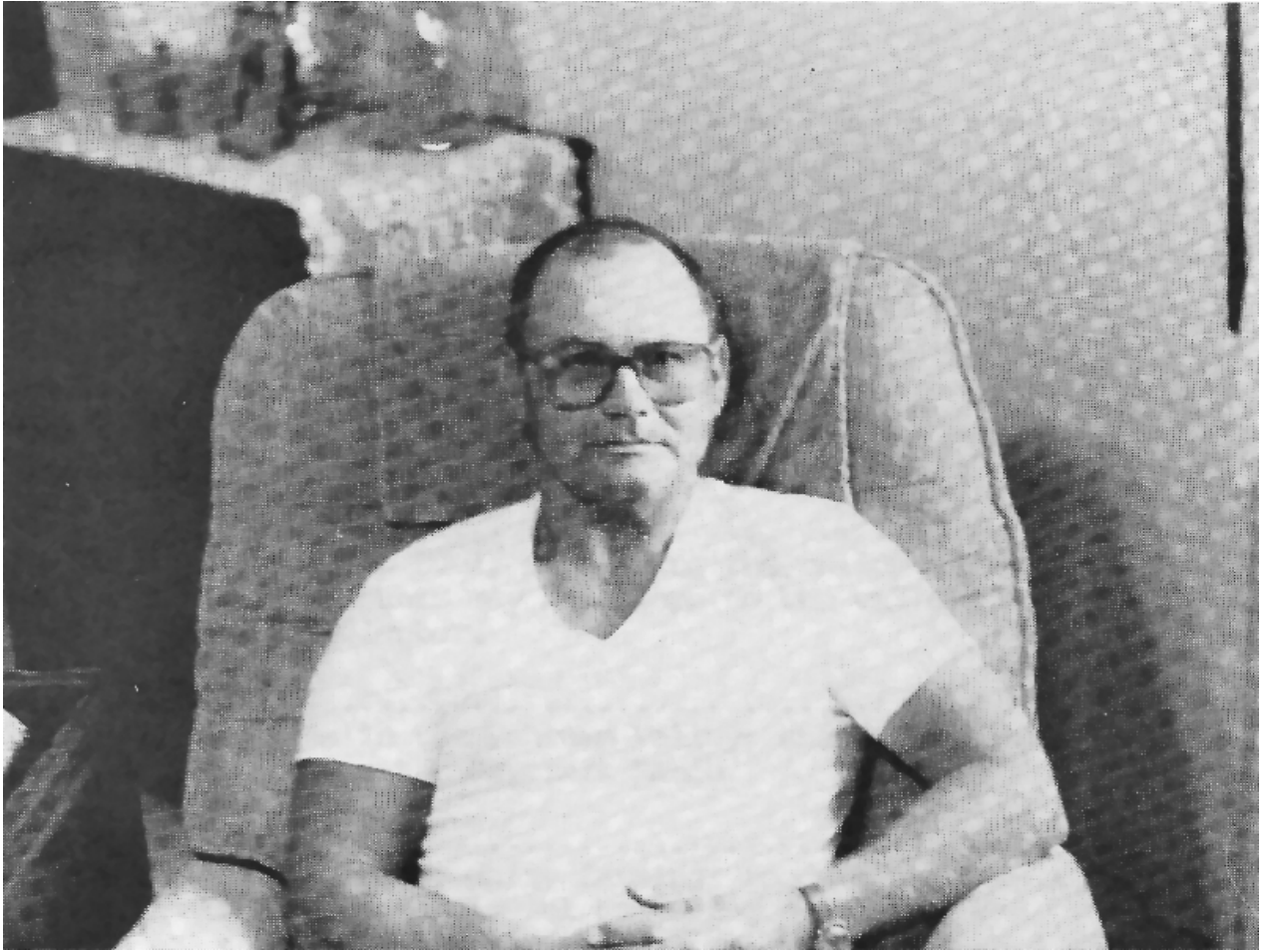


# An Interview With HARRY "BUTTONS" FORD

An Oral History conducted and edited by  
Robert D. McCracken  
Nye County Town History Project  
Nye County, Nevada  
Tonopah  
1988

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Harry "Button" Ford 1989

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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, generally in preparing text: delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;

occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;

rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;

enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and

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; 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

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--Robert D. McCracken Tonopah, Nevada

June 1990

## INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

which was published as a supplement to the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Nye County's close ties to our nation's frontier past, and recognizing that few written sources on local history are available, especially after about 1920, the Nye County Commissioners initiated the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). The NCTHP represents an effort to systematically collect and preserve information on the history of Nye County. The centerpiece of the NCTHP is a large set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Nye County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique--some are large, others are small--yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the 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 Harry "Button" Ford at his home in Pahrump Valley, Nevada - April 25, 26 and 27, 1988

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Button, let's begin by you telling me your full name as it reads on your birth certificate.

