

An Interview with
JAMES C. WEEKS

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

Tonopah
1987

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Tonopah, Nevada
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Jim Weeks and daughter
1987

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PREFACE

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

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

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

in preparing a text:

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

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

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

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

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

All material for the NCTHP was prepared with the support of the U.S. Department of Energy, Grant No. DE-FG08-89NV10820. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of DOE.

—Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

--R.D.M.

Robert McCracken interviewing Jim Weeks at his home in Beatty, Nevada
April 20 and May 2, 1987

CHAPTER ONE

RM: OK Jim, if you could just tell me when and where you were born?

JW: I was born June 29, 1942, Clark County hospital, Las Vegas, Nevada.

RM: Who were your parents?

JW: Norma and Homer Weeks.

RM: And what was your mother's maiden name?

JW: Thompson.

RM: Where were your folks from?

JW: They were from Revenna, Ohio.

RM: How did they happen to come out here?

JW: My dad ran a chain of candy stores back there and he got the mining bug and sold out and took a hike.

RM: With your mother?

JW: Yes.

RM: This would have been in the late 30s?

JW: Well, let's see, this was before I was born; I can't remember the date. They moved into L.A. with my grandmother, and then my mom and dad came up here.

RM: What brought them to Beatty?

JW: The Senator Stewart Mine. I can't remember just what his involvement was, but basically he ran it. Whether he owned it or leased it or whatever, I don't remember.

RM: Could you tell me little bit about the Senator Stewart?

JW: I don't know that much about it, other than the fact it was a gold mine and it produced; at least it supported us and a few other people.

The mine is up on side of the mountain, around the corner. You know,

if you go up into Rhyolite the jail is sitting out in the flats?

RM: As you go into Rhyolite it's on the right?

JW: Yes. You go up to the depot, then you turn the corner going out toward Beatty again on the dirt road . . .

RM: Yes.

JW: OK, around that corner up on the side of the mountain is the Senator Stewart.

RM: Are there pretty extensive workings there?

JW: Well, it's changed so much. I guess it was a pretty good mine - I don't know all that much about it - but since then - this Kelly Mines thing?

RM: I'm not familiar with that.

JW: OK, that's north of town here and there's that mill over there to the side. That became Stewart Kelly and they were going to mine that and have it milled there, but it never got off the ground. And now, things have changed so much.

RM: Is the mine still in operation?

JW: No, it died. It's never been really in operation, I don't think, since my dad was there. But he opened it up and got it going and had a couple of dump trucks and so forth and he was hauling ore back and forth to various places. And then they built that mill after I was born. I've got a newspaper that has a front page picture when they opened it, but I don't know where it is. It was The Beatty Bulletin and the front has a half-page picture of that thing when they opened it.

RM: That [The Beatty Bulletin] was a supplement they had in [The Goldfield News from 1947 to 1956] . . . what year that would have been?

JW: It would have been early '49, I think. I'm sure it was before the

'50s. And there's a picture of my dad, my mom, Clyde Barcus and his wife, and Bud Quinn all standing out in front.

RM: Who is Barcus?

JW: I don't really know who he was. I think he was somebody who was into it financially.

RM: Did he live here in town or was he just an investor?

JW: I'm not sure. I was too young at the time to really know. But Quinn I did know, to a degree. He was another person who was a financial backer in the thing. He gave me my first train. I knew him . . . and I was all of 6 years old - 6 or 7. I wasn't into it. I know where he lived and I know where we lived at the time. It was right down at the end of First Street - First and Montgomery.

RM: Is the house still there?

JW: Yes. And Bud Quinn lived across the street and my sister Carol had a Buick. I'll never forget that - she had a big red Buick convertible. She drove it right up in the driveway and left it out of gear and it ran right through Bud Quinn's house. [laughs]

RM: Is your sister older than you?

JW: Yes.

RM: So your folks had been married a long time before they came here?

JW: Oh, yes.

RM: Yes. How did your dad get involved with the Senator Stewart?

JW: I really don't know. I could find that out for you, but I'd have to ask my mom.

RM: Does she live here in town?

JW: No, she is in California. She just had that operation where they take your voice box out, and you have to talk with a machine. I just talked to

her the other day, and it was the first time she ever tried to talk over the phone.

RM: Is she doing pretty well?

JW: Well, her spirits seem to be up and everything. Still, I smoke, so I can't get around her or do anything. She's going through radiation right now and it will be another 6 weeks before I can go down and see her.

RM: Do you think it would be possible for you to find that newspaper?

JW: I've got a lot of this stuff that Carol has; yes. I didn't know if you wanted just that or . . .

RM: Well, when we do the history of the area we'd like to illustrate it with a lot of pictures, so any pictures out of the old family albums and that kind of thing . . .

JW: I've got a bunch of those.

[tape is turned off for a while]

RM: How was your dad involved with the Senator Stewart?

JW: Well, he ran it until he was physically unable to do so. And then he lived in a trailer house out behind our house - I'll never forget that . . .

RM: Because of his silicosis?

JW: Yes; it was tuberculosis and silicosis together. I couldn't see him because he was contagious. We had a hundred-foot lot. He'd be out at the back of the lot and I'd be coming out the back of the house and they'd have Sugar Ray Robinson on the radio on the fights. And he'd always give me Sugar Ray - I'd always want to bet with him. I'd say, "Do I get Sugar Ray, Dad?"

He'd say, "Yeah, you get Sugar Ray." I'd always win. [laughs]
That's one of the main things that I remember about him.

RM: So, you were a relatively young kid when he passed away?

JW: Oh, yes. I was probably 9 years old by the time he finally died, but by that time, he'd been in the Tonopah hospital for 2, 3 years.

RM: Is that right?

