

LS: Mail was delivered twice a week at first, and then we got it 3 times.

RM: What was the mail route? Did the mailman come through this old Midland Trail?

LS: Yes. He had to at first. Later on he used the highway. He would bring it to the Currant post office and the mail carrier from Currant, whoever that happened to be, would pick it up at Currant and deliver it down as far as Nyala. There were only the 2 ranches, us and Nyala. In the hills there were guys just sitting up there; old prospector-type people.

RM: Little cabins up there?

LS: Like Solan [Terrell's] place, and then Irwin Canyon, Grant Canyon, Troy . . .

RM: Can you mention some of the people who were living up in those canyons back in the '40s?

LS: Some exciting ones. Talk about Peyton Place, we had it here.

RM: Tell me about it.

LS: [Chuckles] Paul Irwin lived in Irwin Canyon. He was born on Duckwater. He had a couple with him, a man named Smitty and his wife Sylvia, and Sylvia had a girl named Maola. One day the little girl came to school and she was talking about something, discussing where she slept or something. She said, "'Well, when Smitty's gone sometimes I sleep with Mama when Uncle Paul doesn't." [Laughter] There was a little baby born and they named it Walter Paul, so I think that Paul was Uncle Paul's child.

The little girl was kind of a cute girl but kind of sad. She wasn't overly intelligent, you know. We were trying to collect stamps and get stamps going and she said she just couldn't find the country of South America. I tried to tell her that was a continent with countries in it. And then on this side, at Grant . .

RM: Were there just miners up there, or what?

LS: Actually they weren't doing anything.

RM: I wonder what they lived on.

LS: I don't know whether they lived on a pension or what, but they had an old Model A Ford, and I know that car was trained. If they were coming from town it broke down here at dinnertime. Or if they were coming out of the canyon they had problems here; and usually at a mealtime. We were real nice [to them] because old Paul was a native here and all that. You fed them and took them home and went after them; you did all kinds of nice little things.

RM: Yes, that people did in those days.

LS: I believe Paul was an uncle to Martha Hawkins.

RM: I'll bet he was Ike Irvin's son. They changed . . . that Irvin and Irwin has always confused me, because some of them are Irwin and some are Irvin.

LS: All the young ones up here are Irwins; the canyon is Irwin.

RM: Yes. The original was Irvin. They changed it somewhere along the way, I'm pretty sure.

LS: Well, they were the main ones up here for a number of years.

RM: How long were these people up at Irwin Canyon?

LS: Paul died, then the others just kind of moved out. I think he had a pension. There was nothing much; they left. But another year — 1941, I guess — they formed a company. A cousin from California, Carl Irwin, who was a good businessman but not too bright . . . [chuckles] he had a good business in the San Mateo area. They decided to mine in Irwin Canyon, so they formed a company. They had quite a crew up here — 8 or 10 people. They worked all year and they had a little crusher going. When the profits were all figured up they had \$8 for a year's work to share. So nothing was done after that. People have come and gone in Irwin Canyon since then.

Then in Grant there was an old guy, Old Man McMullen. He came there in the very early 1900s, and he had a cabin. I guess he was a prospector; they were everywhere.

RM: The prospectors were?

LS: Yes, the old-timers. They were still looking for the big catch. His son lived in Ely and they came out every Sunday, every weekend. He loved it out here. The old man was working for Kennecott, and they had 2 kids. McMullen's wife was a schoolteacher here. They hired her to come and she taught school one year right here on the hillside, years ago when my husband was in school. Then they moved to town and he got a job at Kennecott. But they still liked the place here very much.

Now, Willow Creek is east of Nyala on the hillside of the canyon —straight up. There was a mine there, and I think that Martha Hawkins's husband had some claims there too. A couple and a boy, Millers, lived there. The father always wore kind of a derby hat and a suit, and he had a cane. He was kind of crippled-like. I don't know whether he was lazy . . . he thought he was pretty cool. The boy went to school down here.

He boarded during the week with Howard Sharp's family, then went home on the mail stage and his folks brought him back on Monday. But Maola, from Irwin Canyon, commuted every day when she did come.

RM: It sounds like there were more people living out here 50 years ago than there are now. And then Lockes are on the other side of the valley?

LS: Right; on the other side.

RM: And that's it for all the ranches here until you get to Duckwater?

LS: Right.

RM: But it sounds like there were people in the hills and everything.

LS: There were prospectors, yes.

RM: Were they kind of residue from a former time?

LS: Yes, the old Americana leftover. And they were nice people — they were good, they were interesting. For instance, Hubert Welch moved into the place where the Terrells had been. Somebody has always picked up a claim and moved in.

Sometimes a guy would bring women out to be a companion. Hubert Welch was funny. He advertised that he was looking for a housekeeper because he had a ranch and a mine and he needed a housekeeper. Well, he got quite a lot of calls, and one lady came out from Oregon. She was a big lady, and he was this little tiny guy. She spent the weekend with him. I know Carl was teasing him about her.

All he had was one little house and a mine, and in the mine he had sort of a wine cellar. He had the wine cellar fenced off from the first lady that he had living with him so she couldn't get at his liquor because she would drink. [Chuckles] The cellar had a grill, like in some old medieval castle.

RM: So he would advertise?

LS: Yes, we recognized [the ad] and what he was doing because he had done this before.

RM: Did he have more than one taker out here?

LS: This one from Oregon actually came out. She wasn't going to take a chance, I guess, but she came. But the others would write. He was probably the last of the old-timers. He wrote a couple of stories and had them published in one of those dime pulp things.

RM: Oh, fiction.

LS: Yes, he made up a lot of stuff. And he wrote to presidents . . . Carole would do his typing for him; he'd come down here and she would type all his stuff for him and he'd mail it off.

RM: When was he doing this?

LS: It had to be in the '50s.

RM: Was he here when you got here?

LS: No, he came later. He was from Pine Creek, on the other side of the mountain.

RM: What's the next valley over — is that Sand Springs Valley?

LS: No, that's the Lund area.

RM: Oh, Lund's on the other side.

LS: Yes. He was south of Lund, but he came over. This was open because people didn't pay their taxes and somebody would pick up the claim. This goes on all the time — they come for awhile and [then leave]. But he got sick and had to leave. He eventually died. He was an alcoholic, too.

RM: When did he leave here?

LS: Oh, I can't remember. But his daughter came and took him away. He was found drunk on the floor of his house. There's a story about him that is worth listening to.

RM: Let's hear it.

LS: Well, we'd better stop; the mailman's here.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

LS: This mailman is Ken Curtis. He's coming around the same route that you took, and he's going to go down the valley now to Twin Springs. [Tape is turned off for a while.]

LS: There were sane botanists from the University of Nevada out here. We were looking for plants and we went up Camps Canyon. In the middle of the road was an old army tank that was stuck. Sitting in the front seat was a gal — the hood was opened and she was sitting on the engine pouring gasoline from a gallon jug in a funnel into a carburetor. When we got closer it was Hubert; they were both drunk. Hubert was swearing and cussing at all women in general, and she was sitting there pouring gasoline and she was drunk. He had just gotten out of jail from the prison in Carson because he had shot his girlfriend at Warm Springs and his time was up. On the way out he picked up this gal to come stay with him [chuckles] and there they were, stuck. That's how I first saw Hubert on this side of the mountain, going in. The botanists and I backed off and came back.

So he settled up in that canyon. And there's a tungsten mine . . . he fixed up his house and he was quite clever. If he had only behaved himself and concentrated! He was a good artist; he painted very well in an early Americana style like Grandma Moses. He wrote and he

was a 3-instrument musician. He had a drum that he plunked with his foot and he played a guitar and then he had a harmonica. He would entertain, and he did a very good job. He had ability.

RM: Did he play at dances and things like that around here?

LS: No, but when we had some affair down here he would come and play and when we went up there, he would play for us.

RM: And you say he had shot a former girlfriend at Warm Springs?

LS: Yes, he was at Warm Springs and he got mad at her for something, I guess when he was drinking, and he shot her. He went to Carson City and he stayed there for quite a while.

RM: Did he kill her?

LS: I think she survived.

RM: Meanwhile he's advertising for women . .

LS: This is later, after he's been up here; he got lonesome. But this Virginia that he picked up, this gal he had with him, stayed with him for quite a while. She put up with all his nonsense and antics and everything. He fixed up a nice fireplace and he had a cute cabin. He did a lot of really nice art rock work.

He had a can of kerosene sitting next to the fireplace so they could put it on the wood to start a fire. He also had a can of gasoline. Well, she started the fire one morning and instead of taking the kerosene she used gasoline, and she caught on fire. She was wearing nylon pants — you know how nylon melts and clings. Well, it just melted onto her. They got her to the hospital and she was badly burned. One day he came back and he was laughing his head off. He said,

"You know, the people in there think I'm going to pay for this. I'm not going to pay for any of it." She was in there for months (or weeks, maybe). He said, "I'm not married to her. I'm not responsible for any of her bills." And he didn't pay. She never came back. After she got out she left him.

RM: Was she disfigured?

LS: It was on her body, not the face — it was where the flames hit her and all the nylon melted on. I haven't seen her since; I don't know where she is.

RM: How did he earn a living?

LS: I just don't know; he might have had a pension.

RM: And he was an older man?

LS: Yes, and he drank a lot. One day I guess he drank himself into a stupor and a friend, an old-timer, came to visit and he found him on the floor, passed out. He'd been there for a couple of days I guess, and he had been lying on his hand so much that he stopped the circulation and they had to amputate a bunch of his fingers. Another time he did the same thing. The friend walked down to here tell us that his friend was dying up there. We called his daughter in Alamo and got an ambulance. Then he came to and he wouldn't go in the ambulance. He had signs all over, "Don't take me to Tonopah. They're going to kill me there. Don't take me to Tonopah." This is Nye County, you know.

They finally got him to Ely but he wouldn't stay in the hospital; he would run away. And he was beginning to kind of flip out. Well, the daughter did get him to Vegas and then they got him to Alamo. She had a trailer for him and he lived there on and off and then finally I think they took him Sparks, where he died.

I don't know if you remember when some guy went berserk in Overton, robbed a bank and killed the people at the bank, the 3 of them?

RM: No.

LS: One of them was a girl from up here, a Lani. He laid them down and shot them in the back of the head. It was a friend of theirs who went goofy. Well, he was kind of a relative of Hubert's. The last report was that the killer was going north. Hubert was afraid that he was coming to his place to stay with him, and he was scared. So he booby-trapped that whole hillside. He put mines and all kinds of things out. He put up signs, "This is booby-trapped," all around his place in case that guy ever came. Hubert did strange things.

RM: He sounds like a strange person.

LS: And yet he had a wonderful garden, he could paint, he had a musical talent. But he never developed any of it.

RM: And you say he also wrote some articles?

LS: He wrote articles and Carole typed them. He sold a couple to [a magazine] called Treasury. It's a kind of a western, a pulp — one of those dime novel books. But he did have it published; I mean, it was in 56 a magazine. I think if he had concentrated he could have perhaps been doing something worthwhile. But I think he was kind of the last of the old-time Americans here.

RM: Do you consider Duckwater to be Railroad Valley?

LS: Yes, Duckwater is in Railroad Valley.

RM: Do you consider Railroad Valley as stopping at Twin Springs Gap?



LS: It bends around a little bit and flares out, but it's because you have Hot Creek Valley and Reveille Valley.

RM: But why don't you consider Railroad Valley as going way on down by the Reveille Range on the west?

LS: I think there's another valley; they call it another name.

RM: How did Railroad Valley get its name?

LS: The story that we heard I think was [told by] Bub Roberts's father to little Frank. (He came out here in the early days.) Eureka was booming and Caliente had a railroad, and they were going to run a railroad from Eureka to Caliente because there were no mountain passes. They were going to follow the valleys, and it would be an easy trip. They surveyed it twice and, before they could do anything, the mines petered out and that was the end of it. Roberts came out as a young surveyor from Pennsylvania.

RM: That would be Martha Hawkins' father.

LS: Right.

RM: OK, yes. That would have been after 1900 though, wouldn't it, because the railroad didn't go into Caliente until after 1900.

LS: Yes, about 1905.

RM: The story that I heard many years ago when we were at the Reveille lead mine was that they called it Railroad Valley because they had contemplated building a railroad from Eureka down to the lead mine.

LS: To the lead mine?

RM: Your story makes more sense, though.

LS: They could have even gone to the lead mine plus and then down through to Caliente. You see, there are no passes. When you go east and west in Nevada you go through mountain, valley, mountain, valley. This way you followed the valleys. If you go north/south, like from Reno to Las Vegas, you never hit a mountain pass. This is a basin-and-range state.

RM: Do you know anything . . . I saw a map, I think it was like 1880s or 1890s, and they had proposed a railroad from Ely down to Tonopah.

LS: Well, that's not right. There was no Tonopah or Ely in the 1880s or '90s.

RM: You're right. But it was coming down from the Ely area.

LS: Hamilton was up there, and Treasure Hill . .

RM: Maybe the map was later than I thought.

LS: If you have Ely and Tonopah on it, it has to be later.

RM: It has to be after the turn of the century.

LS: Right. But Hamilton was up there and Hamilton was a very big booming town. Shermantown and Treasure Hill and Hamilton were up there and they were good producers; Hamilton was big. It could have been coming from there.

RM: I think what they were contemplating was a different route to Los Angeles that would come down through central Nevada rather than basically following the old Mormon Trail down.

LS: OK. As I said, this was the Midland Trail, and it went from Salt Lake to Los Angeles.

RM: How did it get to Los Angeles after Warm Springs?

LS: I don't know, but Carole has a sign . . . we used to have sign posts here in our lanes and some guy — I'm still mad at him — took our signs from our yard.

RM: But it said Midland Trail?

LS: Yes, and it showed you the miles from here to there. I think Carole has one of those now; all I have is just the top part of a Midland Trail sign.

RM: Right off your property here?

LS: Yes, right here where we live. That was the trail, and it was posted on one of our fence posts.

## CHAPTER FIVE

RM: You've never heard of this proposed railroad that would have gone northeast?

LS: Not down here.

RM: Because if they'd put that railroad in it would have made a big difference to the history of the state.

LS: If. There are a lot of ifs.

RM: It would have changed the whole focus of the history of the state, I think.

LS: Right. Most of the history that's written and people talk about involved Virginia City and the area right there, and yet there's so much more to the state than just that. James Hulse is one guy who has spread the history down into the lower part of the state. His books are pretty good; he's done quite a bit of research. Then for the Lincoln County and White Pine area Shepperson did some good work. He did quite a lot of research on people. Did you know him?

RM: No, I didn't know him. I'm familiar with his work on immigrants and immigrant themes and that kind of thing.

LS: We have kind of a relative in Ely from the Eureka area. She married a Dutchman (there were some Dutch people who came in there). Shepperson was curious about the Dutch in Ely and White Pine, and he interviewed them. But she was English from Eureka.

RM: Yes. The southern half of the state has been amazingly neglected by historians.

LS: So has the whole central portion.

RM: Yes. From Hawthorne south . .

LS: Was Russell Elliott's thesis on Tonopah?

RM: Tonopah and Ely.

LS: His dissertation was Ely, I think, or just the other way around.

RM: I think it was the other way around.

LS: He was a good friend. He and my husband went to school together, and he has been here. He has taken a lot of pictures from Troy. He did the mining areas, basically. There's a new book he now has on his family. But the pictures that he took here had nothing to do with his . . . it's

for the history of Nevada, but his writing did not encompass this area. He was writing about mining towns and their boons.