BF: My name is Harry Stanley Ford.

RM: And when and where you were born?

BF: I was born in the Los Angeles County General Hospital on January 12, 1937.

RM: What was your father's full name?

BF: My father's name was Stanley Ford.

RM: And when and where he was born?

BF: He was born in Bloom City, Wisconsin, on February 27, 1902.

RM: And how about your mother?

BF: Her name was Hattie Eva Todd, and *she* was born - I say Bloom City . .. they were born in farmhouses, but their birth certificates say Bloom City- Wisconsin, May 19, 1904.

RM: What was your father's occupation?

BF: Originally my family from Wisconsin were dairy farmers. My great-grandparents homesteaded in the dairy country of Wisconsin. My father didn't like the cold winters. He had spent some time in southern California; his father was quite a traveler/pioneer type of fellow. So in 1925 my father and mother and one daughter, who was probably a year and a half old, got into a Model-T Ford, it all their belongings in it, and drove to southern California, and ended up in Fallbrook, which is in between Los Angeles and San Diego.

RM: And what did they do there?

BF: He worked at odd jobs, mainly as a truck driver. In fact, in the Los Angeles area he built up a trucking business; he had 3 trucks at one time. And he hauled hay and produce. At that time they hauled out of the Imperial Valley and the San Joaquin Valley into Los Angeles, and up

until the Depression in the '30s he was in the trucking business.

RM: What led up to his moving to the Pahrump Valley?

BF: Well, he always wanted to farm. It seems as though farming was in his blood, and his family had homesteaded in the Lanfair Valley down here out of Searchlight; that was dry farming. And then he moved out around Needles, California and had a little cow outfit out there. In those days, you just moved in and turned your cows loose. And then the Second World War started. At that time everybody either went to war or was working in government jobs. At that particular time they were building all of the bases around Yermo and Barstow, California, so we packed up in 1942 and moved to Yermo. He worked there on government jobs until 1944. And then in 1944 he heard of Pahrump Valley and at that time there was a lot of artesian water - either wells or springs - and he moved his family into Pahrump Valley.

RM: Did you have brothers and sisters at that time?

BF: I have 4 sisters - they're all older than I am.

RM: And he moved the family into Pahrump with the intention of farming his own land?

BF: We moved onto some property which is due north of here which is now the Basin Ranch. A businessman in Yermo had purchased 100 acres and they were drilling a well with the plans of this being a large artesian well with which they could farm. After the family was moved up here, the well didn't produce and at that particular time we moved onto what was the old Raycraft place. That's where we spent the next 8 years.

RM: Could you describe where the Raycraft place is?

BF: The Raycraft ranch of that time is on Wilson Road. You'd say it started on what is E Street today and then it ran south to what's now the state highway. And then it ran west - we'll say to Margaret. It was 640 acres.

RM: And your dad took over management of the Raycraft ranch?

BF: Right. He farmed it. It was owned by a man by the name of Jim Raycraft, which I have - if you want me to read what I have written down here, it might speed things up. The Raycraft ranch was formerly owned by Nye County Sheriff

Brougher, whose office was in the upper story of the Belmont Courthouse. His daughter Ida married Jim Raycraft and they moved to Pahrump, building the large white house with lumber taken from the buildings torn down at the Johnnie Town, 16 miles north of Pahrump. They raised 2 daughters, June and Pat, and a son, Bob. Moving to Oakland, California, so the children could go to school, Jim worked until retirement for Bell Telephone Company. I have no idea what year they came here, but I listened to him for hours tell stories about the old store at the Pahrump Ranch and this sort of thing.

RM: Could you describe what Pahrump looked like when you got here?