JW: Yes. When this stuff was going on I was 6, 7 years old or something. But I still couldn't go out and see him. I could yell at him, talk at him, but Mom would tell me, "Now, don't you go on out there," because she didn't want me to catch something.

I have some pictures somewhere of a ball mill that sat there along the back of house that he hauled from the mine, and I was on top of the house taking pictures of the first burros coming in from the burro races.

RM: When he passed away - was that when you left town?

JW: No, we lived here for 2 or 3 years after that. Then my mother remarried and we went to Yerington - in 1956, I think.

RM: Was your stepfather a miner, too?

JW: Yes.

RM: Was he a local miner?

JW: No. He was all around the state most of his life. But he got a contract to manage the Buckskin Mine in Yerington, so we went up there and stayed a year and then we went to Elko. Then we went to Jarbridge from Elko and milled tailings. Boy, if that wasn't something . . . I'll tell you what, you've never done anything until you mill those damn tailings. You could go out there with a light at night, in this tailings pond, and you could see this thing - it just looked like a gem field - with your blacklights. It was tungsten. This was before Korea. And so the next day, boy, here I am with a number two shovel filling up the pickup. We'd haul it 8 miles down to these tables that they had and we'd put them on

those shaker tables and . . . man, every day . . . oh, boy . . .

RM: It was tough work?

JW: Well, number two shovel, right? [laughs] Number two is a regular shovel. Then you use a number five scoop. Boy, I'll tell you, you couldn't lift them with a number five scoop, they're too heavy. Back and forth, back and forth, back and forth all summer long. That was the year before my freshman year, between the eighth and ninth grade. And then I learned how to set muck stick.

RM: Yes, that's hard work.

JW: Boy, I'll tell you. So we did that there that year and then we went into Elko during the winter and I worked as a hoistman. I don't know if you're familiar with tungsten. What you'd have to do - this was on the other side of the valley, but, you'd hoist it up, dump the bucket, and send it back down. You had a blacklight over the top of the thing to sort the high grade and dump the rest. About the time you got done with sorting you were ready for another bucket. And I did that for a year.

RM: And you're still just a kid, right?

JW: Well, my freshman year was the only year that I spent in Elko, and then we came back here and my stepfather went to work at the Test Site.

RM: That must have been about the same time my dad and I started there - in '58. I'll bet my dad knew him.

JW: I'll bet. Charlie Hammock was his name. He wasn't my dad, he was my stepfather. He was a shifter out there in the tunnels.

RM: That's where we worked.

JW: I'll bet you . . .

RM: My dad stayed there for 15 years.

JW: Charlie never did anything for any length of time. He quit because he

got mad at them and all this and then they were going to move again - it was a mess. We ended up staying here until I graduated from high school in 1960. And then I went to [laughs] UNLV in 1961. I was on the basketball team, if you can believe that, but it wasn't zip then. I hate to even say anything about that. [laughs]

RM: Did you play basketball here in town?

JW: Yes, I was the captain of the team for 2 years. But that was something that wasn't all that big.

RM: Were they out on the campus by then? At UNLV?

JW: Yes. There was a building with a causeway between it and another building, and that was the start and end.

RM: Who did you play in basketball?

JW: I didn't end up playing anybody. I didn't last that long. I never got on the floor. I ended up in a car accident and killed my scholarship and ended up paying an insurance adjustor for two years because I didn't have any insurance. I just didn't have any money.

RM: But you had a scholarship to UNLV?

JW: Yes, I had the John Delfs scholarship, which originates here. John Delfs left all his money for a \$2,000 scholarship to the valedictorian every year from Beatty until the money ran out. It finally did run out, but it lasted a long time. Mr. Beko administered the whole thing.

RM: Who was Delfs? Was he from Beatty?

JW: Yes. I don't like to say anything because I'm not sure I'm correct . . . I can't remember, but he ended up with a bunch of money and he left it all to Beatty.

RM: So you won the scholarship from the town and went to UNLV but you were in an accident?

JW: Yes. It was a hummer. Going around a corner and this guy takes off with this brand new Ford, and me with no insurance. I'm driving a 1950 Chevrolet with no brakes - you had to pump them - remember?

RM: Yes, I've been through that. [laughs]

JW: And this guy pulls out from a parking lot, right in the middle of the block. It was where the Nevada State Bank was, and he pulled out right in front of this guy with a '59 Ford. Well, the '59 Ford was new - this was in '60 - and man, he just locked it up. I was still pumping when I . . . [laughs] Remember those little side view mirrors that they put on the front fenders?

RM: Yes.

JW: He had one on each side. I knocked them both out. I almost started to grin . . . then I looked at him and his head hit the windshield and he had a big red spot right here. I said, "Oh, no."

RM: You weren't hurt?

JW: Nobody was really hurt but I crunched his Ford. You couldn't believe what that '50 Chevy did to that '59 Ford. [laughs]

RM: [laughs]

JW: So he called the cops and everything and I had to go to court, and I didn't have any insurance, and nothing else, and my stepfather had left my mother and she didn't have any money, she was just scraping by up there. They fined me \$15 court cost and restitution for his car, so I had to go through an insurance adjustor and it took me almost two years to pay him off. Plus it took every damn thing I had, because I had to give them the money that I had up front. That was the end of that. No more college and no more . . . [laughs]

RM: What did you do then?

JW: First thing I did was go get a job immediately. I went down and started hitting the street, looking for a job, and it didn't take any time at all and I had a job. I went to work for Solan Dobbs at a Signal station across from Chrysler. That was '61, because 1961 Chryslers were coming out with stick shifts, which was unheard of for Chrysler. I went to work for him and that was back when they had all the trouble with the gas wars. Gas was selling for nothing. Signal was giving him a 2-cent rebate on his cost so he could compete, and he just wasn't making it. So we got the Central Nevada phone contract. We got their contract for rebuilding engines. And so we started rebuilding engines, and most of my time was spent steam-cleaning engines and stuff. He was trying to put things together but it wasn't working. He was a hell of a nice guy, best guy I worked for in my life, he was really a neat person. But finally he said, "Jim, you're making more money than I am. I can't afford this."