RM: Yes. But actually, he only dealt with 3 of them.

LS: He did White Pine, Goldfield, Tonopah and one other one. Most of his writing is in the McGill, White Pine area.

RM: I think he grew up there, didn't he?

LS: Yes. So his stuff is there. When he taught Nevada history he did the whole state. He did a good job teaching it, too, in the classroom. I liked him.

RM: That's interesting. Let's talk a little bit about Currant, then. Was Currant one ranch as long as you've been here?

LS: The narrows were owned by the Manzonies. I think they came out in the '20s. There was a guy named Howard Rutherford who lived at one of the places.

RM: Now this is as you start up the canyon?

LS: Yes. There was the Ramsey place, and then Rutherfords' place, and the Manzonies' place . .

RM: Did you know first names for those people?

LS: Let's see. I only knew the 2 Ramsey boys' names, Ben and Ivan. They both died on the Bataan March in World War II. I can't remember the parents' names. But they had the first place; they were small places. Then the next one was a Cazier place. Then there was Howard Rutherford. I don't know if he was the first or if his dad came there. He was an old man when I came here, so he could have been the original. He came from Canada. Then up again there were Caziers. Each little place was owned by several families. Now I think it is owned by two Manzonies; John Manzonie and Galen own one part. John's an attorney in Vegas; he's kind of a divorce-type lawyer. And then Denny Manzonie owns the rest. So that's the canyon.

RM: The people you've mentioned weren't the original occupants, were they?

LS: The Caziers and the Rutherfords could be, because the descendants are still here, the grandkids and great-grandkids.

RM: Those ranches probably date back to the 19th century, don't they?

LS: Yes, they do, the late, late 19th century.

RM: So they came much later than Blue Eagle, probably, in terms of settlement.

LS: It could be; maybe about the same time. And there were people here and then Currant, and that was just a ranch, just one spot. Later it had a post office.

RM: What do you know about the origins of the ranch at Currant itself? LS: Not much, I guess. Johnson was there.

RM: The ranch is going up the canyon there, so they obviously have a stream.

LS: There's Currant Creek . .

RM: Right. But once you get down on the flat where Currant is now, where do they get their water?

LS: They were getting it from the creek, but now they have wells. I think they have a well in that well house. But yes, they had their water.

RM: And that's a perennial stream, right?

LS: It gets pretty low sometimes.

RM: Are there fish in it?

LS: There used to be, and I'm sure there are now. People used to fish.....

RM: Just as an aside, are there any permanent streams that come out of the mountains here?

LS: No, just the melt-off in the spring.

RM: It'll flow for a few months?

LS: Yes. But we have no streams; we just have springs.

RM: What's that big mountain off to the east of Currant?

LS: That's Currant Mountain.

RM: Are there any permanent streams that came off of that?

LS: The only stream is Currant Creek. That's the only one that we have out here.

RM: And it runs year round, even though it gets low.

LS: Yes. I've never known it to go dry, actually, since I've been here. That's where they get their water, but it's a small stream. And other times it gets pretty full, but they irrigate their fields and everything with it.

RM: Blue Eagle does not produce a running stream, does it?

LS: No, just from our springs here.

RM: Where does that spring run to?

LS: Just to the meadows. Whatever is left over goes out into the dry lake.

RM: How far is it to water out here in your meadows, if you drilled?

LS: The well at the house that they're using with the windmill on it — it's been there for 120 years — is 11 feet. And it's a good well; it's cold water. Our spring here is 54 degrees. Then we drilled a well for the house and we went 265 feet and it was piped about 225; they had to cut the pipe.

RM: So it's 225 feet just up this far out of the meadow.

LS: Well, it's just north of Carole's house, over there.

RM: Is it surface water that's coming off of the mountains?

LS: I don't think it's surface, I think it's subterranean. There's no surface water around up here.

RM: But I mean it's draining the surface; it's not coming from deep formations.

LS: I don't know, because this is cold. The spring at the ranch to the north is 87 degrees, so that has to come from a deeper area. If you stand up here on this hill above the house — I'm at the foot of the last foothill — and you look over, you can see transitional zones in this area. You can see through geologic time how things went down. You can see the different-type growth on the slope. As you look down you can see that closer down you're going to get more saline plants, and then you have your dry lake down here. The transitional zones are very well marked naturally, and the growth is there.

RM: All right. The other flowing water in the valley, then, would be the Duckwater spring. That actually produces a stream that flows down the valley a ways, doesn't it?

LS: Right.

RM: What's your earliest knowledge of Currant?

LS: The Callaways bought it later, but there was somebody called Johnson who had it. He had an inn; it was just a stop. There was no electricity, of course, and no running water inside; it was one of those typical 1900 or earlier stops. When I first came here, before the fire, they had the original building and the cookhouse and the bunkhouse. The cookhouse had a big stove and big galvanized tubs where they did the dishes and a big table all in one room. I think that roans were let in there.

RM: So everybody ate at that big table in the cookhouse?

LS: Right. And then over here there was a post office and a store. It wasn't very big. I do have pictures of all that.

RM: How big was the post office and the store building?

LS: I don't think it was as wide as this room, but it may be twice as long.

RM: This is probably 18-by-18.

LS: It might have been 15-by-30. It was kind of long, and then the post office was in the back, sort of. She was selling overalls and those old fashioned dresses in 2 or 3 [styles]. I think the Indians did a lot of their shopping there. She had a few groceries. Minnie Callaway was the postmaster when I came here.

RM: And what was her husband's name?

LS: I can't recall his name, but Doug was the boy and he lived at Currant, too.

RM: How long were the Callaways there?

LS: Not too long.

RM: How long had they been there when you got here, do you think?

LS: Just a few years. They don't figure in the old history. They were here in the '30s, and I don't think much earlier than that.

RM: And they left just a few years after you came, which would be in the '40s?

LS: Yes, because he died. The young folks his son Doug and Nora, the wife — took over, but they didn't last. They moved to Idaho. He was working for the state highway department. The state highway had lots of stations along this road. There was one in Currant where it is now, up in the hills. Then there was one at Currant where Doug Callaway was, one up Lockes', one at Rattlesnake and one at Warm Springs. There were stations all along the way, which was kind of

nice — in case of an emergency or anything you were within somebody's section. But now it's all gone.

RM: Why did they do it that way then, do you think?

LS: I think maybe it's the type of equipment they had. I think as they got more sophisticated they just kept shutting them down.

RM: Oh. Trucks got bigger and better and they could cover more territory.

LS: Supposedly.

RM: You don't think they do that good a job?

LS: Well, they come out of Lund up to Lockes' to do our road.

RM: That doesn't seem too efficient, does it? [Chuckles]

LS: No, because on their way to Las Vegas they go way down the valley that way. When you think about Lund, it's more than 50, maybe 60 miles, from Lund to here.

RM: Yes. How do you get to Las Vegas? You go over to Lund, don't you, and down that way?

LS: I have 3 ways to go. It depends on who's with me or what my goal is.

RM: If you want to get there in a hurry, which way do you go?

LS: Well, if I'm going to drive, I used to go this way — on the dirt road and then down through Rachel.

RM: Oh, you go down in the valley to Twin Springs.

LS: Yes. But now the roads are better if you go by Lund.

RM: You go back up toward Ely then over to Lund and then back down. LS: And then down. You get out at Alamo — Hiko. Or you can go to Tonopah and down. So I have 3 ways. The longest is Tonopah, obviously. RM: Yes, because you go a longways west and then you have to come back. LS: Sometimes if I'm alone I go this way because I think if something should go wrong, I have a better chance to [get help].

RM: To get back to the Callaways — who was there before them?

LS: There were some Allreds, and there were Johnsons, and there were Turners, but they would just come and go.



RM: They would just stay a while and go. Did they own the ranch?

LS: In the early 1900s, Vern Allred wanted to sell the ranch to Grandma and Grandpa for \$8000 and Grandma said she wouldn't have it. She said, "That's just all you do. Every time somebody comes by you have to get up and feed them," and stoke the wood stove, and there were no refrigerators. So she wouldn't think about it, and they didn't buy it. And today it's worth quite a bit more.

RM: Do you know how much land they have there?

LS: No. It wasn't very much, and I don't know whether they accumulated more. Denny Manzonie has the property behind them, and I think the field across is his.

RM: Do the Manzonies own what we call Currant now?

LS: No, they own some of the land around. Gustoffson from the Tropicana, I think, is still the owner of Currant.

RM: He's involved in the Tropicana in Vegas?

LS: Yes, and it was his money that . .

RM: I think [the Tropicana is] owned by the Ramada Inn now.

LS: He's in jail now, anyway. He was a real smart man, a college graduate and everything. He got tricked. I think crooks are smarter than [honest] people, and I think he got gypped out. They used him. His sister comes up every once in a while to see what's going on; they lease it now.

RM: When did they put in that store and post office?

LS: The Currant post office had been there a long time, but I don't know how long. I think it was running the same time that maybe the Reischkes had Nyala, which went out long before I came; that one's gone.

RM: Was there ever a town at Currant?

LS: No, it was just a ranch with a store and a house. They sold a few items, and the post office was in the house. Now they have a little motel and across the road they have some hookups for trailer parks. Vern Cyr put that in when he was here. He modernized it and fixed it up very nicely.

RM: Was gas available when you came into the country?

LS: I think so.

RM: You can get gas there now, can't you?

LS: Most of the time you can't. The guy doesn't pay his bill. Instead of taking care of and paying the bills, he likes to gamble. The companies won't bring gas to him unless he pays for it.

RM: You can't count on his gas, then?

LS: I wouldn't count on it, because you never know. When he runs out, until he gets the cash they won't bring more gas out.

RM: When did they put the cabins in there?

LS: Vern Cyr did that, I believe — that was maybe 25, 30 years ago.

RM: That would be about 1960 or in there?

LS: Yes, sometime like that.

RM: Did he own it?

LS: He and his wife. His wife was a moneyed lady from San Bernardino; she was in oil. But he was pretty smart; he improved it and fixed it up nicely. They planted an orchard and did some real nice things. When the old lady died and Vern sold, it all went to pot again. The orchard is all out. Along the creek where the Manzones are now, they still have orchards, but they're practically gone. They made their living on fruit in the early days. They would take it to market in Ely and people would come out and buy it.

RM: When was that — in the '30s?

LS: Yes, the '30s or maybe '20s; I don't know.

RM: So Currant was a good place to grow fruit trees?

LS: Yes. Do you know Angeworm?

RM: No.

LS: When you're at Currant and you look up kind of north and east, you'll see a little clump of trees, a little green along the hillside. That's Angeworm, and they have fruit trees. It's a very small place, a good retirement place. They have a few trees and they have fruit of all kinds. (I'm going to get some fruit this year.) And they raise good gardens. One year Donnie had cantaloupe and sold hundreds of cantaloupes. It's a beautiful land.

RM: What's the history of Angleworm? Does it date back to the 19th century?

LS: It does; it goes way back. There were 2 brothers --Martelettis. (I haven't thought about them for years.) One was Gus but I don't remember the other's first name. They were there years ago. Duckwater had fruit trees; they were into fruit and agriculture.

RM: Who has owned Angleworm since you've been here?

LS: Well, Martelettis had it. And then there was a Blair — they had some place in Fallon also. I don't know if you knew Wes Blair around Tonopah. Wes Blair and Rose Blair owned it for a while. Then Louie Zapattini lived there and worked it. His boy, George, became state forester; he started the range management program in Nevada in the '40s. Zapattini lived there and he married the widow of Henry Bordoli.

RM: Was she the mother of the little boy who got leukemia?

LS: No, this was Jack Bordoli's brother Henry's widow, Clara. [Jack's son was the boy who got leukemia.] They lived up there. And let's see, who after Zapattini? Maybe the Lanis; the Lanis have had Angleworm for the last number of years. They're still there; the young kids have it now. (The "young kids" — they're in their 60s.)

RM: And you say that they paved Highway 6 from Tonopah to Ely in the '30s?

LS: Yes. Scrugham was the senator.

RM: Was he senator or was he governor?

LS: He might have been governor. He was a senator, I think, in the '30s. I don't know the story, but all the people were saying that he was bribed to put the road that way — some contractor bribed them. Because you go through a lot of passes that way; you go through Black Rock and so on, and when you go this way there's absolutely no pass.

RM: You mean, when you go down through Twin Springs?

LS: Yes — there's just nothing; it's all flat. But Black Rock is here. . .

RM: Yes, you've got to go over Black Rock, and then you've got to go over Rattlesnake . .

LS: You have several peaks, so they were thinking that Scrugham got paid off.

RM: Who would have profited by going that way?

LS: I don't know; that's all I heard. When I came these were just conversational things and I wasn't really that much interested in it at the time. I'm interested in the history now, but at the time I wasn't.

RM: It was not a traditional route, was it?

LS: There was no road there. I think the contractor did it to get more money out of the deal by going over the passes. There was nobody on these roads — there was no ranch or anybody.

RM: Another thing I wanted to ask you about was Rattlesnake. Do you remember Tom Hurt?

LS: Yes, he was at Warm Springs.

RM: My dad used to go see him at Rattlesnake; Tom had a trailer at Rattlesnake.

LS: I'll tell you, the first time I met him was in the '40s when I came out. And one time in the early '40s he got a letter to the mayor of Warm Springs. And of course they gave him the letter, and it was from a school back east, saying they would like to correspond with the school at Warm Springs. But all there was, was that one little tiny building that Tom lived in with kerosene lamps. Do you remember Tom Hurt?

RM: Vaguely. I was 16 years old, or something.

LS: That's the way I am; it's kind of vague. Anyway, he gave me the letter because I was teaching and I had kids. I might even still have that letter.

RM: That would be an interesting thing to put in the book, wouldn't it?

LS: Yes, because he was the mayor of Warm Springs and he got it. The kids and I did something with it.

RM: Tom Hurt was an old miner, wasn't he?

LS: Yes. When he had to leave Warm Springs he got a cancerous growth on his face. It was big.

RM: Oh, a mass? He didn't have it taken off?

LS: No, he didn't have any money. And he was in a care center. When I'd go and see him, he looked awful — finally he died. I don't know if he had anybody or not.

RM: I kind of think he didn't.

LS: I never remember anybody; I don't think anybody went to see him. I know when I'd go to town, if I had time I'd run up and see him. The last time I saw him was with this big mass of stuff disfiguring his face.

RM: Oh, poor guy. And he was pretty old by then, wasn't he?

LS: Yes, he was an older man in the '40s.

RM: My dad used to go see him in the '50s, and he was living at Rattlesnake. So he lived in Warm Springs and then went up to Rattlesnake.

LS: Evidently. The Egosques were at Rattlesnake .

RM: Were they at the highway department there?

LS: Yes.

RM: What was his first name?

LS: There were Phil and Prude, father and son; Dorothy, the wife, is in the care center now. She's in her 90s. They're Basques.

RM: And they worked for the highway department?

LS: Yes. They were here a long time. I think the Egosques and some of the others built the house at Moores Station in the early '20s.

RM: Oh, that nice house at Moores.

LS: The big one. I think that Egosques were involved in that building.

RM: I noticed when I came over Rattlesnake today, it's called Sand Pass or Garden Pass?

LS: That's something new. I noticed it the other day when I went to town; I think it's that new.

RM: We always called it Rattlesnake.

LS: It always was Rattlesnake; there's a den of rattlesnakes on the hillside.