BF: When we first came here there were 3 large ranches. One was the Pahrump Ranch, which had 12,000 acres, and at that time they probably farmed 500 or 600 acres. It was a hay, grain, cattle operation. The Manse Ranch was a hay, grain, cattle operation plus they had the outside range; they ran cattle in the Charleston Mountains in the summer and in the floor of the valley in the winter. That was owned by Dr. Cornell, from San Diego. His son-in-law and daughter, Charles Sawday and his wife Ruth, lived on and managed the Manse Ranch. Then the next ranch down was owned by Lois Kellogg.

RM: The Manse Ranch wasn't nearly as large as the Pahrump Ranch, was it?

BF: NO, it wasn't. Then there was the Lois Kellogg ranch. Lois Kellogg came from a wealthy family. She owned the Kellogg ranch and she owned a ranch somewhere around Tonopah. When Lois Kellogg passed away, Dr. Cornell bought her ranch, so that made one large ranch out of the two.

RM: Could you give me the coordinates of the old Pahrump Ranch at that time, in terms of today's roads?

BF: Well, the headquarters would be close to the intersection of Highway 372 and 160; that would be the nucleus. And then the ranch went in - southwest and north. Everything - a portion of the property which would be in the northwest corner of the intersection - belonged to other people, although there was just a small amount. When we came here there was absolutely nothing north of - let's say Basin Road.

RM: Is that right; the 88 Ranch and the Dollar and all those were. . .

BF: Absolutely nothing. And then there was absolutely nothing west of Linda. So all that existed were the 3 large ranches, which were now incorporated into 2. And then there was Frank "Pop" Buol. He owned what is now the Binion ranch.

RM: What was the building situation on the Pahrump Ranch?

BF: As you entered into the Pahrump Ranch you went through a gate; every ranch had a gate. On the right-hand side was the large barn. It had a hay maw with the hay in the top. It had a through run where - we were told the horse-drawn carriages, the stagecoaches and whatever [went]. Then on each side were the stalls for the animals. When we came here it was a cow ranch, so to the west of this big barn were corrals - holding pens - working pens, so to speak. Then on the right-hand side just past the barn was the old store, which looks basically like it does today, only it was their tool shed and in front of it was a hand gas pump. If you came to Pahrump and you were out of gas, they would give you enough gas to get to a town.

Now, the road situation was: when you got to the Manse Ranch, the road ended and it turned into a trail to the south. The Automobile Club of Southern California had come through here at same time and put white with either black or blue lettering porcelain road signs. And they were everywhere. You couldn't go 2 miles but what you saw a road sign that said, "3 miles ahead to" whatever. I have one of those.

RM: In addition to the barn and the old stone house, what was on the Pahrump Ranch?

BF: The old store. Then on down - on the right-hand side - there was a 2-story house. There was one more small 2-bedroom house on the right-hand side. Coming back, on the left as you first entered, there was a small house that, I understand, had at one time been the school house. It seems as though wherever there were the most kids, that's where the school was. As you came on down they had just built, or were building, a brand new home, which today is Cal-Vada's construction office. Then the next building was the old hotel. It had a hallway with rooms off each side on just the bottom floor and a big room which at that time was being used for the dining room, and then it had the kitchen, and then they had a storeroom - a locker for their meat and supplies. Upstairs (they had a stairway in the back) in the attic they kept supplies.

RM: Why did they have a hotel here?

BF: All I can do is quote hearsay: that there was a lot of activity at the Johnnie Mine somewhere in the early 1900s. So they had a stage route that went through Pahrump and on south.

RM: I wonder if it went down to Goodsprings?

BF: Well, that's where the road went. But the road went on down to Goodsprings and then who knows where - probably down to the railroad. That was all we knew; that it was just used. I suppose they didn't have a hotel at Johnnie; I've never heard of one. And then past the old hotel was another house, a regular one-bedroom house. And then on further down they built another new house. Two brand-new houses were built in 1944 or '45 and they were both on that side. But a beautiful thing down there was a Lane, and why it was there I have no idea, lined with large palm trees.

RM: Could you tell me where those palm trees would be today if they were still standing?

BF: Both of the new houses that were built stand today. One is the construction office, the other one is Central Nevada Utilities. Right at Central Nevada Utilities, just past that going to the south, was the row of palm trees. They were the large, large-based palm, not a date palm. In fact, one of them still exists. They took them up, moved them out, put them along 160, and one of them is still alive, standing out there on 160.