So I said, "OK." So I took off and came back up here. I thought, "Well, I'll see what's going on up here."

I got as far Lathrop Wells and I ran into Bobby Shearer, who is dead now, too. His brother still lives here. He was working for a guy named Gillespie, who had a ranch out there, and he said, "Hey, man, we need somebody else to buck bales out there."

"Buck bales?"

He said, "Yes."

I said, "Well . . ."

RM: Where was the ranch?

JW: Out of Amargosa Valley.

RM: Oh, out of the Amargosa.

JW: Well, Lathrop Wells is called Amargosa Valley now. And I went out and

at 3:00 in the morning he gets up and says, "Come on, we got to go out," and so we go out and start mowing and baling and the bales that broke, you threw on the back of a wagon, and you had to buck it in with a pitchfork. So then we had to buck the bales. By that time, it's probably 11:00, 12:00, and man, it is hot. You start itching like hell. Then we went back, and slept in a hot trailer had with no air conditioning.

[tape is turned off for a while]

RM: We were talking about the . . .

JW: Oh, yes; that lasted one day. I said, "Man, that's enough of that stuff." So I came back here and went to work for Ralph Lisle - that was in '61 - and I worked for him until March of this year in his hardware store.

RM: OK, let's talk about some of the changes that you've seen in town. What was school like when you went here?

JW: OK, when I was first going to school here . . . Have you been up there and seen it?

RM: Yes.

JW: The building with the belltower was grades one through four on one side and then four or five through eight on the other side. Then they built that cement building which is on the side of the hill and that turned into a high school. That was after I left for Yerington.

Oh, I'll give you something of interest to most people . . . I'm totally left-handed. Remember during those times how they'd always try to make you right-handed? Well, Erma Cunningham was my teacher and she tried . . .

CHAPTER TWO

JW: Cunningham. She was old school people and she was a honey. But she was a toughie. As I was telling you, I couldn't handle this right-handed stuff. Now, her method was to whack you on the back of the hand with a ruler. Well, she finally gave me the left hand, but she refused to have me write like this [left hand held above the line]. And to this day I still write like a regular person.

RM: But you wanted to wrap around?

JW: Right, like everybody else does. But every time I did it, it was big times U.S.A.: BOOM, she'd hit you with that ruler. But I saw her last year, I think, and she came in and saw me and gave me a big hug and everything down at the hardware store. I was in the - what, second grade then? That would have been about 1950, so you can imagine how old she was. Sweet good old girl, though.

RM: Are there any other things about the community, when you were a little kid, that stand out in your mind? Buildings, for instance . . .

JW: Not much in the way of buildings. There wasn't much change other than the fact that they wiped out all the trees when they put in the four-lane highway. The trees, and all of the saloons and everything.

RM: What year was that?

JW: I think it was 1955.

RM: And there were a lot of pretty trees lining the street?

JW: I don't know if I'd call them really pretty trees; they were mostly cottonwoods. I remember when I was a kid we used to sneak downtown, in front of the St. Peter's Bar, which is Bobby's Pot Shop, now. There used to be a pole up there, and there was a big cottonwood. So at night, a bunch of us kids would run up that pole and sit in that cottonwood tree and watch all the military personnel that came from Desert Rock. They had some

kind of a military base out there. These guys would come in there and get totally blitzed. So we'd go sit up there and watch everybody fool around. I can remember 3 or 4 times when they would have knock-down drag-outs. And everybody carried silver dollars then, so you'd slide down the pole and pick up the silver dollars they lost. [laughs] And jump back up and wait for the next one. Of course, it didn't happen that often, but it was kind of neat.

You know about the other hotel burning, I'm sure?

RM: Yes. The one that was located across the street from . . .

JW: From the two-story one. Did you hear the story on how that took place?

RM: I don't think so.

JW: At the time, the fire department was really small. We had one air pack (a self-contained breathing apparatus) in the whole department. It was a Scott. We have a ton of them now, but then there was only one on the whole truck. And we . . . it was my first fire. Ever been on a fire?

RM: No.

JW: I'd just joined the department shortly before and it was my first big time, real. I jumped off of that truck - man, that baby was cooking - and Brian Thayer was ahead of me on the nozzle. You always have a back-up man on the nozzle. Well, thank God it was Brian Thayer because he weighs about 260 pounds and the guy in the bottom floor had a bunch of ammunition in there, and that ammunition was going off everywhere - BANG, BOOM, CRASH. You ought to have seen me lay up against old Brian. [laughs] It would have got him first. [laughter] Anyway, it was really funny. I was scared to death. But, you know, whatever . . . I don't know what time it was, but it had to be 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning before we were done and we started

about 8:00 or 9:00 at night. Well, everybody was doing stuff as soon as they got there. The thing I ended up doing - there were three of us on this old inch-and-a-half line - you'd run up the stairs and go in and hit that upper story. One guy'd go in, turn the fog on, and give it the old swirl trick. And you couldn't breathe. So you'd come out, the next guy would go on, and by the time he got in it was back up again. And it was an endless thing.

RM: By turning on the fog in the swirl, you mean you would turn on the spray on the hose?

JW: Yes, they're fog nozzles. And the object is to permeate the whole area with fog. If you could see what we've got now, it's just unreal. But at that time they were 80-pound fog, and [whistles] they really didn't do much. You'd go in there and hit that and it'd knock the fire down and you'd come running out because you couldn't breathe, so by the time [the next guy] got back in there it was going again. Oh, it was awful. And you just kept doing it, and kept rotating in threes all night long until you could finally get something knocked down. Now you could walk in there and [whistles] anything on that fire department truck would knock that baby down.