RM: Are they still there?

LS: As far as I know, unless somebody's disturbed them. You know, people do break up stuff. But it used to smell pretty bad. The decay . . . I guess they'd been there for years. There was a

little water that came down, some kind of a seep. There was a little opening, kind of a grotto-type . .

RM: I wonder what they lived on?

LS: I don't know, but they might have ranged far and away.

RM: But Tom Hurt had a trailer there. Is that the road that goes down to Moores Station from the top of Rattlesnake? Do I have the right names?

LS: How about Hot Creek?

RM: Well, it goes over toward Morey. You know that road that goes over to Morey from the top of Rattlesnake?

LS: Yes.

RM: He had a trailer right on there, 200 or 300 yards from the highway. My dad used to stop and see him because the only people my dad really knew were miners, so I think Tom was an old miner and prospector.

LS: I think Tom was a miner but then he settled down at Warm Springs and ran that.

RM: He probably leased it from the Fallinis, didn't he?

LS: No, I think Fallinis bought that much later. He might have owned it; I don't know who had it before. I don't know the history, but I know that Tom was there.

## CHAPTER SIX

RM: I think Chlo Lisle from Beatty taught school at Warm Springs. Do you know Chlo?

LS: No, but I know her family and I know about her.

RM: I believe she was the one who taught at the little school at Warm Springs, but I wouldn't swear to it. I interviewed somebody who taught there back in the late '30s, I believe.

LS: Helen Fallini and her sisters went to school there, but there was no high school there, so it would have been grade school. I don't know how long they went there or how long the school had been there, but the building is still there; you saw it.

RM: Yes, it's dilapidated now.

LS: But it's sure neat, isn't it?

RM: Yes, it is. I took a picture of it a while back.

LS: I don't know who taught there.

RM: What did Warm Springs consist of when you came here in 1940? That is, what did the establishment consist of?

LS: From my memory it was just one little building.

RM: Was it a bar?

LS: Tan Hurt had a bar and a little gas pump; it was real primitive.

RM: Probably the setup was a 50-gallon barrel and a pump?

LS: No, he had that little glass tube where you'd pump up 10 gallons and then drain it. Down on the flat from Warm Springs there's a little cabin,— I don't know if you've ever noticed it.

RM: I think I have; on the south side of the highway going to Twin Springs?

LS: Yes. Amateur Aragoni lived there when I came here in the '40s. He had married a Fallini girl and they were there, living in that one little cabin you saw. He was just cowboying around.

RM: Do you know anything about the history of the Reveille mill? Did , you ever get down that way?

LS: I've been there, but I don't know anything about it. Joe Fallini would be the person to talk to.

RM: Let's switch gears back to Duckwater now. By the time you got here Duckwater was already a reservation, wasn't it?

LS: I think in '33 or '34 the government bought the ranches.

RM: They bought a ranch from A. C. Florio.

LS: And the Bank Ranch.

RM: Who had the Bank Ranch?

LS: I'm not sure about that. Edna Jean would know all this.

RM: And she's a Halstead?

LS: Yes, Edna Jean; she's Forsgren now. She's teaching school at Duckwater, and she's in her 50s. By the way, how did you get my name?

RM: Oh, everybody knows your name. [Chuckles] When anybody wants to talk about Duckwater, your name comes up.

LS: I taught school there a long time.

RM: Yes. So in approximately '34 the government bought 2 ranches there.

LS: As far as I know — the A. C. Florio ranch and the Bank Ranch. The Duckwater reservation has 2 parts, sort of. There's the lower part and the housing is here, and then the church and the school and all that is up here.

RM: The town is up north.

LS: The town's sort of divided. They built the housing at this part, [the] down part; the school and what they call Tribal Hall are up here now. The old Mormon church, I guess, is the school. And they have a medical station there. The girl who lives on the ranch with us here in this trailer works at the Tribal Hall as the nurse's help.

RM: What did Duckwater consist of when you got here?

LS: There was the Halsteads' ranch.

RM: And who was on it at the time?



LS: Ed and Beatie (Beatrice) Halstead. And then the lower part of Duckwater had a Bordoli place, and the Azamendis and the Roberts had little places. They were not ranches; they were, I guess, farmers — orchards and stuff. Everybody seemed to have orchards then. Imogene was a Basque and the Azamendis were Basque people and they leased and had sheep.

RM: So they had sheep on their ranch and they were probably pasturing them out in the hills around there?

LS: They had places to take them, yes. They had herders who took them wherever their designated area was.

RM: By the 1940s, were there many sheep in this country?

LS: No, there never were many sheep here; they just trailed through. think Basques still own the place the Azamendis used to have; I can't remember their name. They own it yet, and they pasture and do a lot of their work there, but they summer their sheep up north and winter them down south. They follow the sheep trail.

RM: By south you mean south of here?

LS: Yes, not through here.

RM: How far down?

LS: They go down through another valley.

RM: Which valley?

LS: I'm not sure which place they go across.

RM: But to your knowledge, sheep have never been a big thing in this, area.

LS: Right; we were cow people here. Each rancher disliked sheep intensely. The first sheep we had right here was when my kids went into 4-H and Carole had her first lamb. She has a little herd of about 30 now. Sue Fallini did the same thing; she also has a little flock of about 30. They're all cattle people, mind you — they go way back with cattle ranching. There's a girl who's kind of a newlywed (she's living at Rachel) who is getting a little band of sheep.

RM: What's her name?

LS: Ruthie Agee. Her dad is Wayne Hage.

RM: Oh, OK, she's a Hage.

LS: Yes, she married an Agee.

RM: Oh, Ruth Hage.

LS: Do you know her?

RM: She was a cheerleader in Tonopah, yes. One of the best they ever had, and one of the cutest. Who did she marry?

LS: An Agee from Elko. So she has a few sheep, and those are the sheep that are on the places now, and the guys make many comments.

RM: I should add that my daughter, Bambi, was a cheerleader at Tonopah, too. She graduated in '87.

LS: Was she in grade school there?

RM: No, she started junior high there.

LS: I was going to say, I didn't have her in school.

RM: You taught in Tonopah?

LS: Yes, a long time, but the elementary grades.

RM: Now, you've described the ranches that were there when you got there.....

LS: As I remember them.

RM: Yes, as you remember them. All of this is as you remember it.

LS: This is all so fast that . .

RM: You'll have a chance to review the transcripts, so you can look it over more at your leisure. Was there a school for the Indians at Duckwater when you first came out here?

LS: Yes, I think there was a school ..... are you familiar with Duckwater?

RM: A little bit.

LS: Do you know what they call the Black Point?

RM: No.

LS: You know when you came up going up the road, to your left you'll see ranches?

RM: Right.

LS: OK, that's Duckwater. Then you go up and as the road turns to go by the cemetery, that's Black Point. When I first came here there was a schoolhouse right on the hillside. I don't remember that Indians were there, but later they insisted that they wanted the kids to get off the reservation and to join the whites and give them privileges, which they did for a long, long time. Then there was a movement a few years ago to go back to the reservation and preserve their culture. None of the kids speak Indian at all — they're all English-speaking. The old-timers are the only ones who have the language.

RM: Yes, the culture's dead for all intents and purposes.

LS: It is. Although they still have a lot of their beliefs and their traditions and all, which is the way it should be, I think.

RM: What did the school at Black Point consist of?

LS: First through eighth grades.

RM: Was it a 2-room school?

LS: I think it was just one, if I remember right.

RM: Were there many Indians in Duckwater, or did the whites outnumber them?

LS: I really don't know that. There were quite a few whites who were old-timers. There were the Vanovers and the Roberts . . . Auntie Vanover was an aunt to the Azamendi lady and to Josephine, who was the mother of Martha of the Roberts. But as they died off nobody took their place. The Bradshaws bought the old Bordoli place; the Bradshaws are out there now. Then Wence bought a piece of land out there, but I'm not sure if they're gone or not. They were with the Basque sheep people . .

RM: Was there a store in Duckwater?

LS: There were several during the years. When I got here Della McGary had a store; the building is still there. It's by Edna Jean's house. They were pretty old when I got here. I think that closed. On the highway as you're going toward the reservation or the school, there's still a sign that has the big metal pipe. There used to be a store and a service station there, but that burned. And that was the last that they had on Duckwater. I remember those 2.

RM: Could you name some Indian families that were here when you came into the area?

LS: Thompsons, Allison's . .

RM: Was Blackeye there?

LS: Yes. They had a place down in the valley here.

RM: You mean in Blue Eagle?

LS: In Railroad Valley up north, way up on the other side of the highway, was a place called the Blackeyes' place. I think Perlene's father, Tabbitts Blackeye, lived there.

RM: Oh, is Perlene Thompson a Blackeye? I didn't know that.

LS: Perlene had another name Behank. And her brother, Henry Blackeye, lived out there. A lot of them didn't live on the reservation; I guess they kind of meandered over and moseyed back. They went back because they got so many free things, with no taxes and everything.

RM: Oh, I see, they've come in more since you've been here.

LS: Lots of them have come in.

RM: Where did they come from primarily?

LS: I think the Allison's came from the Yomba area and the Smoky Valley country, Reese River, that part. I think the Blackeyes were here. I can't remember the old-time names, but a lot of them came as the reservation was opened up. Years ago the government built housing. They put up little stone houses with 4 rooms — there was no bathroom as far as I know, or anything in them. A lot of them continue to live in their little house and use the stone house as a chicken house or for storage or whatever. They were contented; they didn't have to be moved. I think we did so many things wrong around the world trying to impose our culture on these people and these old-timers. They were happy in their traditional place and they liked it and they stayed . .

RM: Yes, instead of trying to put them in a modern house which they couldn't relate to . .

LS: Yes, they didn't really like it. They were contented. They didn't have much, but they didn't want much; they didn't care for physical things — they were more spiritual.

RM: Then you say they shut down the school there and moved them off?

LS: Well, they built a new school.

RM: Approximately when was that?

LS: I think that when the kids of that era grew up the school closed down, and when they started getting married and more kids moved in they built the present Duckwater school. Senator Bible might have been the senator at the time, and I think Bering was congressman. He said nobody liked him but the people; he was elected year after year. He was good. But the school was built and it's still there; it's a very good school That's the one I taught in. You should talk to Edna Jean about this.

RM: And you taught white children and Indian children?

LS: They were combined, yes. The Indians decided that they wanted to join the whites, which they did. Andy Thompson was our bus driver and he was a janitor. Martha Hawkins was our cook — oh, she was tough with the kids. She was a tough old gal. We had the Allison kids — when they built their own school the Allisons wouldn't go back to the reservation, so they stayed on.

RM: So basically they built a school here and it was for all the kids in the area.

LS: Everybody. They went there for years.

RM: When did they start combining the Indian and white kids?

LS: I really don't know. The white kids went to the reservation school too, if I remember.

RM: The school at Black Point?

LS: No, I mean on the reservation school, later. And when they got this big county school built, everybody went there. It's a Nye County school. RM: I suppose the county got something for the Indians, didn't they? LS: Yes, we did. We had many advantages because of that, because they're the "underprivileged." To get them educated in the spring we took a trip around the state. We would take them in the bus for a week --- go to Elko and Winnemucca . . . when we got to Las Vegas we took them on a boat ride on Lake Mead, and we got on the train to take a train ride from Vegas to Caliente; the bus drove up and met us there. So we gave them experiences. We went to the fanciest nightclubs in Vegas, Reno, every place, and they treated us beautifully; they were very good with us they were good with the kids. The kids were excellent to take — all of them, the Indians and whites. We have many pictures of that. Andy did bus driving; he and Perlene were the 2 guys who ran the bus. I took care of the bigger kids and Edna Jean was in charge of the little ones.

RM: What grades did you teach?

LS: The upper grades, 5 to 8.

RM: Were you the only teacher for the fifth through eighth? About how big was your class?

LS: I think the biggest was about 20.

RM: How would you describe teaching in an environment like that, with the Indians and white children together?

LS: I never considered them as Indians and whites; they were just kids. We all had math at the same time, and each kid would . . . I am not a type that gets up and lectures to kids. That's a worthless way to teach, because they don't hear. They might be there, but they're not with you. I let them work and I'd just wander around and answer questions and help. The little kids would listen and they got a lot more by listening. And each one did his grade level and if they needed something . . . if a fifth grader needed something maybe a seventh grader would answer or help. It was great.

RM: Did they have a high school there?

LS: No.

RM: Where did they go to high school?

LS: My kids went to convent schools.

RM: Were your kids there for the first 8 grades?

LS: I taught my kids here at home. Carole never went to a school. When this school closed I taught my own. And when Carole was in the eighth grade, we opened a school again here.

RM: You're the first person I've met who has done that. Let's talk about that when we finish with Duckwater. Did most of the children that you taught at Duckwater go to Ely or Tonopah or Eureka when they graduated from the eighth grade?

LS: Not Tonopah. They went to Eureka, Lund and Ely; they chose. If you had relatives in Eureka you went there and so on.

RM: And I imagine the county made some kind of an arrangement, didn't they, to pay for that.

LS: Yes, there was an exchange if you went to school in a different county.

RM: When did you start teaching at Duckwater?

LS: Oh, gosh. I taught at Currant for a long time and then . .

RM: Were there any Indian kids in that school?

LS: I had some. They didn't live on the reservation. The dad, George, was working on a state highway [project] at Currant and they'd come down to school from the highway station.

RM: Oh. So it was the people who were living along Currant.

LS: In the whole area, and from down here.

RM: Was it a one-room school?

LS: Yes, I had all 8 grades.

RM: When did you start that, approximately?

LS: It was about '60 when I went to Currant. When I came here in '40 I taught here a couple of years and then I substituted, and then I had my family. But I taught my kids here.

RM: But you didn't work in the school system again until '60, when you went to Currant.

LS: We opened up Blue Eagle in 1955 because there was a big bunch of kids here.

RM: Oh, you had a school at Blue Eagle?

LS: Yes. Carole was in the eighth grade. I taught my girls at home until that year.

RM: When did you start teaching them at home?

LS: From whenever Carole started school. She was 5 years old when we started, so it was about '48. But I taught her all the time. My kids were learning from the time they were born. They could all read before they ever went to school.

RM: When you were teaching them here in your home, did it have to be established with the state?

LS: Not necessarily, but I worked with them.

RM: But if you've got a kid who isn't in school when they're 6 years old, you're in trouble, aren't you?

LS: You should be, yes. I went to the school superintendent in Ely and got some books from him and I just bought books and taught them at home.

RM: And who supervised you or tested them or anything?

LS: Nobody, until they got older.

RM: Who kept records?

LS: Nobody. We didn't have any records. Nobody taught my kids in the first 8 grades but me.

RM: Is that right; all your children? That's an amazing record.

LS: Yes, I taught them all.

RM: And you either taught them at home or at the school at Blue Eagle or at the school at Currant?

LS: Currant, and then Marilyn was the one who went to Duckwater; the Currant school was being phased out. I can't remember . . . there were 3 girls graduating from the eighth grade at Currant; Linda was one of them. There was a big celebration that year. We had 3 old people who had graduated from the 8th grade 50 years before — Rusty Cazier, Grace Cazier Fisher and Lida Bardness Lani. They came to my graduation, so we did quite a thing. We had the picture of those 3 in the Reno papers — it was really big stuff, these 3 little old people sitting here with the young girls behind. And the girls were laughing, they were just delighted; they looked really neat. And Governor Sawyer came out to visit our school. RM: I'll be darned. So that school at Currant had been there a long time.