One more thing on the Pahrump Ranch was water. They had an abundance of water. There were 2 large springs, and then they had drilled more wells. The 2 large springs and one particular well together free-flowed over 3000 gallons a minute. And that was the lifeline of the Pahrump Ranch. In the summertime they farmed with it, and in the wintertime it ran into the old natural slough.

RM: Now, where did that slough run?

BF: They built the golf course right down the slough. And that slough, in the wintertime, was a haven for ducks and geese and game of all kinds.

RM: Were there vineyards on the Pahrump Ranch when you were a kid?

BF: When we first came here there were still some fruit trees, and the ranch itself grew an excellent garden, which was part of the supplies for the bunkhouse, to feed the men. But there were no grape vines to speak of, although we had been told in the past there had been a large vineyard. There are still some almond trees today, and pear trees and a pecan tree that are still standing and produce today from the same group. There were 2 or 3 large fig trees, and unfortunately they've been taken down, because a fig tree is hard to grow in this area; they freeze down in the winter time.

RM: Where did they get their labor?

BF: There were 3 Indian camps in this valley. There were Mutt and John Weed. There had been a Jeff - Mutt, Jeff and John Weed - but Jeff had died. Mutt worked on the Pahrump Ranch and John worked for Frank Buol. John was a mute. And then there was the Long Jim family. And Long Jim worked on the Pahrump Ranch, and all he had was daughters. Then down in the south end there was the Louie Sharp family, and there are still some of them down there. And Louie Sharp worked on the Manse Ranch. And then there were some white families that would come and go. And I think they had a help wanted ad that ran, probably [chuckles], all over the southwest. The mail only came once a week, and [workers] would ride the Las Vegas, Tonopah, Reno Stage lines out, catch the mail bus, and came in to Pahrump, and then many, many times the following Wednesday, one week later, they would get on the bus and go back out. I can remember a couple of fellows coming down and begging my father (and paid him \$5, or \$10, or something) to haul them out before Wednesday came. They had had enough of this.

RM: Is that right. And they were whites?

BF: Yes.

RR: Was there any Mexican labor here that you remember?

BF: Absolutely none at that particular time.

RM: Moving on down to the Manse Ranch, could you describe what structures were on that property?

BF: The Manse Ranch had the same thing: you had a gate. Every ranch had a gate - you just had to have a gate to go through. The first house you came to still stands today, and I understand it's adobe with stucco on the outside, and

it has a metal roof. That was where Charles Sawday lived. Behind his house was a large spring which was the local swimming hole, and it was just a wonderful place to be in the summertime. And then as you went on around a curve, they had a line of buildings and of course every ranch had to have a bunkhouse. [The only people who] lived in theirs were the cook, who was usually a woman, and her husband worked on the ranch, and then they ran the cook shack. And then there were small, cabin-type [structures] where the help lived.

RM: Approximately where was the gate to the Manse Ranch in terms of today's landmarks?

BF: 160 runs right down the old road to a point, and then it would turn a little to the right, and actually go right straight in to the house that's existing there today. And then they had, and have, an old store building, and they also used that for their tool shed.

RM: Oh, there were 2 old store buildings. Do you know when the store on the Pahrump Ranch became nonoperative?

BF: I have no idea.

RM: Were there any people on either the Pahrump Ranch or the Manse Ranch Wiring this period aside from those you've already mentioned that we should note?

BF: The person who was called the foreman of the Pahrump Ranch was named Heber Wilson and his wife's name was Norma. They had 2 daughters - the youngest one was Carol Jean and the oldest's name was Joy.

RM: How about on the Manse Ranch?

BF: Well, it would be basically the same thing, because there was always a turnover. The foreman was Charles Sawday, the son-in-law of Dr. Cornell. He was a practicing physician in the San Diego area - it could've been Escondido

RR: You don't know what his specialty was, do you?

BF: I sure don't. I know he took out tonsils, so apparently he was a nose and throat man.

RM: And then, how about the Kellogg ranch?



BF: As you left the Manse Ranch, there was nothing until you got to a large, modern-looking barn. Mrs. Kellogg had started building a rolled barley mill, and it was as modern a building as you would see anywhere in the country. It may have been oats; but she was going to roll a grain. There were many things she never completed, and that was one of them.