RM: So you could probably save that building now?

JW: [whistles] That building would never even have got to the upper stories if we'd had what we have now. I don't know if you've been up to the fire department, but they have some stuff up there that's outstanding for the area. Did you ever hear what some people have said about it?

RM: No.

JW: A deputy or something from the State Fire Marshall's office came down here checking fire chiefs, and we knocked down that thing up there on Main

Street across from the post office. He said, "If my house was on fire, I'd rather have you respond to it than the Reno fire department."

RM: That's a real compliment.

JW: Well, we kept all the stuff so they could . . . They just determined where it was, it was arson, and so forth.

RM: Did they ever catch him?

JW: Yes.

RM: Who was it?

JW: I don't know who it was.

RM: What was his motive?

JW: I don't remember now. It was somebody after somebody else for doing something and it didn't really have a lot to do with anything that was . . . There were 2 guys after this other guy, and they tried to burn him up. They burned the place down but he woke up and got the hell out. Then they found him out in the desert and beat the Jesus out of him.

RM: You mean, the two guys who tried to fry him?

JW: Yes. They almost killed him, I guess.

RM: What was that building called?

JW: It had a lot of names. Red Williams was the last person to put a business in there. It was a swap shop or something the last time. Originally, I think it was a blacksmith shop or something for Fred Davies. But the last person to have anything going in there was Red Williams.

RM: You just had a big fire here in town with the Exchange, didn't you?

JW: Yes.

RM: You were able to save that one, weren't you?

JW: Basically, yes.

RM: If it had been the old days, would that have gone down?

JW: Big times. If it had been the old days, that would have been the end of that. Period. That was fully involved in the top floor. We hit this one down here, the one we were talking about, and if we'd had the stuff we've got now, we'd have been home in 45 minutes.

RM: Is that right?

JW: Yes. [chuckles] I can't remember what time we started, but it was between 8:00 and 10:00, and I know it was after 2:00 before I left there. So that's 4 or 5 hours. And we'd have knocked that baby down in 30 minutes.

RM: How about the Exchange? How long did it take you to get that one?

JW: I wasn't on that one. Bill said that they handled it real well, and I don't think it took them over 12 or 15 minutes to really knock it down.

RM: What are some of your impressions of the people in town? Say, up until the time you graduated from high school?

JW: What kind of people?

RM: People that history should take note of. Interesting people, or characters, or community leaders . . .

JW: I know one character that I don't know if anybody has told you about. She was a good old gal, but man, she was a wild hair. Her name was Madeline Pagett. She was my next-door neighbor on First and Montgomery. She had the thickest collie you ever saw in your life - white collie called Sir Thomas. And I grew up right next to her. And man, she was a rootin' tootin' go gettin' mother bear. She used to go downtown to the town square, jump up on that bar and start dancing and raising hell. She was a go-getter, boy. She'd get a snoot full of that hoosgow and go for it. But she was a really neat person to me and my sisters. She lived next door to us (they tore down the house). We'd go over there and, "Maddie, can we see

Sir Thomas?"

And, "Come on in, kids." The place looked like a . . . you had to tunnel your way into it almost. This was the way she lived. I guess every time she got her check she went on a toot big times, U.S.A. [laughs]

RM: What supported the economy of the town in those days?

JW: Well, it was basically mining before the Test Site went in. You have your basic service station type stuff and retail trade but the backbone of it was probably mining, at that time.

RM: What were some of the mines that were operating? Say, through your high school years.

JW: Crowells', which was a fluorspar mine, and the Senator Stewart, back when I was young. I don't remember if the Shoshone-Montgomery was doing anything then, or not. As I say, I was young enough at that time . . .

RM: What kind of an effect did the Test Site have?

JW: Big times, then. It probably doubled the economy's input.

RM: Was it mainly people here getting jobs at the Test Site, or people from the Test Site moving in?

JW: It was a combination. Some people here got a job at the Test Site, other people came in with companies and then there were people that just heard about it and showed up. My next-door neighbor at the time - his dad heard about it in Oklahoma and came out here. As a matter of fact, his wife still lives here. That's Jewell Brown. Her husband was one of the first people to work there.

RM: That would be in '51 or so?

JW: Yes. And she raised three boys and one girl here. This was a steady-type guy and he was probably one of the real pioneers of that whole mess out there, up until the time he retired.

RM: Do you think that more people from Beatty used to work at the Test Site than do now?

JW: I don't know. It seemed like more then but there weren't as many people, so I don't really know.

RM: Some people claim that there aren't that many people here working at the Test Site now - maybe half a dozen or so.

JW: Oh, no, it's more than that. It's probably not what it was then because at the time the Test Site was big times U.S.A. But there are more than half a dozen. The only thing is, I've kind of lost contact with people. It's grown to the point where you really don't know who's working there and who's not. Bobby Nichols worked out there for many years and he can probably tell you most of the people who are working there.

RM: What about the low-level waste dump? How has that affected the town?

JW: Oh, [chuckles] definitely positive. They don't employ a lot of people, but they employ enough to make a difference. I'm totally positive on them. They're just super-duper. They've made a lot of contributions and everything. That whole thing has just been the greatest thing that ever happened. I wish we had 17 of them. They have made numerous donations to the fire department, they pay good wages, they allow the economy to grow. If anything happens, any kind of a major catastrophe, they've got 20-foot booms and cranes and . . . just ask them; they're right there.

RM: Do you think it's better than the Test Site itself?

JW: Oh, definitely (they do more proportionally for the town of Beatty).

RM: Does it have more impact than the Test Site?