LS: Yes. It was a log cabin. They put siding on it later when they improved it.

RM: So you say you started teaching at home in '48?

LS: Yes, but now you're making it sound as if this was formal. Carole was reading from the time she was 2 and 3, because I had all these books. You ought to go downstairs and see my library. I had these kids reading . . . I read to them all the time. They did numbers and I would send them to the "store." We had a storehouse and I'd send them to the store to buy a can of peas or a box of cereal, so they were learning; we never had anything formal. And all our science was done . . . I had all kinds of things going on.

RM: Then when you had a school here at Blue Eagle, you went on the county payroll?

LS: Yes.

RM: Was the school mainly for your own kids, or were there other kids there?

LS: There were other kids. Roy Sharp, my husband's brother, had 3 children in the school. There was a tiny building at the upper part of the ranch, and we had 6 kids. We did all kinds of wonderful things. We had a band and a little musical group. I took them to town to entertain at different organizations, and we had T-shirts that said Blue Eagle School, and then they had



white T-shirts and the girls had blue corduroy skirts and the boys had blue Levi's; they looked real sharp. I have pictures of all that.

RM: And how long did the Blue Eagle school last?

LS: We ended up with 9 kids in an 11-by-15-foot building. It got so full that we had to move, so we went to Currant. The teacher they had at Currant was not always there. When Flo Reed would come out she wouldn't be there; she'd have to go look for her. So they closed the school.

RM: Was Florence Reed related to O. K. Reed?

LS: She's from Elko. She might have been a relative, but she was the superintendent. She just wrote a book about the schools that she had out here.

RM: Oh, yes, do you have it?

LS: Yes. I bought about 8 of them. I got one for each girl, and then for Edna Jean and anybody connected with the school; it's a good book. She tells about experiences that she had.

RM: Is there any history about this area in the book?

LS: Yes, there's all about me and my school.

RM: OK, I'm going to get that book. So you became overcrowded here and you had teacher problems at Currant, so you moved up to Currant.

LS: Right.

RM: What year was that?

LS: It was in '60.

RM: And how long were you in Currant?

LS: I really can't remember. I had lots of kids there. Then they got into this consolidation thing, and I went to Duckwater. There were 2 teachers there and I was the third. Edna Jean had the first 3 grades and this guy, Casey, had the last 2 and I had the fourth and fifth. Casey was not one of our pet teachers. He left and I got the upper grades and Edna Jean had the lower ones. We worked there for quite a few years together.

RM: Meals were furnished at Duckwater, weren't they?

LS: Yes.

RM: Did the kids bring their own lunches at Currant, or how did that work?

LS: We all brought lunches and they had water.

RM: But at Duckwater they fixed the lunches, didn't they?

LS: Yes, because the government thought the Indians needed that meal. But they had food; they weren't starving. It was just this thing that they put money into something. Those kids ate. They didn't eat what you and I would eat, they had their own . . .

RM: They were well-nourished?

LS: They looked all right to me. If the parents got drunk or something they might not get a meal, but basically they were getting along. They were good kids.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: You said that at Duckwater they went through a period where they wanted the Anglo and Indian children to go to school together, and then there came a time when they wanted separation.

LS: That's more in modern times. Some people — I think you call them agitators — came in and said to them, "Keep your culture," and all this stuff. But one of them said that they don't know their language; they don't speak it.

RM: The young people, yes.

LS: Yes. They understand it when the old folks talk to them, but it's all English now. And they don't have any of the traditions. They used to have fandangos.

RM: Describe a fandango that you remember.

LS: Just dancing. I don't think these people were into that [Ghost Dance] cult, because Jack Wovoka was on the other side — Hawthorne, Yerington and up in there. I don't know if they had anything to do with it. I think this is a newer thing here, from the reading I've done. don't ever remember anybody ever making a reference to Wovoka, but they do now, some.

There's one lady on Duckwater you should really talk to. I told you that she and Jeanne are collaborating. She has taught some classes on Indian culture at the junior college in Elko and she's trying to get things together from the Indian point of view.

RM: And what's her name?

LS: Doris Allison.

RM: Allison? Would she talk to a white person that she doesn't know?

LS: Oh, sure; her grandkids go to our school. She won't have them on the reservation school. She's really an up-and-coming woman; she's a very nice person. She won't tell you where things are. Sometimes you tell a person and they put it in their book and then somebody else comes out and they'll try and find it. And if they come across [a shrine or something] they will desecrate it or take souvenirs, so they're not going to tell their locations.

RM: Sure, you don't want to. I wouldn't put them in a book even if I knew where they were.

LS: I know you've talked to Andy [Thompson] and he talked about secret things.

RM: Yes, some. I don't think he went into it too much.

LS: He's not all Indian, you know.

RM: Well, none of them are.

LS: No, but he's pretty white. He grew up on the other side of the mountain with the Adams. He was Andy Adams and then he changed his name to Thompson.

RM: You mean he is part Indian?

LS: Yes, he's Indian, but he wasn't raised with Indians. They didn't have reservations [when he was young]; they lived with white people.

RM: Oh, he lived with another family over there?

LS: I don't know whether he lived with a family or not but his family was on the other side of the mountain. And they took the name Adams because of the Adams family over there. I don't know when he changed from Adams to Thompson.

RM: Was Thompson his original name?

LS: I didn't ask him. He's hard of hearing now and his eyesight's going. He had been at the care center. He's home right now.

RM: How's his wife, Perlene?

LS: She's on that dialysis machine 3 times a week. This gal who lives here on the ranch takes care of her.

RM: Did you ever go to a fandango?

LS: No, I didn't go.

RM: Is it held in a particular season of the year?

LS: I think in the fall. They have events on Duckwater now — artifact sales and things. It's not like it used to be; I think it's more like an American fair, or like what the Basques do — they have their big days and excitement. I think that it's more like that now because these kids are too Americanized to keep much of their tradition.

They're teaching kids Indian dances but they're not from here; they're Plains Indian dances. These people never wore the feather bonnet; that was the Sioux. Anytime you see people with bonnets on, that's a fake. The Sioux were the guys who did that, and the chiefs wore that. Others might have one feather, but the bonnet was his clan's symbol, the way the totem of the Northwest was a symbol. A lot of the feathers now are these pinks and blues; they're not Indian colors, they're the commercial things. So I think they're getting away from the old customs.

RM: You say there were radical people who came in. Was that in the '60s?

LS: Oh, that was after; in the '70s, I guess. They had people who came out with the government — VISTA workers. Well, one came out and she was going to teach the girls how to take sun baths and all that kind of stuff. They kind of told the people at Duckwater that they should keep their culture.

RM: Was this girl in VISTA an Indian?

LS: No, she was from New Hampshire, coming out here, onto the desert. She was a disaster. They shouldn't send people from a New England state out to places like this. They have different attitudes, different ideas, different cultural backgrounds, different lives. The Indians in their area have been integrated for years. . .

RM: Right; they're indistinguishable from the general population.

LS: Yes. And these are nice people, they're good people, and they're doing good things, but you can't keep in isolation; there's no way you can isolate them. The teachers are all white, and I don't think the Indians have very many young folks going into the teaching field. Oh, there is going to be an Indian boy I think that I had in school — Keith Honecker is going to be a teacher here. He's a great young man.

RM: Oh, that's good.

LS: But he's the only one of all the kids who have been here who is going into the teaching field. I think he's going to be very good, because he won't be too radical either way. He's going to be a good teacher, and he's going to be real broad minded.

RM: So the result of this kind of radicalization or turning within was that they said they wanted to be schooled by themselves. When did they start that?

LS: I was teaching in Tonopah, so I don't know, but it was in the '70s.

RM: That's what they still have, isn't it?

LS: They have their own school, but as I say, they have white teachers. Carole teaches the music.

RM: Do they have any Anglo children in their school?

LS: Yes, they have a deputy there and his 2 kids are white. I can't think of anybody else who's there, but there are others.

RM: So the kids from Currant and other places don't go there?

LS: No, we have our own school.

RM: Is there a school at Currant?

LS: No, it's at Duckwater.

RM: Oh, there are 2 schools at Duckwater?

LS: Yes. One's on the reservation, 5 miles from our school. And that's where most of the kids go.

RM: Oh, most of them go to the white kids' school?

LS: All the white kids go to our school except for the kids who live on the reservation whose dad is a sheriff.

RM: So you have separate but supposedly equal facilities?

LS: Right.

RM: It's segregation in a way, isn't it?

LS: They're segregated; that was their choice. But as I said, some of the people, like Doris Allison, choose not to let their kids go there, She's very progressive; she's really broad minded, and her kids and grandkids continue at our school.

RM: Did they have to build a new school then for the whites?

LS: Oh, we had our school here. I told you that I think it was [Senators] Bible and Bering who helped build this school for us.

RM: Oh, I thought they got the Indian school built.

LS: No, it was our school.

RM: Did the Indians build their own school?

LS: They took the Mormon church . . . the Mormons built a church over there and I don't know whether they got rid of the Mormons, but they took over the church and made it into a school. It's pretty nice; they have a little gym and everything.

RM: And you feel that was in the '70s?

IS: Yes, early '70s.

RM: When did you start teaching in Tonopah?

LS: In the '70s.

RM: What grades did you teach there?

LS: The first year I had the fifth grade, and from then on I had second and fourth.

RM: And you were teaching up at Tonopah High School?

LS: No, there's only one . .

RM: Well, there's a Silver Rim Elementary School, too.

LS: But that wasn't there; that's all new — that and the high school are new. We were all up at the old high school. We were in the lower building, on the lower side.

RM: How long did you teach there then?

LS: Ten years or more. I just retired.

RM: When did you retire?

LS: In the '80s. Then I went back to teaching again. I retired and went back, stayed out a year and went back, and then went back again.

RM: Did you go back to Tonopah?

LS: No, I went to Fallinis'. I taught a school there for same years in the '80s.

RM: So you were back to a little country school.

LS: Sort of, yes. I liked that.

RM: Did you follow or did you precede Ruth Hage at Fallinis'?

LS: She taught after I did.

RM: That's the year I interviewed Helen, when Ruth was there.

LS: Oh, OK. Then the school closed. I was there for a number of years and then my daughter taught for one year, and then Ruthie came.

RM: How did it change, if at all, from the time you had started teaching in the small country school till when you went back?

LS: It was basically the same. Nobody bothered me, so I could do as I pleased. Like Ray Tennant — he was my superintendent for a long time — said, "I like the results you get, and I don't care how you get it." We did a lot of activities. They don't do much of that kind of stuff. We did all kinds of things — we did research, we did books, we made newspapers . . . out here we had the Blue Eagle Standard that the school published. Do you know John Gillman and Dallas?

RM: Yes.

LS: They came out and filmed my school at Fallinis' and it was on TV. I had some big projects going. We were reading about medieval history so we built a medieval castle — a big one — in the middle of the floor out of cardboard boxes and all kinds of shapes and we sprayed it all. We had a moat with alligators in it and little horses on the drawbridge and everything.

RM: How would you describe your philosophy of education?

LS: I never thought about it. I don't believe in a lot of textbooks; I think that's just one man's opinion, and mine is as good as his. And you have to taste your class anyway — you have to know what the kid is. I've taught about 35 years and I've never taught the same way twice. You can't. You have a different group of kids and you can't do the same thing; you have to feel what they're like and what their abilities are and which way they're going.

We did wonderful things in Tonopah. I used to fight with the janitors. One year I put my chairs in a circle around the room and we built Tonopah in the middle, and each kid [was in charge of] the building where his parent worked. The little Peterson girl's dad was in the airport, so she did the airport; one guy's parent was a cook at the Mizpah, so he got the Mizpah Hotel. We got everything in there — different boxes — and [running right across the room was] the highway with the bends in it. We actually went to 22 places that year to see these facilities. And when we got done we just had a marvelous thing there. Lots of people came to see it. And the kids brought all their little toys — those Fisher Price service stations and things. We got a lot of civics studies in, as well as geography, geology, architecture . . .

Another year we made candles. We had a classroom of about 30 kids making candles. I brought my hot plate and coffee cans and the kids saved paraffin and we used crayons to color them. We would read in a history book about what the colonial people did, and we tried everything they did. We made soap; we had 2 failures in our soap-making before we were successful. And I think that's important, because life is not always a success. Their parents had to save grease . . . they went along with everything we did. I had good parents, good people to work with. Another year I put my kids in pods, 5 to a little group, and the janitor would come in . . . do you remember Jess Allanise?

RM: The bus driver?



LS: He might have driven the bus — Jess.

RM: Yes, I think so.

LS: He was Mexican; he was a neat guy. He'd straighten [the pods] out and then we'd have to put them all together again. People would say the kids cheated, but I don't think they ever did. I think they were pretty smart kids. Lisa was one of my students. They really were good smart kids, and they worked together very well. They were competing with this other group . . .

RM: How different was it teaching in Tonopah compared to the ranch school and at Duckwater?

LS: Well, I had one room with one grade and I taught everything, but it was only one grade. I still had a lot of projects going. I liked to have kids do things. I don't want idle kids in my room — idleness causes mischief. They always had many things to do. And if the slower ones weren't done, I'd help them.

I did not believe a lot in homework, either, because parents weren't aware of newer methods, and it may make them feel guilty. Remember the new math that came in?

RM: Yes.

LS: Well, you can't send that home to a parent. I think we got done pretty well in school. We worked — we didn't have idle time. I read a lot to my students. I read reams and reams of stuff.

RM: .That's great. What did you read, literature?

LS: Everything. One of the books I read to every class that I had was Silas Marner.

RM: Oh, we read that, too, when I was in school.

LS: You read that in high school. But I read it to my kids. I read Treasure Island, I read the classics, I read the Oz books, Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, any other current [books] that were good.

RM: Did you read a little bit each day at a certain time?

LS: Yes, when they came in at lunch. They didn't do anything; they listened. I read exciting stories and seasonal poetry. We did lots of poetry — every Friday we recited poetry in every class I ever had. During baseball season I would use the 3 Casey poems — "Casey at the Bat" and "Twenty Years Later" and his revenge — whatever the season is, there's a poem for it. I'd have a whole section on poetry. The kids got to where they kind of liked it. We always memorized poetry, and it's not sissy stuff — you can think about the spheroid that came through, you know. There's a lot of action — like Casey Jones, the engineer. It's no joke when he crashes; and that's a poem. The guys realized that poetry is not sissy stuff and not just lovey-dovey and that poetry doesn't have to be rhyming all the time, it can be blank or free or

whatever you want. And I read a lot of Robert Service-type things. I read everything and anything; the grades made no difference. I read good material and we discussed it. We discussed the characters. I have 2 favorite villains — Iago and Long John Silver. We read Treasure Island every year and we always discussed . . .

RM: So you read them Shakespeare, too?

LS: I read everything that came along. I told them the stories of Shakespeare, and they're exciting — there's a lot of intrigue and meanness and . . .

RM: Oh, yes — every human vice and misery and joy and everything else. LS: When they listen to the stories they don't realize what they're listening to. You tell them "Shakespeare" and they just blank out, because people say it's awful. And yet you talk about the story . . . Comedy of Errors is one of my favorites. I had bought some posters of the Dromio — the Twins — and one side [shows them] looking at you and the other side is their back; they have their head turned around, and you see their front and back. And that was an interesting picture to them. You can sell kids anything, really.

RM: And you're still involved in helping the schools, aren't you?