JW: Oh, well, financially . . . But as far as community organization type stuff they do 20 times more. There isn't anything that you can't ask that company that they won't do if they are able to.

RM: How did you see the impact of Jackass Flats on the town?

[tape is turned off for a while]

JW: It helped. There were quite a few people who had to leave after they shut down. Matter of fact, my first wife worked for Aerojet General. She was head secretary at E.T.S., at N.R.D.S. One. [That is,] Engine Test Stand One. And there were some people who were laid off. It wasn't what you'd call really major, but it did affect the town economy.

RM: How about Tolicha Peak?

JW: That has had a real impact on the town to a degree, but it's a different type of people. You used to get people like the people from Jackass Flats or Mercury. They settle down, they build homes. These people figure they're going to be transients and they stay transients. They don't buy things, they don't . . . The impact on the community itself is much less than it would be for the same people in a different situation. And I feel that maybe it's because the contractor or whoever is running the show tells them, "Hey, you're going to move out, maybe in two years." I think that the difference is that they don't know that they are going to be here for any length of time so consequently they don't invest in the area. I was in a position for some period of time to gauge that kind of thing, by the business I was in. I'd see who comes in and buys new lawn mowers, who buys lawn lighting, who is putting a shed on the building or whatever. And you don't see it with these people from Tolicha as much as with the people from the Test Site, or U.S. Ecology, for instance. U.S. Ecology people are almost all people who have bought here in town. Almost everyone has bought property here, plans to stay here, and is a solid citizen. Whereas the people out at Tolicha Peak - most all of them live in apartments and they're just a lot different.

RM: What about retired people?

JW: The number of retired people is growing in proportion with the growth of the economy, but I don't think it's what you'd consider the oncoming thing in retirement.

RM: And what about all the trailers you see around the area?

JW: Well, it used to be that you bought a house. Now you can get into a trailer so much cheaper that people buy trailers. And that's start and end of that, as far as I know.

RM: What do you believe is making the economy grow?

JW: Everything, with the exception of some of the things that you've mentioned, is a magnification of time. The apartments up here were built specifically for that outfit [Ford]. The Lori Motel takes care of all the military. The rest of it is, for instance, Ford people who don't live in Ford apartments and military people who don't always stay at the Lori, and so on. And there's quite a bit of mining going on now that wasn't going on then.

RM: What are some of the mines that are operating right now?

JW: The Crowell fluorspar mine and the Saga, which are the only solid producers. [Columbus Mines, a division of Angst Corporation, is doing extensive development in the area.]

RM: Saga's over in the Bare Mountain Range too, right?

JW: Yes.

RM: Is it an open pit?

JW: No, some of it's underground. It's all leaching. And there are a lot of people mining but they're core drilling and testing and so forth. It's just exploration. They really haven't said, "OK, here we go." The only other one that's really committed, and this is strictly an opinion, is

Angst Corporation. They're operating as a subsidiary of Columbus Mines.

RM: Where's their operation?

JW: It's basically the old Gold Bar property between Highway 95, say 12 miles out north, and the Grapevines.

RM: Is there any action over at Pioneer?

JW: Well, Spicer had that but I think it's pretty well died unless there's something going on I don't know about.

RM: Yes. How about Rhyolite?

JW: Bobby Garcia's got something out there, and St. Joe American's got something going, and there are probably more I'm not thinking of.

RM: Are these mining activities or exploration?

JW: Probably both; mainly exploration, I think. Some of these people are playing around with processing. If somebody could get something down that really worked, they really would go for it.

RM: How about over toward the Funerals?

JW: Nothing that I know of.

RM: How about the Vanderbilt mines?

JW: Oh; I forgot about them. They're a large corporation. That's an operating situation. They've been doing this for years. It's bentonite and it's basically a controlled situation. If they need X amount of bentonite they just get what they need and so on. Now, that's an opinion, of course, but it seems that it's not something like you're going to run into a deposit and wahoo, you're going crazy.

RM: It's just a steady thing.

JW: It's something that's going to employ 2 or 3 people out here and go on forever.

RM: How many people work down at the bentonite mine here?

JW: Two or three. My next-door neighbor works there.

RM: And then they also have that one over in the Amargosa, on the foot of the Funerals.

JW: Same situation; they just go from place to place.

RM: Oh, these 2 or 3 guys just go from one place to the other. So it's not a big employer.

JW: No, it used to be a lot bigger.

RM: Is it true they use bentonite for face powder?

JW: Face powder, drilling mud; you name it, it's got a million uses. Same thing, to the best of my knowledge, as Industrial Mineral Ventures is.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: Beatty used to have an Indian community across the tracks, when the railroad was running. Have there ever been any other minorities in town?

JW: No, it's been basically white. As a matter of fact, it's almost all white now, you know - if you were talking percentages. The Indian community used to be much larger than it is now. The Black community has probably gained somewhat, but not to a point where it's really noticeable.

RM: Are the Blacks from government projects like Tolicha Peak?

JW: Yes, exclusively. And almost everything else, too, with the exception of employment by Janda Ribbons of some Hispanics.

RM: Are they Beatty residents, or do they tend to come from Amargosa?

JW: Almost all of them are from Amargosa. One thing I would like to say - and I want it to be put in print, if it's appropriate. I have done business with a lot of Hispanics. And you know what your percentages in business are for gains and losses - thefts, and so forth. Man, I'd give

them all the credit that they ever had a chance to ask. I've never been beat - not once in all the years there. It impressed me totally. To begin with, I more or less extended credit on my own (usually I check with my employer). And every time, I got some of the best accounts I ever had in my life. I was totally impressed with how these people handle their obligations. I don't have a lot of experience with Blacks, but I have never lost a nickel with all the Hispanics.

RM: That's quite a compliment. How do you see tourism in the economy, and how has it changed over the years?

JW: It's changed a lot. There are more people on the road, but all the cars use less gas. So you're not getting a \$10 or \$20 fillup all the time - you're getting a \$2 or \$3 fillup, even though the price of gas is twice as high. And everybody is trying to handle all their own maintenance, so you lose that. I can remember back when I first went to work for Ralph [Lisle], and it was just: "Fran'll be in on Saturday, and someone will be in on Thursday," and you did all their maintenance. People aren't doing that now. Even the local people. Oh, there are a few, but it's not like it used to be. And you can't really count much on maintenance anymore. Now, I think if someone really tried to build a clientele you would probably get more than they're getting right now. But I see people who come into the store. I see who's buying their own filters, who's doing this, who's doing that.

RM: And you say the tourists are doing that, too.

JW: Well, yes. They're doing that before they even leave home. And they're on the road and they're boogeying. You're going to get them - big time - because if something falls apart, hang on.

RM: It seems there have been a number of RV parks established in Beatty in

recent years. What's causing that?

JW: It's just an influx of business because more people are traveling in RVs and so forth. You can see the rise almost yearly. I know a couple of people who are in that business, and it has probably doubled since they went into it. And their optimism is super-duper. The guy who was in the business to begin with - the basic first man - is still doing a land-office business. There are just more RVs, I would say. Or, maybe it's more people stopping because of desirable conditions.

RM: Yes, and more accommodations, so more stops.

JW: Yes, if you get a little nicer game going, with a competitive price and that kind of thing.

RM: I notice the motels are very crowded here.

JW: Well, that's another thing. There's more traffic on the highway than just what you see. Everybody has to sleep - everybody doesn't have to buy gas.

[Break in tape]

- May 2, 1987 -

RM: OK, Jim, you said that since we last talked you had thought of some names.

JW: OK. Now, starting from Beatty going north, not counting the Revert ranch -

RM: Well, let's include the Revert ranch.

JW: OK; the Revert ranch was right across the street from the Stagecoach.

RM: And Old Man Beatty's stone cabin remains.

JW: Right. That was the original thing for Beatty. There were a number of people who lived there, but I can't remember their names right offhand. But going north, I remember - where Fran's Star Ranch is now, up against

the hill - there was a place there that I think Fred Davies owned, and there's a spring there. And next is Fran's. It used to belong to Dick Steel and a man named Terrell, I believe. They had a little ranch out there. It was purchased from them by Lee Carter, who started the brothel.

RM: When did Fran take it over?

JW: Well, let's see. Fran got it from Vicky, who got it from Lee Carter some years later.

RM: Did they take it over when they moved the brothels out of town?

JW: No; it wasn't simultaneous. The Hot Springs, as I recall, was a brothel at the time that they closed the Red Rooster and the Willow Tree. I believe that was the first out-of-town brothel. This one came up later. Lee Carter started it and then it was Vicky's Star Ranch. She called herself Vicky Taylor, but her checks always said Mary Burns. [laughs] For whatever that counts for.

Next is Manley's garage. Manley converted the old Kelly Mine's mill to a garage. Then right where you take the curve coming into town above the brothel you make a 90-degree turn coming in?

RM: Yes.

JW: OK, Marvin Walker has that place now. When I was a kid that was Carpenter's. And there's quite a Carpenter clan. There were some Manleys who lived out there after the Carpenters, if I remember correctly. There was Carla and Sandra and Patsy and a bunch of these Manley girls who went to school here. I think they lived out there, too, at one time.

RM: Is that's Manley's place?

JW: No, it's across the street from it. The Manleys, and Carpenters, and all those people are related. Pat Manley could probably give you some insight on that. Oh, gosh, there were some other families . . .

Ishmaels . . .

RM: Ishmael lived there?

JW: Well, he didn't live there, but they were all part of that clan. And the Bells. The Bells, the Ishmaels, the Manleys and the Carpenters were all interrelated. The Carpenters were the people that lived there when I was a kid, as I recall.

Across from Manley's garage is the new RV park. That's a new installation. Bill Wahlen built it within the last year or so and he runs it. He ran a taxicab service in Tonopah. And then when the bottom fell out of Anaconda, he sold out and got out of there.

RM: Now, describe what's there now so that I'm clear on what we're talking about.

JW: OK. Marvin has his home there and there's a yard in front, and then off to one side is a quonset hut that he uses for a shop.

RM: Just for the record, describe what else is there.

JW: Not much of anything. Fuller Looney used to live above it before he got sick and left and went to Texas. And then he died. There were a bunch of Looneys around - I don't know if I mentioned that to you last time.

RM: No.

JW: Well, there were all kinds of Looneys here - about 5 or 6 families. One kid who was a Looney by marriage took state championship in boxing at Reno. His name was Carl.

RM: What year would that have been?

JW: Probably in the '50s. I'm sure he was state champion. I remember seeing his name in the newspaper but I was just a kid then, too. And Fuller - who lived out there up from Carpenters - was related to him.

RM: I understand that Bill Sullivan is the Justice of the Peace and Fire

Chief. Where does he live?

JW: Bill Sullivan lives at the end of Montgomery. If you keep going out Montgomery Street, which is the street that intersects down here on the corner, one block up from the intersection. And that place used to belong to Tom Welch. Bill doesn't actually live there now; his son does. And Bill brought in a triple-wide just down from there.

RM: What's the next place going north after Manley?

JW: The next place on the left is Charlie Williams. He had that place for years and years.

RM: None of those places are real ranches, are they? They're just small acreages.

JW: Yes, they're not producing ranches. Most are probably 2-1/2 acre tracts. But there are some that could get up to a section or a quarter section or something.

RM: The ones we've talked about so far are small acreages, aren't they?

JW: As far as I know they are. Now, Fran owns quite a bit of property. She may have 160 acres.