LS: Yes. I took a class last year and I did a project on . . . to begin with, the kids at Duckwater gave the teacher a pair of mice for Christmas last year. Those 2 mice produced close to 70 offspring by the end of the year.

RM: Is that right? Isn't that something?

LS: Kids nowadays don't have much imagination or creativity.

RM: Would you say that for a fact?

LS: I'm saying it as a fact. So for this project for the university I made a felt mouse and stuffed it. I had a box about 2 feet by 2 feet or more, and I made that the classroom. It had a desk and the teacher was a mouse — Carole the music teacher was a mouse. It was called the Mousterian Academy, and all the kids were mice and they were all different colors. They knew where they were sitting; I used the same seating plan. So if they saw a yellow mouse at their place, for instance, that was who he was.

Now, each kid was supposed to be a mouse and think like a mouse. They have a school cat, so there was a big school cat — and I called it the Great Spotted Cat — that lived there. And they were suppose to write . . . well, the year ended and I only got a few stories that I made into a book and sent to the university.

RM: Oh, I see; they made up stories, then, about this situation.

LS: And from the mouse point of view. They were the mouse, they weren't human. They had to impose themselves into somebody. And some of the imaginations were wonderful. Others were not too deep, but some of them . . . what did they study at their academy? Why, they studied how to escape the cat and what to do in case the cat came. And they were good — some of them did it as poetry, some of them rhymed it in couplets.

RM: Why do you think kids are less creative now than they used to be? TV?

LS: They have to be told whatever to do; they don't get out and do things.

RM: Yes, they don't have any initiative.

LS: I don't know if the kids out here watch too much TV, but I know that they watch a lot.

RM: But they don't have any initiative here either? I mean, like they used to?

LS: No, because there are too many outside things — too much television, I think, and everything's done for them. They just have to sit and watch it and let it come in.

RM: You're more and more a passive observer.

LS: .And I don't think that's using your head much; you're just stacking things in there that another person has put there. I think that they have to get out and think and create and imagine things.

RM: I think you're right.

LS: I'm going back this fall and finish up the project and see what we can do. And this summer I got 3 blank books and gave them to 3 kids to write in. They're not to write a diary or a log, they're to write a poem or some pretty thought or a story. So when school starts I'm going to see what they have put in these blank books. (They're the regular hardback books.) I'm going to take a class in writing children's literature because I might write. I might; I'm not very good at writing, I think, but I'll see what I can do.

RM: Let's shift gears now and talk about the oil. That's been a big part of the history of the valley in the last 40 years, hasn't it?

LS: Yes. I think Carole has more information on that, because she was keeping a scrapbook. They were involved in the first . . .

RM: Why don't you talk about the early days of the oil exploration. I remember we were in Reveille Valley at that time and it was quite a sensation.

LS: Well, Shell Oil came in. They were doing a lot of exploratory work all around here. We leased land to Shell. The first well was drilled very quietly. I think they went down about 10,000 feet — a long way. They discovered a lot of things, the formations and what's down there. They studied the gravels and cores and other geologic things. They found out that the stuff that's up here on Blue Eagle is down below, so there must have been a fault here in this section of the valley that pushed up somehow, as if it was a slide of some kind. They found things like that, and then they picked up [leases on] all the land around here, then it hit the public.

RM: Because it's mainly government land, isn't it?

LS: Yes. Shell didn't do it; they had other people apply for land so that Shell's name wasn't involved in any way.

RM: Sure, that would have driven the prices up, wouldn't it?

LS: Yes.

RM: Did they take an oil lease from you?

LS: Yes, we were the first people approached.

RM: What did they tell you when they came to get a lease from you?

LS: That they were drilling. The engineer who sat on the well was Ivan Colburn who, as I said, is a geology professor at . . . I don't think it's Long Beach State, but it's down there. He was a young man and he was sitting on the well as the engineer. He stayed with us; most of the guys in the early days stayed here with us.

RM: This would be the professionals, or the workers, too?

LS: Just the professionals, not the drillers. We were friends with them but they didn't . . . they just had a job; these other guys were kind of the brains behind it.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

RM: Can you say how much you got on your first lease?

LS: A dollar an acre and then a royalty if they found oil.

RM: It didn't amount to a whole lot, did it?

LS: No, but then there wasn't much going on; there was nothing here. Actually when they came out, there was nothing in the valley but this ranch. There wasn't a light, a pole; there was nothing. We were here, Nyala was there, and Carrant, and that's it. This was all built up since Shell came. Then Shell pulled out and different ones came and drilled in different areas.

RM: Where did they drill that first well?

LS: You came right through it. It's way up close to the end. You came through a place that's all brown with buildings right around it.

RM: About how far north of Blue Eagle would it be?

LS: Let's see, it's about 6 miles to the turnoff and then down about 3.....

RM: About 9 miles up?

LS: Approximately, yes.

RM: Was it a dry hole?

LS: No.

RM: Oh, they hit oil on the first shot?

LS: That's right. That was an experimental thing. Yes, they found oil right here.

RM: Was it a good well?

LS: Yes. It was not a flowing well, but they could pump it. And they have a lot of wells around there now that are still pumping.

RM: They must: have been in here exploring and doing seismic studies and everything before that.

LS: Yes, a year or two before they drilled.

RM: And they'd gotten the leases before that, hadn't they?

LS: Yes, before they drilled and after they explored.

RM: They didn't get a lease before they explored?

LS: No, there was nothing to get a lease for. This was a pure guess, I think. There are no salt domes to show that there might be anything here, so it was a chance they took, and it worked.

RM: What happened after that first well came in?

LS: I think they drilled another and then other companies — Cardinal was one — came in and started to drill around up in there. And then other companies came in and started to lease, and they spread out. Every year we had 2 or 3 seismic crews working, but they never shared anything. Each did his own; Gulf was out here and . .

RM: So Shell didn't nail down the whole thing in the beginning?

LS: No, they let it go, after.

RM: Why did they let it go?

LS: I don't know; I guess there wasn't enough.

RM: Who did they sell it to?

LS: I don't know to whom they sold it.

RM: Did they have to inject steam or anything to pump that first well?

LS: Not that I know of. In the oil journals it says this valley has the United States' largest free-flowing well, right down here 5 miles.

RM: Is it called Grant Canyon well?

LS: Yes. They have a battery of 8 tanks and they're doing pretty well. We get as many as 60 trucks a day sometimes, hauling stuff to the refinery and out.

RM: Do they refine it all at the refinery?

LS: No, some of it goes out.

RM: They take it out crude to someone?

LS: Somebody, yes. I know some went to California — the Bakersfield area — and I think some went to Utah. There are trucks going into Utah, so I'm assuming . . .

RM: Originally there was a refinery at the airport in Tonopah. Did they move that out here then?

LS: No, they didn't move that one; this is another one. This is Petro Source from Utah, I think. (I don't know where their headquarters are, but I think it's not all in Utah; I think the headquarters are someplace else.) Yes, there was a refinery [in Tonopah]; I think it's [still] there. I don't know whether it's working or not.

RM: I have the feeling it isn't, but I may be wrong.

LS: I don't think it is, because it was easier to build one here, and it's pretty successful. We also had a little one up at Shell's place; a Ralph Hand built that.

RM: Was he a local person?

LS: No, he came in from California. He built this little refinery but it caught fire and burned. It was right across the road. As you go out it will be on your right. It was never rebuilt. Then they built right down on the highway.

RM: What products do they produce here now?

LS: What did he say, kerosene, a diesel . . . they're going to break it down into 3 components. It's not refined to the end. They break it down into 3 components and haul that out. And a lot of crude goes out, but I think independent people haul the crude, rather than Petro Source. A lot of the trucks that you see will be other people buying crude to take out, and it just goes around. There's a lot of activity.

RM: I wonder if they're making their own diesel for their trucks.

LS: I'm not sure. We talked about getting that oil and doing our own thing, the diesel . .

RM: Yes; I wonder why they don't put some of it on the road.

LS: They tried it a couple of times and people complained that it's ruining . . I think the environmentalists said it's not good for the place. We just have so much to contend with; you can't believe the interference that there is.

RM: I want to talk about that, too, but let's finish discussing the oil. They've found oil in several spots in the valley, haven't they?

LS: Yes, Five Miles South is at Grant, and then all across the valley. They're drilling right down the valley at Bacon Flat now; you can see it. It's just beyond our field. They drill and they find dry holes and they find oil.

RM: It's spotty, isn't it?

LS: That's an interesting aspect of the geology here; they don't know what it's like underneath. Basically it should be a basin with the sediment, but you can drill a well here . . . up at Grant Canyon you have a flowing well, one of the largest in the country, and in the next 40-acre plot there's a granite dome and you don't get anything. Blue Eagle is some kind of a lift; there was a fracture, and the stuff that they were pulling out in core samples was the same as it was almost here on the level.

RM: And the oil is below that?

LS: Some of it is; some is below.

RM: How deep are they going with their holes?

LS: I'm going to guess around 5000 feet now. I don't know if they go any further. I haven't been keeping up with the people; there are so many of them out here now. There are a lot of little companies here, like Mack Oil.

RM: I know Apache is out here.

LS: Yes, Apache and Mack Oil and Petro Source. And Grant Canyon, all kinds.

RM: There is a Grant Canyon Oil Company and they own that big well?

LS: Yes, that's theirs. They have a couple of wells here, I think. Then off from there they have several wells.

RM: Are there any wells on south of Grant Canyon?

LS: None that I know that are producing. It's all in that area. But they've been drilling down below. If there would be just one well I don't know if it would be working. They do find oil, but it's not always worth taking. The shades of oil are there but when they take it under the microscope I don't think it's enough. But it seems to be profitable in the oil fields. They have little spotty fields. Right above here there's a little Pennington . . . remember Pennington from the Circus Circus [Casinos]?

RM: Yes.

LS: He was working up on this place [when] he got discarded.



RM: You mean Pennington owns . .

LS: He had an oil lease. And then I don't know if the old man died . . . anyway, they gave it up; they sold it to somebody else and it's still producing. I think the old man died and young Bill was hurt in an accident somehow.

RM: But that's the same Pennington who owns Circus Circus in Las Vegas?

LS: Yes, and Reno. I think they're out of Reno. That's where their home was.

RM: You seem to think the oil has been good for the valley. Am I right?

LS: Yes. It's a good business and I think it's all right.

RM: How has it affected your lives here?

LS: I get a lot of dust from them, but I don't think it's affected me much at all.

RM: Are the roads better than they used to be?

LS: No. There are so many trucks going over it that they need to pave it. Every election we get promises. I think as much revenue as is going out of here, we've got to get a road. We have many accidents on this road — lots of people have been killed here.

RM: From hitting the trucks?

LS: No, from the dust and going too fast; you can't see. For instance, Ken said he went off the road — that type of thing.

RM: Ken Curtis, your mailman, was here and he said he couldn't see because of the dust and he went off the road.

LS: That's what I'm talking about; that's when your accidents happen. They go too fast; sometimes you get these young guys and they . .

RM: The truck drivers?

LS: Yes, and the young kids who care in to do some exploratory work, or the roughnecks. The road is rough, it is corduroy, and you know how a light vehicle kicks and bounces and goes sideways. You have to know the terrain and drive accordingly. The oil trucks used to have more accidents than they do now. Getting to the barrow pit going too fast the trucks would weave and then tip, and they had lots of oil spills, but they don't have that much anymore. They have a

speed limit and they regulate all that pretty well. Most of the drivers are very considerate; when they see you coming they go to the other side of the road.

RM: Yes, if the dust is real bad from one direction they'll go to the other side so the car doesn't get all the dust.

LS: Yes, you can see where you're going and they're pretty considerate. All in all, I think that it's been OK. When you stand out here at night it looks like a city; there are lights everywhere.

RM: Oh — from the oil wells.

LS: Every well has its little lights. The rig is down here and the refinery is all lighted up and when you come up Black Rock you think, "Boy, there's a big place." And actually, between Nyala and Currant on our road, there are only 5 people that actually live here, not counting Nyala.

RM: You mean 5 households?

LS: Five people. I'm one, Carole and Carl, and Sharon and Thomas. Nobody else lives out here.

RM: How many are living down at Nyala, would you say?

LS: Let me see, I think there are 9. They have some of those land grants now that were taken up as Desert Land Entry [properties]. We have 2 or 3 of those. The newest that we have out here is a polygamist and his outfit. He moved in down beyond Nyala.

RM: What's his name?

LS: I think it's Perkins.

RM: Does he have his extra wives with him?

LS: I don't know if he brings them up, but he has about 12 kids or so.

RM: By several women?

LS: Yes. So he's a pretty active guy. [Chuckles]

RM: Do they have a school down there?

LS: Oh, no.

RM: Where do his kids go to school?

LS: I guess in Utah.

RM: Oh, he didn't bring all the families out here.

LS: No, just some of them at times. During the school year, I think they're in Utah.

RM: Did he move here within the last year or two?

LS: Yes, within the last year perhaps.

RM: Does he have a ranch down there?

LS: No. They're not ranchers, they're farmers. They had some kind of a land thing and they're improving on it. We went down the other day and they have fields of, I think, alfalfa. It looks good.

RM: You mentioned there are some other Desert Entry holdings.

LS: Yes, down in the flat beyond Nyala.

RM: Do they have big pivot sprinklers down there?

LS: I think this Mormon will have pivots. I don't know what they have now. Gary Bevis has been haying there for a number of years and he has good hay crops. One of the girls — Miriam Sharp — the sister of the boys and her husband — has a place down there they started years ago.

RM: How many operations are there below Nyala? There's the polygamist.....

LS: I think his name is Perkins, and I don't know how much land they have; it's kind of new to me. Then there's Gary Bevis, who has about 160 acres, and he works at the refinery and farms alfalfa. Then there's Miriam (Sharp Ylts; he's Dutch or something). And then there's a guy named Gibson from Texas. I don't know if his wife is with him or not but he's there. And that's it, as far as I know.

RM: Are they in Railroad Valley or are they south . . . ?

LS: It's all Railroad Valley, between Twin Springs and beyond Nyala. RM: I wonder where they sell their hay.

LS: I don't know. They truck it to whoever needs it.

RM: When did power come in here?

LS: I wondered if you were going to ask about that. We had our own Witte engine with a 10 KV .

RM: Did you get that in the '40s or the '50s?

LS: Well, before that we had a Kohler plant. When I was at the house down below with my kids we just had the Kohler plant. We had a dual system — we had AC and DC power and the storage unit where power was stored in big batteries. We had lights in DC and then we had the other current.

RM: Oh, AC for appliances and things like that.

LS: But it was not very big. Then we got a Witte engine, which was bigger.

RM: What was the advantage of the Witte over the Kohler?

LS: Kohler only gave a few watts. It was cheaper to operate but the Witte was a 10 KV and we ran everything on it, and it was a 24-hour job. We could shut the Kohler off because the batteries stored up power; we had power for a month from the batteries, for just lights. We had a Servel gas refrigerator.

RM: Did you have a Servel when you got here?

LS: Yes, there was a little one. Then in the '50s we bought a big one.

RM: When did you get the Witte, in the '50s?

LS: In the late '60s. It served both houses when I moved up here.

RM: How expensive was the Witte to operate?

LS: I really don't know.

RM: Did it use like 2 gallons a day, or 10, or . . . ?

LS: I think it was more than 2, but I don't know if it was as much as 10. I know it must have been more than 2, because it ran 24 hours. That little building on the hill here was the Witte house, the power house.

RM: And you used that until commercial power came in?

LS: Yes. I don't know when that came in; it must've been the early '70s.

BM: Did it come in from Ely?

LS: Yes, from Mount Wheeler Power. And finally not too long ago they got it down to Nyala and then down into the farms. So they've been expanding

RM: So it's probably the availability of power that has helped make those settlers move in.

LS: Yes, but it's an expensive process. It's really marginal, the way the power bill is.

RM: Yes, according to other people I've talked to, it's tough to make a living.

LS: It is, because the power is so expensive. And to have your pumps turned on . . . I think they're ripping the people off. I can't remember, but I thought it was \$5000 to turn the power on for the summer session. And you're not going to make much money by the time you finish supplying all your machinery and everything for the hay and then selling it; you're working for nothing.

RM: Where does Ely get their power?

LS: They're buying it from Utah.

RM: There must be a coal-fired plant somewhere.

LS: I'm not sure if it's coal-fired. We do get some, I think, from Boulder Dam. I think it came up through the Pahrangat Valley and that area. But I think it stopped at the old Cleveland ranch. We buy from 2 sources, I think. I'm not familiar enough with Mount Wheeler Power to know.

RM: Is power expensive here, by kilowatt?

LS: I pay about \$35 a month.

RM: That isn't bad.

LS: I get my hot water and I have a furnace (you might hear it come on and off). My hot water is connected through the furnace somehow. I think I average now about \$35; sometimes I run my water cooler. The only thing that runs constantly would be all these lights and the refrigerator.

RM: It doesn't seem to be any worse than I pay in Vegas.

LS: No. That's Mount Wheeler Power. Then I have to buy oil for the furnace. It's an oil furnace but it runs on electricity.

RM: Can you buy oil at the refinery?

LS: No, I buy it out of Ely.

RM: It seems like they ought to be able to give you cheap oil here. [Chuckles]

LS: I'm not sure if it's refined enough for a sensitive plant. I think they might [use it in trucks], but I'm not sure.

RM: And then of course your water is all local for each person.

LS: Yes. My water's from the well we drilled up here.

RM: You were mentioning TV. Do you have a TV district here now?

LS: Yes. We haven't had TV very long — I don't know if it's 20 years yet. We pitched in money and got it going and we had 2 or 3 channels. Now we have 6, and at the meeting Carole went to last night they were asking for 7.

RM: And that's the same system they have at Duckwater?

LS: Yes.

RM: So it's a whole valley system. Do you have a translator up on top of a mountain, or what?

LS: It comes from Salt Lake and Reno to Elko, then to Eureka, then it goes to Prospect Peak, then to Duckwater, then to Currant and . .

RM: Is it on a wire or is it beamed?

LS: Beamed. We have a Chicago station, Nashville, Atlanta and a sports channel, all from cable. And then one from Las Vegas, 2 from Reno and one from Salt Lake.

RM: Well that's more than 6.

LS: It's going to be 7. This Chicago one that they're talking about is going to be the 7th. So I'm satisfied; I don't need a dish. Several people bought a dish to see more, but my god, how much can you see? And you pay all that money and the upkeep . .

RM: Do the dishes work well out here?

LS: Evidently. People seem real happy with them.

RM: How do you get your reception through the district?

LS: I have an antenna that picks it up.

RM: Oh, so you've got a broadcaster up there somewhere that your antenna picks up. It's not on a cable at all.

LS: No, but we cable into the transmitter and then they transmit it to us.

RM: Where do they cable it from?

LS: Oh, Chicago, Atlanta . . . I don't know how the cable works to come in. I guess it's a satellite-type thing, and then it's beamed down to us from there. And we have pretty good reception.

RM: What about phones; when did you get that?

LS: For years we fought with that company to get phones. They had to do studies. They always gave us this run-around — studies and \$100,000 for this . . . finally they gave us phones, and it was a one-party line. It was such smaller; there were fewer people here. My ring was 4 longs, Carole's was 3 longs and a short, and somebody else's was 2 shorts, 2 shorts and a long, 2 shorts and a long and a short; just like Morse code. There were 8 of us on this one line. And that thing rang constantly. During the night the oil companies would call and then they'd stay on forever. And you'd pick it up and somebody would be talking. But it was better than nothing.

RM: When did that come in?

LS: It might be 20 years ago. We haven't modernized very long. I'm not sure about the time; time is fleeting. Then 9 or 10 years ago we got individual lines.

RM: Was it people between here and Currant that were on the line, or was it people in Currant and up to Duckwater, too?

LS: Our area was one, and Duckwater had their own. There were 8 phones in this area, so I don't think Currant was in ours.

RM: OK, there were 8 households?

LS: Not households, 8 phones. Because some were just on a well.

RM: Oh, you mean on an oil well.

LS: Yes, they were on oil wells; they were wired someplace. The wire was on the ground, and you'd follow it.

RM: Did the oil company put in the phones? I mean, were they the ones that really got it in here and put up some of the money?

LS: Not necessarily. We had all worked on this for a long time. We all paid the same but finally I guess the pressure . . . we went to the Public Service Commission finally; we almost forced them into it. Now we have many phones out here.

RM: But most of them are still on the wells?

LS: Well, that's all there is. We only have 3 households here — 3 phones, 3 numbers here. Currant has . .

RM: What, one in the bar and one in the . .

LS: I'm talking about the narrows; there might be 4 phones there in the narrows, and Currant has 2. Then all the people in the trailer park might have a phone . .

RM: Each of them?

LS: They might. Donnie Lani has a phone up at Angleworm, but the other 2 houses don't have phones yet. They said the first of the year, and then they said March; then July. Now Carole said it will be in before 1993, so they're stalling. All they have to do is run a line from the pole to the house, and they haven't done it. They have to do a study . .

RM: Probably the operator is in Ely, or is it Eureka?

LS: We don't have operators. Every phone call we make is long distance except our local calls. Carole and Duckwater — anything that has the 863 prefix is free. Anything out of this valley is long distance — Ely, Tonopah, Australia, or wherever you call.

RM: Do you have good phone service?

LS: It's pretty good. Sometimes they go out but we can't fault that.



## CHAPTER NINE

RM: You were here, of course, when they started the atomic testing program in 1951. Would you like to talk about your recollections of that, and how you see it and so on?

LS: First of all, when the government sent out those field men . . . I'll call them snotty. They were young kids and they looked down on us out here. We didn't want to cooperate with them because we didn't like their attitudes and we weren't going to do anything with them. Then they sent Chuck Costa. He was from Massachusetts and he had such an easy manner and such a friendly way that we talked to him. He spent lots of time in this area as a field man. He eventually worked up to be the head of the EPA part of the Test Site. He just retired. He sat in on every testing. He comes out quite often even now, and he tells us what's going on. He was easygoing and we liked him, so we cooperated with the government then.

RM: You had to wear dosimeter badges, didn't you?

LS: We wore badges, yes, and we had things around . . .

RM: What else did they ask you to do?

LS: I think it was mostly attitude — "Here, you do this," and looking down on people who lived in the country. We thought we were as good or better than they were, and they were just young kids who were not very smart, intelligent or anything. Anyway it all worked out with Chuck at the helm, and then old . . . do you know Don James?

RM: No.

LS: Well, he still comes out. He's been on this run for about 32 years and he still comes out around every week and they take milk and badges and stuff they're still sampling. We give milk and water and vegetables and all kinds of stuff. Carole has a monitor . .

RM: She takes care of that?

LS: Yes, she takes care of that. So we do have something going on all the time. And they always told us, or we think they did, that they were going to have a test. I'd wake up my kids in the morning to watch the bomb go off. We'd stand out here and we'd watch the big cloud come over.

RM: You could see the mushroom cloud from here?

LS: Oh, yes. It always seemed to come up toward our way. Vegas always canceled the shots if the wind was in their direction, but if the wind was coming kind of north and away from Vegas .

RM: So you could see the mushroom cloud from here.

LS: You could see them; it traveled over, yes.

RM: What would the cloud do, come up Railroad Valley or... ?

LS: Sometimes it went over the hills this way and sometimes it would go this way . .

RM: Sometimes it went over the Quinn Range?

LS: Kind of over. It kind of followed the valley up. Anyway, we were in for every shot; we saw all the ones that were visible. They monitored us and I felt confident with these guys.

RM: Do you still feel confident about them?

LS: I do. I testified a couple of times for them. I don't feel anything was wrong, and my kids are intelligent, they're all college graduates, and I don't see anything wrong — that it affected anybody.

RM: How do you feel about the Bordoli boy and his leukemia?

LS: Well, Martha is a dear, dear friend, but I don't know if it was caused by that. He might have just gotten it anyway, no matter where he was.

RM: Do you feel that there might have been a cluster in here? Joe Clifford had leukemia and . . .

LS: But then you look around, and people are getting cancer everywhere. There's so much more of it everywhere, and there are no atomic weapons in sight anywhere; no discharges of any kind. I think it's just exhaust, so I don't know that this had any effect. I know Joe died of leukemia, and Butch died, but those are the only 2; the rest of us are still here. My kids have normal intelligent kids; they're reproducing; it didn't alter their genes in any way.

RM: And nobody else in your family has had any problem that you know of?

LS: No, we've never had any that we know of.

RM: Do they monitor your bodies? I know they have a machine down in Vegas or something.

LS: Carole and Carl go down every 6 months for monitoring. I only go down once in a while; sometimes when I'm down there they'll put me through that.

RM: Do they check to see if you've got radiation?

LS: Yes, or anything. Carole and Carl have been going down ever since [the testing began].

RM: Now who is Carl?

LS: Carole's husband, Carl Hanks. He's from Elko and Fallon. A native of Nevada but he wasn't exposed practically at all.

RM: Did any of your cattle ever get burns or anything from the radiation?

LS: I never saw anything. They say that some down below did; I didn't see them.

RM: Helen Fallini told me that a lot of their cattle got burned.

LS: They ran their cattle almost to the Test Site so they could have, but I didn't see anything up here. They were much more bitter about it than I was — you could sense that. I didn't talk much with Helen about it because I had a different feeling about it.

RM: Do you have any pictures of the clouds coming up the valley?

LS: I'll have Jeanne look and see what I have.

RM: Did everybody in the area get up and go out and watch the shots?

LS: I don't know. I was different with my family. If I heard that there was a star shower, my kids got up. And if we were going to watch some of the satellites . . . above the hill we had a little observatory that they've used observing Regulus II. Well, when Regulus II was going over my kids got up. I got my kids up for any kind of eclipse or anything. If they said there was going to be something phenomenal . . . I don't know if other parents were like that. I don't think they were; I think we were the only ones that really did that.

RM: Would you describe a typical shot that you saw?

LS: They were usually at dawn, or maybe a little bit earlier. The sky would light with a kind of a pink glow. Then this cloud would come up and you could just watch it unfolding, watch it bubble out and then get bigger and kind of dissipate into a big brown haze.

RM: And then it would move up here and move out to the east?

LS: Yes. It didn't go south, I'll tell you. Vegas made sure that it didn't go south.

RM: And I don't think they ever went west, as far as I know.

LS: They followed the wind pattern and that was their natural direction.

RM: How far north from Yucca Flat are you?

LS: They always said something about 125 miles, but I don't know if that's accurate or not.

RM: But you could actually see the cloud that far away.

LS: Yes, we saw the cloud, and we could hear the rumble 15 minutes later.

RM: Did you ever get any damage here from it?

LS: No. Sometimes the Geiger counter showed stuff and then Chuck would say, "Well, wash all your fruit and everything before you eat it and be sure that it's clean." The Geiger counter would go wild sometimes but I didn't panic about it. And I still don't panic about it.

RM: Did it ever shake your building, crack your ceilings or anything?

LS: No cracks, but some shaking. The planes that come over do more damage.

RM: Do you get sonic booms here?

LS: Lots of them. Especially the ones that were ahead of Stealth. This is a testing route. There were so few people here that they would just test through here. We got all kinds of sonic booms. We get them even now, but I can't see anything when I go out. I don't know what it is; it's something that is following. Stealth is done with, it's obsolete; now there's something else on the books. They're always working on something, and whatever it is, we can hear it — I can sense it. Everything rattles, so I know there's something. There are different feels of tremor.

RM: Are you familiar with the stories of the aliens over on Groom Lake, right out of Rachel? You haven't seen any aliens or anything?

LS: No, but we've seen strange phenomena in the sky. One day we were going north on this road and a big shiny ball went across the sky that way (to the west) and then just disappeared.

RM: Was it going fast?

LS: Fairly fast. We followed it with our eyes; it wasn't instantaneous, but . .

RM: But it was a ball?

LS: It looked round. I didn't see flames or anything and it didn't look that far away, but it was something. And we've seen different light shows through the valley through the years. So they had to be either aliens or testing. It was something that was there and we've seen it. Nobody's mentioned it; nobody knows.

RM: What are the light shows you've seen like?

LS: Oh, just flares in the sky over there, just like fire. And then just lights that come on and glow. Grandpa Hanks up here saw something to the south that scared him pretty badly.

RM: What did he see?

LS: Something landed, a plane or something; it scared him.

RM: Was it a regular-looking plane or was it strange?

LS: Something strange, because it frightened him. (He's an old-time cowboy and his speech and mannerisms and words are old-time.)

RM: Is he Carole's husband's father?

LS: Yes, from Fallon. So through the years we've seen different little things that just come and go and we don't know what they are. Nobody knows — or they won't tell you, anyway.

RM: Is there anything else you'd like to say about the A-bombs or the Test Site?

LS: Are you familiar with the names of some of the tests, like Plowshare?

RM: Yes, Plowshare was the Sudan, wasn't it, that big shot?

LS: The Sudan shot, that went to Canada.

RM: Oh, it sent material to Canada?

LS: The whole cloud. Chuck and a couple of guys were here the week of the Sudan; it was going to be a big shot. Jim and I had gone to Elko and we were caning back. Before we got to Ely there was a cloud moving. We went into this cloud and we thought that was funny. We had no idea what it was — it was like the wind blowing here. But they don't have the kind of dust there that we have here from the lake bed. Well, that was that Sudan shot cloud; it went clear up north.

RM: Oh! And you went right through it.

LS: We were in it, yes. It went right through here and Chuck told the girls to stay in the house. They were going to wash everything before they ate, but evidently nothing happened. I felt that they took care of us and were as honest as they could be. We didn't complain. I'd tease Chuck about it — if I have something going I say, "Well, I think I'll have to sue you or something," just because everybody else is suing for everything.

RM: How do you feel about the St. George people and their lawsuit?

LS: I don't know. I hate to say this, but I think there's a lot of inbreeding and there may be a lot of gene mixture down there. People are getting cancer everywhere, and I just don't know. They're picking on it. I don't know if it's sensational or they're hoping to get something or they feel hurt because their people died and they want to get revenge on someone. I don't know what it is.

RM: Has the Test Site made any difference to the valley economically? Have you benefitted at all from the Test Site?

LS: The only way you benefit is that they pay for the milk and vegetables, little puny things . .

RM: That they get to test?

LS: Yes, it's nothing.

RM: How often do they sample the vegetables and milk?

LS: Oh, Don James was out about a week ago. He comes every week and makes his rounds.

RM: Does he take samples every week?

LS: No, he comes out and checks the boxes and everything, then stops and visits. He brings us the Vegas paper when he comes. We've known him almost 35 years — he's been on this run [all that time].

RM: How often does he pick up samples?

LS: Well, this last week he was picking up stuff. He was going to go and have Anna at Fallinis' give him a bunch of stuff and then [take things from] Carole's garden, and I don't know if the milk cow was there. They take water too.