RM: Oh, OK. It goes up the river, or does it go back into the hills, or both?

JW: Both.

RM: What's the next place then?

JW: The place that Ronnie Oden has now. It's right next to where Manley's place is, across from Marvin Wahlen's. I think that's the one that Charlie Williams had. I can't remember who had the Manleys'.

RM: But Ronnie Oden has it now? What's the next one you hit after his?

JW: The next one is the place that Wes and Elaine Parker own. It's on the left. And the people who owned that back in the '50s had a daughter named

Kitty. I can't remember her last name, but they were doing some work out at Carrara as well. But they owned that ranch at the same time. He was her stepfather.

RM: Is it a real ranch or is it just an acreage?

JW: Basically an acreage. The next thing would be . . . well, Bud Hawkins has bought some property up above Wes and Elaine just recently. It's off the highway about the same distance; you can hardly see it. It's right back up in the hill there. And they've moved the double-wide up there. And then across from that would be the Hot Springs.

RM: Can you give me any history on the Hot Springs?

JW: The first thing I remember is an owner. I think they called him Pop Gray. I'm not sure of the Pop, but his last name was Gray.

RM: Was it old Judge Gray?

JW: I don't know.

JW: But he ran it for a while, and then it went through a number of people's hands, including the brothel stage, which was after they got them out of town in the 50s.

RM: What did they call the brothel?

JW: I think it's always been the Hot Springs. The brothel had gone out of business before the flood. There used to be 3 or 4 or 5 little cabins back there, and I think that's where the hookers did their thing - I don't know. That was before my time. The brothel stage only lasted a year or two.

Then I know a fellow named George had it. Then Cal Jones had it. The big building was totally washed out by that big flood in '68. There was a 12-foot ditch in front of that place. It just wiped it out. So they tore the whole thing down and built a new building there. The baths were all rebuilt too. Everything was rebuilt. They just started from ground zero.

RM: Did the owner who had it before the flood do that?

JW: The Elmer Bailey family were the ones who built the building in front. I know he did a lot of work on the buildings in back, and they just mucked out the the little cabins and got rid of them. Elmer had a real nice dinner house there for some time. But he's getting up there where he doesn't want to fool with it. He's got his daughters in on it but they don't want to come out from California and do it, so they try and lease it. The last person who had it open was Tom Short's son.

RM: They also have RV parking there, don't they?

JW: Yes. Elmer Bailey's family put in the RVs; they were the ones who really put it back together again, and built the building as it is now, and the whole thing. But Elmer is in his 70s and he doesn't want to fool with it.

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: What's the next place after the Hot Springs?

JW: There are 2. The one on the right would be the old Greenwall place, as I remember. I think it was Greenwall, then Turner, then somebody else owned it. It ended, ultimately, as Jim Spicer's place.

RM: Now, is that actually a ranch, or is it again just an acreage?

JW: It's not a producing ranch. When Spicer had it he was just using it for a base station for mining operations and stuff.

RM: Does the Spicer place have quite a few acres?

JW: Quite a few.

RM: Now, who owned it in your earliest recollection?

JW: I think it was some people by the name of Greenwall. And then when I

was growing up, and you went out swimming at the pond, you always went out to Turners'. There's a pretty good-sized pond above the ranch. It was just a regular pond. We always used to go up to Turners' pond swimming. After Turner, it belonged to a couple of other people. And the last of them was Spicer.

RM: Did he have it very long?

JW: Oh, probably 5 years or so.

RM: And then he was killed, wasn't he?

JW: Yes. I was on that inquest. They called in 3 people and I was one of them. I had to go up there and see it. And they still had the body sitting there. He was shot. They've got to leave it. So to give you an idea of what happened: The place was built along these lines. [Weeks draws a diagram of the Spicer home on a piece of paper.]

What happened was, Jim Spicer was driving around the yard with his car. He kicked in a side door to the house. Spicer wasn't supposed to be there, there was a court order for him to stay out, as I remember.

His stepson Dave was in the house. And Spicer came in the side door; he kicked it open. There was a door to Spicer's right going into a bedroom. Spicer had a sawed-off 12-gauge shotgun. He turned and shot a side wall of the bedroom full of holes. There were pellet marks all over.

Well, David had a .38. And he knew Spicer was coming. So, naturally when somebody takes a shot at you with a 12-gauge you only get one chance. So Dave shot Spicer three times. Spicer stumbled a considerable distance and fell dead in the kitchen area.

When the inquest was formed we had to decide: did David have reason to shoot him? Well, any time you pull a 12-gauge on me, baby, you've got a reason. So it was found to be self-defense.

RM: Are the Spicers still there?

JW: David's still there. He runs a lot of equipment and does a lot of work around town. He has D-8 Cat and other equipment. His mom still lives here. Her name's Effie. And his dad - his real dad - is still in Beatty. You see, there were 2 sons and a daughter. And David was the only one that elected to become a Spicer; the rest of them remained Siedentopfs.

When they had the autopsy, they told us on the inquest that the guy wouldn't have lived probably [whistles] 6-8 weeks. His heart was all plugged up, everything was messed up, and he was totally hyper. He was in a lawsuit with the Stagecoach. He was just that type of person.

RM: So he was having a lot of conflict all the way around.

JW: I think the guy went nuts. He was living with some other gal. That was why Effie and he split the sheets. And he had her out there. I don't know what happened to her. She took a hike - went someplace. And so he just went nuts.

RM: Had he been here a long time?

JW: Not really. In the area . . . Now, Sandy Spicer is his brother. He lives in Goldfield and he was real bitter about this whole thing. He was at the inquest. As far as I could figure, Jim just went nuts. I never had any personal problems with Jim at all. He was a good customer at the store, when he was working down there, everything was fine and we did business and everything, but I think he just [whistles] took a dive - went off the deep end. I know that he was in this other litigation, and all this other stuff; maybe it was just too much pressure.