RM: Do they ever tell you the results? Are they finding anything in those samples?

LS: I think they send Carole a sheet. They analyze everything and I doubt if there's anything . .

RM: I read in the paper a couple of months ago that the DOE [Department of Energy] is flying the Test Site at low altitude in a grid, measuring radioactive hot spots on the ground from atmospheric testing. Have you ever heard of anything about hot spots outside of the Test Site?

LS: No. I've been to the Test Site 2 or 3 times now, and I've been into some of those holes. I think they're safe. People say oh, they won't go down there for anything for love nor money. Well, I went in. I think the Sudan hole is still there; it's a biggie.

RM: Yes, you've probably seen it. I know I have.

LS: I was on the first trip when they had that big, big deal — all the generals were there and we went to a lot of things. After that I've gone a couple of times; they asked me if I wanted to go. I kind of enjoy going down just to see it.

RM: I worked on the Test Site in the tunnels in 1958. My dad and I started there together the summer of '58 and he worked there for almost 20 years.

LS: Is he retired now?

RM: Yes. He lives in L.A. with my brother.

LS: That's a sad place to live. I feel that it's not so good anymore. I'm supposed to go down to Sherman Oaks and visit in September but I just don't want to go. I might go; I'll have to check it out.

RM: The things that always got me about L.A. are, one, the smog I just can't take that poor air. And two, you can find anything you want in L.A. if you want to drive. I get tired of driving and the crowding.

LS: I was just going to say — the crowds, the people. I love to go to places like San Francisco and San Mateo for a day or two and then I want to get home. I marvel at the drivers. I like to take 101 — it's off the freeway and it's not so bad. But I like my area here. The air is clean. Every night you see stars, everything is so clear and so bright. You hear the crickets. If you like noise, I have night noises — crickets, and in spring the frogs are down here.

RM: I like crickets but I don't like sirens and barking dogs at night.

LS: We don't have that. We have all these little bugs, and then the coyotes howling; lately we've had a lot of coyotes howling.

RM: You mentioned that there's a lot of interference in your life by all kinds of government agencies?

LS: Well, I'm out of it because I sold to the kids.

RM: You sold your interest in the ranch?

LS: Not my interest, I sold the ranch to my kids. I had the ranch and I sold it, but I kept 5 acres here; this is mine.

RM: When did you do that?

LS: Again, you ask me dates and I can't remember! In the '70s, I guess, because Jim died in '65.

RM: So you moved up here after your husband passed away?

LS: I built up here, yes.

RM: What did he die of?

LS: Heart attack.

RM: How old was he?

LS: Oh, 51.

RM: And you had how many children?

LS: Five daughters; 5 girls.

RM: I'll be darned. Could you give me their names in birth order, the oldest one first?

LS: Carole. Jeanne is the red-headed one you talked to on the phone. Helene is in the middle — she's a redhead. Linda's the fourth redhead, and then Marilyn is the baby. Jeanne is teaching in Vegas now. My girls are all musical; they all play all kinds [of instruments]. Jeanne and Carole and Linda used to give music lessons in their spare time. Jeanne's teaching now and she's working on her master's degree for academically talented kids. (She just finished a class last Friday.) Helene's a nun, and she's in Utah. Linda handed in a paper 2 days ago for her final; she's working on a master's in special ed. They're doing the extremes — Jeanne is way up here and Linda's . . .

RM: One's doing the gifted and one's doing the . .

LS: One's doing the nongifted. [Chuckles] And they both love it. Linda said she's going on for her doctorate. Marilyn decided not to be a teacher because all the rest of them are teachers. She decided that she's going to go into child development. And so she did, but when she got through and went on some cases, it was too much — the abuse of the children and all — and she was threatened. In some places she'd take a police officer with her, and it was just too much. So she quit.

RM: Yes. Dealing with the problems of society will get you down. That's what I told my daughter.

LS: Yes, they were threatening her.

RM: My daughter was talking about going into social work or something like that, and I said it might be fun for a while, but spending your whole life on that . .



LS: It's not fun. She tried it. So she went back to school. She has 3 little boys, this little family [in the picture] over here. She didn't go anyplace, so she went to school at nights all the time she was home and became a paralegal. Now she's in that field and she thinks she'd like to go on and be a research attorney. She thinks that attorneys are a pretty bad lot. She said there are a few good ones but most of them are connivers. So she wants to get into research; she's doing research now for an attorney.

RM: Now Carole is the oldest, and she was born in . .

LS: In 1943.

RM: And when was the youngest born?

LS: Fifty-seven — a big span. That's [a picture of] Carole's younger daughter; she's at the university. Those 2 are Linda's kids — the 4th girl. These 3 boys belong to Marilyn. The other 2 boys that are flat on there are Jeanne's. The girl is Carole's; she's in Florida. And the 2 boys, one's in high school in Las Vegas and Kevin is going to the University of Nevada, Reno, this year. They're Jeanne's 2 boys.

RM: Yes, she told me she was taking one of her sons up to the university. I noticed she didn't send him to UNLV.

LS: He didn't choose to go there. He won 5 different honorary things; he won lots of medals and he's quite a scholar. He had many invitations to different schools and he hemmed and hawed and everything and finally we said, "You've got to make up your mind," so he chose Reno, I guess because we all went there.

RM: How do you see the whole problem of government interference by agencies like the BLM and the Forest Service? Did it influence your decision to sell out?

LS: No, I was just alone and it's not fun working a place alone if you don't need to, so . . .

RM: Carole was here then with her husband?

LS: They came the day that Jim died, and they never left. So they have been here since '65. And they wanted it so I thought, "Well, might as well."

RM: So they're operating the ranch now?

LS: It's theirs. And they've added more land. The only one sad thing is that Carl has developed MS.

RA: Is it a bad case?

LS: Yes.

RM: So he may have to give up the ranch?

LS: He's going to give up the work but we're not going to give up the ranch; it's been in the family too long. I think Kathi might come out. She's Carole's youngest.

RM: None of the others show any inclination . . . ?

LS: Yes, but there's no room for more than one.

RM: So basically the ranch [will] only support one family?

LS: Well, the girls were all in agreement that it would be . .

RM: How many head are they running now?

LS: I don't know. It's their business now, not mine. The girls come home quite often; they like the ranch and the area.

RM: Because they spent their whole life here, didn't they?

LS: Their dad spent his whole life here and they were all born here. These little kids are 5th generation here, because Grandma's mother lived here in the house too. She came from Ireland in the 1850s.

RM: That would be Grandma McCann. Oh, she came down here to be with Grandma when she was old?

IS: Yes.

RM: So there's a tradition.

LS: Yes. I have a picture of the old lady someplace.

RM: Is there a cemetery in the area?

LS: No, but I'm going to try to put one up here in the corner. The girls think it would be a good place to have a cemetery.

RM: Your husband isn't buried in the area?

LS: He's in Ely, and Grandma is buried in Tonopah and Grandpa's in Ely. They're scattered around, so we thought maybe we would make a family cemetery.

RM: I can't think of any other questions right now.

LS: We've been talking for hours. [Chuckles] Is there anything that you can think of that you would like to add? LS: Well, I told you that poem, "Being a friend to man, live in a house by the side of the road . . ." This used to be the road right through here until the oil people started going, then we had the county build the road up there. I have met many people [because we were on the road].

RM: Oh, the road went right through your place and on down to Nyala?

LS: Yes. That wye went down, and from that it's about a mile . . . we couldn't have the oil people going through the ranch, we just couldn't. So they built the road up above. Lots of people would come and stop and most of them were nice people. I would invite them in and have lunch or whatever and I made friends. I can make friends pretty easily, I think, and I learned a lot. And there were all these students who used to come here and stay — they were studying geology. We remember many good times, like when they were haying. There would be 2 or 3 young students, but they would help the girls and go into teams to see who could haul the most bales. We have a swimming hole where the kids always went swimming.

And we always had a little lawn — I started a lawn before Carole was born — and now Carole's expanded that into some lovely lawns. I could take you down and show you some stuff in her house, if you would be interested.

RM: Yes, I would.

## CHAPTER TEN

RM: I understand that as the oil business developed here, a lot of the more white-collar people stayed with you.

LS: Most of them, yes.

RM: So you were kind of a residential boardinghouse for them.

LS: I had lots of friends - like Ivan Colburn, who I talk about; he was the first engineer to stay here. He's been here many times and I've gone to Pasadena to stay with him. When I went to Australia I went there for 3 days and stayed with him. I met his dad, who was a professor. You meet all kinds of people. They were good people.

And I've met a lot of young folks - students, mostly. They still keep coming. Young people from different universities would come here, and we'd feed them. Sometimes they'd stay out in the field and sometimes they would stay right here.

RM: You mean they'd camp out in the field? Was that in a trailer or a tent or . .

LS: Whatever they had - back of a pickup . . . if they're doing fieldwork, instead of coming in every night they would stay. When Ivan went down into the lower part, down in the Quinn Canyon main part, he would bring me back samples of plants. I was into plants very seriously - it was kind of an avocation - and he would bring me plants. He found some dogwood way down there and brought it back.

RM: You mean the dogwood from the South grows here?

LS: Well, this was a dogwood that grew down . .

RM: A dogwood tree that blooms?

LS: It's a shrub. He just brought me branches of a shrub.

RM: But not the flowering kind?

LS: I didn't see the flower. But he would bring me things through the years. Professors from the University of Nevada would come out here and do lots of botanical research. We'd do fieldwork . . .

RM: And they knew that they could stay here? I guess it's part of the grapevine?

LS: Yes. I invite people if I like them. And if I don't, I just don't say anything. You have a feeling, and most of the people are great. I enjoy having them. In all the travels that I've done I've made many friends and they'd come and stay with me, and I've gone to their places. They're from

Florida, Chicago, all around — San Francisco, up north — anyplace. And we still have our annual visits — I do a lot of that.

RM: So you've been on the inside as the understanding of the geology of the valley developed.

LS: Yes. And since they quit coming . . . I guess there isn't much future for geologists. I know when I was in Pasadena and I went to his classes with Ivan the kids don't seem to . . . they're taking geology because it's a required course. Some of them would go into it, but there's not much of a future. What are they going to do with it?

RM: There's not much of a future for anything, when you think about it. LS: Ivan said that fewer and fewer students are going into the field right now. But the last bunch we had were girls — we had 3 or 4 different girls in the last 4 or 5 years.

RM: Do they come in groups or as individuals?

LS: Both. Sometimes 3 or so of them would come and then they'd separate and one would go a certain area and one would be in a different spot. They would take different fields and look for different things. Then they would meet and come down and we'd give them a good dinner. Sometimes they'd just camp out and eat sandwichy stuff, and then they would come in. They'd go swimming at the swimming hole.

RM: Where is the swimming hole?

LS: It's back up about 2-1/2 or maybe 3 miles.

RM: Is it a warm water spring?

LS: Eighty-seven degrees, yes. It's not too big, but just right. The kids all grew up through the years swimming there. First it was my kids and now it's their kids.

RM: How deep is it?

LS: They say that they can't feel the bottom; they don't know where the bottom is where it's bubbling up. It's warm, so it has to come from pretty far. This one's cold.

RM: The one in your field here?

LS: Yes, and I don't know why that's cold and the other one is warm — 87 is pretty warm. There's the fracture, and water is coming from some place.

RM: Tell me about your plant studies.

LS: When I first got married a fellow from Ann Arbor, Michigan, came out — Rogers McVaugh. He was as big as you are [6 feet 4 inches], and had great big hands, and he was handling these tiny little plants — he'd pick them up and put them down and study them. [I thought], "Why, there's got to be something there, when this man who shouldn't be playing with flowers.... " He stayed here quite a while, and I went out with him and got started. I had no idea about plants or their Latin names or anything. I worked and collected and identified, and I had over 250 flowering plants between what we call the Big Wash and Troy and up here.

RM: How far north is the Big Wash?

LS: About 10 miles.

RM: Ten miles north, between here and Currant.

LS: It's on this side of Currant. Every spring, summer and fall I'd go out looking for plants and press them. I used to send plants to the University of Nevada. Then I got hold of a professor at Brigham Young and that guy was a fraud. He wrote me the longest letters, but he never returned anything. All the grasses that I sent him . . . I don't know anything about grasses and he would tell me what wonderful things he had. He gave me an A, but he never returned anything. One of the professors said, "You know what he's doing, he's keeping that for his collection and he'll use it and say that it was his."

RM: Other people returned them?

LS: If I wanted them back, yes.

RM: And you had asked him to send it back.

LS: I wanted the grasses because I didn't know anything about them. I collected a good variety of them, roots and all. And then the flowers. And I met people; lots of botanists would come out. Carl Worth from Rutgers and Annapolis came out. His avocation was botany and he came out every year and we'd go plant hunting, and he would spend a couple of weeks here. Margaret Williams and her husband from the University of Nevada at Reno will come up. They started the Northern Nevada Native Plants Society and it's a big thing now; it's very strong. Do you know Dave Pruitt?

RM: No.

LS: He's in the school system. Then there's a John Pontell . . . I just saw their names on the list. I was trying to get in touch with them to find out why they joined. They collect plants and Margaret's been out here. They show up periodically and we go into the hills and collect. I just liked flowers, and I learned the Latin terms and everything. Now they have restructured botany, and they've changed the names and the Latin phrases and so on, so I have to relearn some of it. I don't know whether they combined families or made more families.

RM: Have you tried growing any of these plants?

LS: Yes, I have some of them.

RM: Are you successful?

LS: Not very — my ground isn't very good. Sometimes if I don't water them they don't do well, but in nature they do. When I bring them in here, somehow they know that they're moved, I think, out of their element. There are certain plants that grow in certain areas only. For instance, up at what we call the Forty, they have a certain composite. Time after time I've brought seeds down and just tossed them at random—put them in the ground — and they don't grow here.

RM: Is it alkalinity?

LS: Yes, and there's a lot of lime. My soil out here is white. I think the whiter the soil the more sterile it is. And our deserts aren't very good — you have a bush here and a bush here, and that shows you that the soil is very poor.

RM: Or there's no water.

LS: Yes, but the soil is poor, too. If you got water then all the stuff would die and settle and you would have a growth there, but right now it's kind of white.

RM: I hike in the hills out of Las Vegas and I've been watching the flowers for a couple of years. This year we had a glorious flower season because of all the rain in March. I've been collecting the seeds and I'm just wondering how you would grow them.

LS: I've had some wildflower seeds — Carole gave me some for Mother's Day, I think — and I have some little things growing. I have linen and flax and . .

RM: I don't understand why botanists haven't taken more wildflowers and developed them. They're as beautiful as any domesticated flower.

LS: And they withstand so many different elements.

RM: Why don't they breed them? They breed roses and carnations and everything; why don't they breed these wildflowers?

LS: Yes — they don't have to breed them, just put them in. Maybe it's because you have to go out and get them; there's so much effort involved.

RM: I've got a lot of seeds.

LS: What are you going to do with them?

RM: I'd be willing to share them with you, if you would plant them and see if you can get them to grow. I don't know if they'll grow here because I get them from between 3500 and 6000 [feet above sea level].

LS: This is 4800 feet here. The lake bed is 4500, so we're a bit higher.

RM: I would be willing to share some of the seeds with you if you could see if you could get them to grow, because I don't have a green thumb.

LS: My poor green thumb is . .

RM: I don't even know how to start. I feel that every seed deserves a fair chance because I robbed it from nature.

LS: They're more apt to grow than something that you got from a garden, it seems to me, because they're so much heartier. Some of those seeds will be dormant . . . as you noticed, the wildflowers will stay dormant until a wet season. Then they'll come and you have this glorious display and then they reseed.

RM: It's just incredible, yes.

LS: They'll sit there for another few years and then they come out. So seeds are pretty [hardy].

RM: There's a bush down there that had a yellow blossom on it about the size of your finger; it smelled like orange blossoms. They were everywhere down there. Their seed looks like a feather, with a little seed at the end of it.

LS: Is that what they called Apache Plume?

RM: I don't know.

LS: Apache Plume has a feather.

RM: And there are about 10 in one flower.

LS: Yes, that's the seed.. .

RM: So that's an Apache Plume. Some of the bushes get pretty big, and pretty gnarled, but oh, were they fragrant. There were a couple of others — probably my favorite flowers. One of them grows on a long stem; it'll get 3-1/2 feet high, and it's got flowers all the way up. The flowers



are about the size of your thumb and they look like a purse and they kind of hang down . . . you talk about fragrant!

LS: Are they pink?

RM: Yes.

LS: They're penstemon.

RM: I can get a lot of those seeds if you want them.

LS: Oh, good. I had a whole bunch here — I planted seeds — but I haven't seen any lately. It is very fragrant. Penstemon belongs to the foxglove family.

RM: Oh, that's digitalis, isn't it?

LS: Yes. It's a very beautiful bush; it's one of my favorites.

RM: Oh, it's just wonderful! And then there's a little flower that grows up on the mountain, in the cracks of the rocks. It almost looks like a little fern, and it's got a little blossom on it smaller than a match head in a book of matches. It's the most beautiful blue and an exquisite white.

LS: It's not a mahalia mat, is it? Mahalia mat is a creeping plant with tiny leaves and it just crawls . . .

RM: Well, the plant itself won't get bigger than a saucer; I mean, it doesn't spread out all over, at least where I found it.

LS: It could be the mahalia plant.

RM: Would you make some generalizations about your understanding of flowering plants in this area?

LS: I don't know how to generalize, but you if have a wet year, you get lots of flowers. And if you don't, they're dormant. We do have cactus that bloom every year — several kinds. There are certain plants that come up every year in spite of the water and sometimes there are just a few; and I love them. dearly. My favorite family is the composite because they come in all colors, varieties, and they seem to come up everywhere. All the\_ flowers that we have out here that bloom in spite of everything are the composites, and they're great.

RM: And a composite is what?

LS: The sunflower family. I have a lot of wild sunflowers — I let them grow in my garden and birds eat the seeds. I like the flowers. People ride through on Highway 6 and they say it's forsaken and it's ugly, and I say, "I have over 250 identified plants."

RM: Two hundred and fifty flowering plants along the east side of the Grant Range . . .

LS: In the shrubs and the plants, yes. Some of them are just tiny ground covers and micro things. I've spent many an hour looking, following and finding out where something is and bringing [in samples]. I have a lot of books that I use for identification. If I couldn't find it then I'd have to write to somebody and ask them. I was enchanted with the flowers.

RM: I am, too.

LS: I still get carried away and try to do something with them.

RM: Well, is there anything else that we've neglected that you might want to add here regarding the history of the area? Basically Duckwater was tied to Eureka economically, wasn't it?

LS: Yes, it's real close to Eureka. It's 84 miles from here so it's about 45 miles to Eureka from there.

RM: Did Tybo have any connections? It really didn't, did it?

LS: Not here.

RM: Tybo's connection was more to Belmont?

LS: It was Belmont, absolutely.

RM: And then, of course, Belmont was the county seat, and it was probably tied in to Austin, wasn't it?

LS: Yes, because Eureka's a long way off. In those days it was all horse and buggy, and your transportation was not the best, so it would be. Is there any evidence that Mexicans were in here before Anglos? We're working on a theory down in Big Smoky Valley that the Mexicans were actually in there before the people who spread south out of Austin. LS: I don't know. There's a Potosi mine out of Las Vegas — Potosi is a Spanish word.

RM: Yes, but that was named by the Mormons. The Indians showed the Mormons that mine. Now, it could have had Spanish working it earlier, but my understanding . . .

LS: I had never heard of Mexicans coming in here actually, but Las Vegas means "the meadows." Well, Father Kino was through . . . we named a street [in Las Vegas] Garces for Father Garces, and Father Kino was in there.

RM: Yes, there's a strong Mexican influence on the Spanish Trail and everything in the south, but there's no evidence that they were up here. Were there ever any black people in here?

LS: We never saw blacks. Even in Las Vegas we only had a couple of kids in school.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: You said that mail comes to you at a Tonopah address.

LS: Right.

RM: And then it's delivered 3 times a week by a mail contractor who cares out Highway 6 to Warm Springs and then on out to Currant?

LS: No, he doesn't go to Currant; he turns at our mailbox.

RM: Oh, OK, he turns and cares down Railroad Valley.

LS: Right.

RM: And he goes down through Nyala and over to Twin Springs .

LS: And back to Warm Springs.

RM: But he does not go to Currant.

LS: No, he's nowhere near it. But we also get mail from Ely — a lady cares out from Ely each day and drops it on the highway, in those mailboxes you saw on the highway. So I get Ely mail. I used to have everything from the east come to Ely. I bank in Ely and I also bank in Tonopah, so all my banking things come in. I'm gradually changing over, because if they're going to deliver to the door . .

RM: Yes, you'd rather support that service.

LS: If we get it every day . . . The one gal who lives here goes to Duckwater for her dialysis work and she picks up the mail every night and brings it up, so we get that mail every day, too.

RM: That's coming in from Ely.

LS: Yes.

RM: And who is the mailman from Tonopah?

LS: Ken Curtis.

RM: Coincidentally, he performed the marriage service for my daughter, Bambi, 2 weeks ago in Tonopah.

LS: Yes. We [recently] fed the congregation for him — the White Pine Cow Bells did our specialty. There's a lot of connection there, isn't there? I've known Ken for a long time. When I was teaching, I belonged to the hospital auxiliary; in fact, I was president. He was working in the hospital, and I worked there.

RM: Oh, right — he works in some kind of therapy or something.

LS: Yes. He still is and they still call on him. He works hard, he has a lot of things going. He's very accommodating, a very nice man on the mail.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

RM: Lina, there are a couple of questions I forgot to ask you, and I was wondering if you had a couple of minutes to talk about them. I've got a tape recorder going on the phone now. I wanted to ask you about that story you were going to tell me about Jack Longstreet.

LS: Oh, there isn't much of a story. When he was being hunted he was hiding out here in the hills and Grandma knew that. I remember that because at the time when Grandma was talking, Longstreet didn't mean much to me.

RM: Right, and now he's developed into a semi-legendary character.

LS: Yes, an infamous hero. [Chuckles]

RM: The other thing I wanted to ask you about is what you recall about Bill Thomas. He was kind at the tail end of his career as Nye County Sheriff by the time you got there, but . .

LS: I liked him; he was easygoing. He didn't harass the local people. I remember a story about when a couple was living on the Currant Creek, and the woman did not know he was the sheriff; she thought he was there to visit. She kept talking about how the fish were doing and how her husband went fishing. Her husband tried to shut her up and asked her to go do things, but she kept on talking. She didn't realize she was talking to the sheriff and, of course, they had no license. [Laughter]

RM: How would you describe him physically?

LS: He was a big man. He was tall and big-boned. He wasn't fat, but he was big all the way; he had a lot of flesh on him.

RM: He didn't carry a gun either, did he?

LS: I never saw him with a gun.

RM: Would he ever stay all night at your place?

LS: He didn't stay; he'd just come and visit, make the rounds. He would be very chatty and he was very pleasant. He never found fault with any local person; he was easygoing. I know one time Jim and I were coming from Tonopah across the flat and there had been a tiny little sink area in the ground and it had a clay covering. When it rained or snowed or anything it got real slick and people would get stuck, but we knew enough to go around. We got there one night and Bill Thomas's car was stuck in it. We couldn't find him, so we kept on and we could see his tracks. He walked; his tracks went to Nyala.

RM: Is that right — he was walking clear out there?

LS: He knew where he was going, and he got there. I think Slick Lamb was living there at the time. He walked in there was nobody home, so he just broke in and made himself at home and comfortable, and when we came by he was OK. He was hoping that somebody would come and feed him.

RM: He was dearly loved by the people of Nye County, wasn't he?

LS: Yes. He kept order. I don't think we had many problems at the time. There are so many new transient-type people now, but at the time there was nothing but old-timers. He knew who they were, and he never said anything about fishing without a license, you know. He probably would eat the fish with you and not say anything. I liked him; we liked him.

RM: He was one of the longest-term sheriffs in the country — he was sheriff for around 50 years, I think.

LS: I guess he was just a good guy who stayed. He would visit, sit down and chat. I never saw him in a hurry, that I can recall.

RM: Did he ever campaign at election time?

LS: I don't remember him ever coming out here to campaign. I don't remember anything about campaigning; I just know he was always sheriff.

RM: Clear into the '50s, I think.

LS: I can't remember when he died. I guess that would be 40 years ago, wouldn't it?

RM: Yes, it would.

LS: Bob, when you were here you forgot 4 blank tapes.

RM: Oh, that's all right; you can have them. I discovered that when I got back to Tonopah, but that's not a big deal.

LS: Jeanne is coming up Labor Day weekend and she's going to go through all the pictures. Would you like to come up and join her?

RM: I can't; I've got to go to Reno Labor Day weekend.

LS: We're going to put in a picture of the last graduating class at the Currant school before it was closed. She's going to find things like that.

RM: That'd be nice.

LS: She's going to find the last graduating group that was at Currant before the store burned.

RM: Good. I think that picture of the 50 years separating the 2 classes would be interesting, too.

LS: Yes. It's a beautiful picture, also.

RM: Part of what determines whether a picture should go in a book is how clear it is. Sometimes you've got a picture that's a little bit better but not as sharp as one that you use. Maybe it isn't quite as good a picture but it would reproduce better.

I really enjoyed talking to you, and I think we got an excellent interview. I was interviewing somebody the other day, and they said, "Well, if you want your great-grandchildren to know who you are, you better write it down, because they won't hardly know a thing about you." And that's right. I can talk a bit about my grandparents but I can hardly say a word about my great-grandparents.

LS: That's the way most of us are. I heard all these stories and I kept thinking, "I will write them down. Or I'll remember them." But you have to recall them now.

RM: Did you think of any stories that you wanted to tell since I left?

LS: I have some about Paul Irwin. They're not very nice stories; I don't know if I should tell them.

RM: Well, you can always tell them and we can take them out if you want. Was he Ike Irwin's son?

LS: Yes, or brother; something. I can't remember how many boys there were. Paul was born in the late 1800s.

RM: Probably Martha Hawkins' mother's brother?

LS: Yes. He was an uncle to her. Well, Paul looked like a lecherous old man, but he really wasn't. When I came in here I used to be afraid of him. He'd stop here and I'd be alone, and I didn't like him. And one day I was talking to his sister, Auntie Vanover, and she said "Oh, there's nothing to Paul. He's all words, he's nothing." I came home and I got to thinking, "I'm young, he's old and . . ." so we got to be real good friends and he wasn't bad at all, he was OK.

But he would tell me stories. Up in Irwin Canyon they had a garden and they had a lot of strawberries, and something had been eating his strawberries. He wore coveralls, those old-fashioned bib overalls. And the whole inseam was split, and it hung like a skirt on him. He was kind of a soft fat man, and he told me that he was bending over the strawberries and the little boy, Paulie, was behind him, and he bent over and his testicles and things were hanging down and the little kid pinched it. Paul said he just jumped so high! He thought one of the creatures in the garden had gotten him. [Laughter] Well, I knew him well enough that he just could tell me all these things. That's not probably good enough, but that's the kind of a guy Paul was.

RM: Now that you mentioned that, give me your opinion on this: It seems women were a lot safer in those days than they are now. Now women have to worry about rapists and perverts and so on.

LS: My opinion is, the way that some of them are costumed kind of lures the guys on. I think costuming has a lot to do with it, because when you're showing it off — almost all of it — a guy just assumes that's it's there for the taking. That's my opinion, and I think that perhaps if ladies were more of a lady, maybe things wouldn't happen.

RM: Women were alone a lot on these ranches, and yet I don't get the feeling that there was a lot of fear that perverts would be . .

LS: That's right. The only guy I ever had any fear of was this Paul, when I first came here. I was young, and I was from Las Vegas. He would stop all the time and he didn't say anything or do anything, he would just look. And he'd be there when there was nobody else there. And then he would talk. But his sister said, "He's nothing but words." And I got to thinking about that when I saw him next time. And other little stories have cropped up . .

RM: Maybe he was just admiring you?

LS: I have no idea. I think he just liked women, and I don't think he ever did anything. We got to be real good friends. His car always stopped at the ranch. Coming or going, it always broke down here.

RM: [Chuckles] Where was he living?

LS: At Irwin Canyon with that couple I told you about.

RM: Oh, he was the one — "When daddy's gone . . . "

LS: Yes, when Smitty was gone he was the guy who took over.

RM: OK. And they named the baby after him.

LS: Yes, they called him Paulie — Walter Paul. Anyway, those are funny little things out here that happened that to me are kind of funny, but I don't think anybody else might find them . .

RM: Well, we'll type them up and see what you think of them when you see them on the printed page.

LS: Incidentally, I think it's great to get to see the state the way you do.

RM: It is. And I meet the most wonderful people.



LS: I would like to do that. I don't know if I'd like to go alone now, but I know somebody in every place in Nevada.

RM: I'm getting to the point where I know somebody or several people in every town in Clark, Nye, Lincoln, and now Eureka counties.

LS: Also, there's a lady, Lida Lani, who's 90.

RM: Your daughter told me about her.

LS: I think that if you could come out here I'd take you to talk to her. She's still quite lucid.

RM: Is she there?

LS: She lives in Ely. She wants me to come and visit her. She lived down below Troy in a cabin when she was 4 years old. Jeanne suggested that she might have something to offer.

RM: I wonder if she's got any pictures.

LS: Oh, I'm sure she does. I think Jeanne might have a picture of her cabin — we call it "Little Meadow." It's south of Troy, and it's quite interesting. There's a cave with water . . .

RM: I might rent a car . . . afraid to drive my car too far on those dirt roads because it's got 302,000 miles on it.

LS: And nobody's going to pick you up. Nobody goes by there, so you're taking a risk. The mailman comes 3 times a week.

RM: So you just have to camp out till he gets there?

LS: Till you get some water, unless you want to walk.

RM: My brother and I broke down out of Silver Bow one time. We had to walk 25 miles to the highway, and that kind of put a spook in me about getting too far off the highway.

LS: That's the part that spooks me if I have to go alone—the walking.

RM: The thing to do is always have somebody know where you're going.

LS: We do here. When I leave town I call to tell Carole that I've left. They know that it's a 2-hour drive and that I make a stop along the way.

RM: Let me call you later in the week.

LS: I would like to take you to see Lida Lani.

RM: Yes, I think that would be good.

LS: One of her sons, Donnie, lived at Angleworm for a long time. He used to call mail for us when we [were gone].

RM: Do they call it Angleworm because there are a lot of fishing worms there?

LS: I don't think so, but I'll ask Donnie. He's quite a teller of fish stories. I find him quite interesting; he's a nice guy.

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