RM: Well, now, going on out the road, it's the old Spicer place on the right . . .

JW: OK, directly across from that on the left is the place that Shirley

Harlan and Elizabeth Keel have now. They call it Cold Comfort Farm. It used to belong to Bill Lotti. As far as I can remember back, that's the place he had.

RM: And is that a ranch or is it, again, an acreage?

JW: It's just out there. It's basically a ranch. Before you get to the Harlan and Keel place, you turn off toward Pioneer and Mayflower. The next one on Highway 95 is Oleo Road.

RM: OK, Oleo is right north of Spicer's place. What's up Oleo Road?

JW: There's a ranch up there. Again, it's an acreage. They've got a reservoir up there, and a pretty good-sized field and 2 or 3 houses.

RM: Who lives there?

JW: Rita Mullins. She works at the Beatty Club. It's a neat place. It's totally surrounded with mountains in a little pocket there. You don't even notice it from the highway.

RM: How far off the highway is it?

JW: A few miles at the most. Then you hit Ilene Torrance's place. And that place used to belong to Slim Riggs.

RM: Now, is it right on the highway?

JW: It's on the right going north; it would be the one up from Oleo Road before you get to the Fleur-de-Lis. And it's sitting down off the highway. I don't know if Slim Riggs built it. And they've owned it for quite a few years, but Slim Riggs owned it before that. I guess you know he owned that place out on the Sarcobatus.

RM: Yes; they call it Slim Riggs out on Sarcobatus, don't they?

JW: Yes; Sarcobatus Flats. About a mile and up, at Scotty's Junction.

RM: And then that burned, didn't it?

JW: Years ago. Of course, he was dead by the time it burned.

RM: He was an old-timer here, wasn't he?

JW: Oh, yes. He was from around here for a long, long time.

RM: Yes, I remember him. And he was in The Beatty Bulletin. He's mentioned from time to time.

JW: Yes. He and Velma and . . . he had a bunch of daughters. They grew up with my older sister, as a matter of fact. Loquita, I think, grew up with my older sister. Loquita would have to be in her 50s, which would make him in his 80s if he were alive.

He gave me my first car. And I couldn't make it run. It was one of those old Buick straight-8s - a '46. And he gave me the crankshaft and poured rod bearings. And you had to shim them, and all that kind of stuff? So I put them up like I thought they should be, and put it all together and . . . Man, that thing wouldn't even turn over. [laughter] I fixed it up good. [laughter] Yes, it was quite a deal. This was a 2-door, but it was a long old baby. And I thought I was going to make big times out of that, but [chuckles] it took a hike when I put it together and it wouldn't run. [laughter]

Anyhow, from there we have the Fleur-de-Lis.

RM: Now, where does that go?

JW: Well, there are 2 ranches there. One used to belong to Russ Long, who sold to Bud Hawkins, who sold it to George Younghans. Then up above that is G. L. Coffey's. He's owned that for quite a few years. Coffey has had it for a long time. Now, it's probably the closest thing you could call to doing anything commercially - he does sell cattle. It's not what you call a real big operation.

RM: How far off the highway is it?

JW: Two or three miles. There's the lower ranch and then they have an upper ranch. They do have cattle there and so forth, and other than that,

I don't know.

RM: What's the next place you hit after Fleur-de-Lis?

JW: Springdale. It was quite a little place. The highway used to go right through it and there was a cafe and saloon. We used to go through it every time we went to see my dad in the hospital.

RM: What kept it going?

JW: Tourist business. The highway went right through the middle of it.

RM: It wasn't an old ghost town from the early days, was it?

JW: No, it was something that somebody put together; I don't know who. It had been a railroad stop. There was a gas station there, and a saloon, a cafe, and etc. The gas station was on the left going north, and the saloon and cafe and stuff were on the right. And there were a couple of little houses, and I think they had some cabins back there, motel-type stuff.

RM: Have they moved the highway?

JW: They moved it to the left. If you go out there and you drop down that little bank, the old highway's still sitting there. You can still see it, except he's got a ton of junk sitting on it. [laughs] You're not going to drive out on it. It used to be a spot - well, if you remember back in those days, man, it was hot. My mom and and my sister and I used to go up to see my dad. He had tuberculosis - he was in Tonopah Hospital - that was in the '50s. And it was hot. So we'd stop at Goldfield and stop at Springdale, [laughs] and get a Coke or something. And so it was a place I stopped at a lot when I was young.

RM: Who owned it then?

JW: I'm not sure. Peacocks have owned it for the longest time that I can remember, and I think they owned it then. Because I can remember - they had peacocks; they still do. I remember that Ed Peacock's mom had it at

the time, as near as I can recall. I used to go out in the yard and watch those peacocks. I was 8 or 9 years old, and those things would fan out, and you'd get a big charge out of them. [chuckles] I'm sure she owned it at the time. We'd go fooling around out in the yard while we had a Coke or something.

RM: When did they close down the bar?

JW: When the new highway went through in '55 or '56. Then it just died, because people wouldn't drive off the highway for it. They just kept on boogeying. So they just shut everything down there. That old pump out there - you ought to take a look at that. It's one of those old glass gas pumps - the kind where you'd crank gas in the top, and then it went down. I think it's still there. You'd crank 5 gallons up, and then drain 5 gallons out, and . . .

RM: Then there's a place on the left, the next place.

JW: OK, that's the Windmill Ranch. Renee Gibson has owned that as long as I can remember. I think probably her husband built that place. I really don't know that, but I remember they used to have a swimming pool out there. And it was a real swimming pool - had cement and stuff in it. And we used to ride out there on bicycles to go swimming.

RM: That was a long ride.

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