RM: What was her thinking? Was she going to grow barley here?

BF: She grew barley. But in one particular case, which I know is true, she grew a field of barley and it was beautiful. Well, it was just so beautiful that she never harvested it. She did the same thing with her hay. When you cut alfalfa hay, you have to let it cure before you bale it because if you bale it green, it will actually burn. Well, she loved the sight of beautiful green hay, so she had her men bale this hay green, because it was beautiful. And her stacks went up in smoke [chuckles].

Her living quarters, strangely enough, were on past her mill in a little adobe building at Mound Springs. A group of kids from Las Vegas came out and had a party and burred the thing down a few years back, but the walls probably still stand. But that was her living quarters, a little adobe house a mile or two from her farm. It was part of her ranch and there was a spring there - the old Mound Spring - and that was where she lived.

RM: Where did her hands live?

BF: When we came here she didn't have any help. Now, I really don't know how this all took place. Soon after we came, she died.

RM: Do you know the circumstances of her death?

BF: She raised a type of dog . . . One thing she liked was purebred animals. She had beautiful purebred Hereford cattle. These dogs, whatever breed they were, were of the best quality. And I heard 2 stories [about her death]. I heard, number one, that she was bitten on the hand by one of these dogs and from that bite she developed an infection and died. The other story was, she had been bitten by one of the dogs, she had skinned a rabbit and, as we all know, skinning rabbits in the desert is dangerous and she got tularemia. But of course in those days there were no phones [and medical help was not nearby].

RM: Approximately what year did she die?

BF: Probably 1945; '44 or '45.

RM: So when she passed away there was a consolidation of the Kellogg and the Manse Ranch.

BF: That's correct.

RM: And that would've been shortly after her death.

BF: Right.

RM: And so then Cornell had both of them.

BF: That's correct.

RM: Could you describe what other small ranches were in the area?

BF: OK. Coming back to the nucleus of Pahrump, there was Frank Buol, who had 160 acres. And on that he had his vineyards and his orchards and he was very meticulous with this sort of thing. He grew his own grapes and made his own wine and he was very meticulous about that.

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

BF: I can tell you what he told us, that he came to Las Vegas from somewhere back east.

## CHAPTER TWO

RM: We were talking about Pop Buol.

BF: Frank Buol told me that he had come from back east to the Las Vegas area. He was apparently sort of a surveyor and he had been sent out here to survey the Spring Mountain Range for timber; there are large trees up there. In fact, there had been a sawmill up there somewhere - that's another story. After he had completed his job in the Spring Mountains, he walked into the Pahrump Valley, and I guess he found the place that he wanted to spend the rest of his life, and he did.

RM: Do you have any idea what year that was?

BF: I sure don't, but he was here during the heyday of Johnnie.

RM: Johnnie was going in the very early 1900s.

BF: I now when we moved here there was an old steam-powered well rig, and Frank Buol had drilled his wells with it and it had rope for the line, and also cable. He had drilled the wells on his property with that old steam-powered well rig.

RM: So Buol had to drill; he didn't have natural artesian springs?

BF: That's correct.

RM: But the Pahrump Ranch had natural artesian?

BF: Pahrump had 2 large natural springs and then they had drilled wells also. The Manse Ranch had one large natural spring. I have heard down through the years that there is such a thing as the Manse Ranch fan and the Pahrump Ranch fan that are different. And then around these springs they drilled wells which came in artesian.

RM: Did the Kellogg ranch have a natural artesian spring?

BF: The only natural spring she had was where she lived. She had a small spring where her little house was. Another thing she tried was to siphon these wells, because they were up on the alluvial fan, maybe 500 feet higher than the ranch. She had an idea, which was excellent, but she tied right onto the well casing instead of going down the well,

so when they would start siphoning they would just pour lots of water, until they would get an air lock. And then when they'd get an air lock they'd stop, because there was no way to get air into the ground.

RM: Yes; no way to burp it.

BF: Or had she put her siphon down inside the well where air could've gotten around it. She was quite an ingenious woman.

RM: Let me get the siphon visualized. She's higher up on the fan?

BF: Right. So she connected a pipe onto the discharge from her well and then ran a pipe down the hill, which gave a weight distribution - it would pull the water down. It was an excellent idea, had it had air, but there's no air in the ground, so as soon as they pull a vacuum on the ground, it would stop and lose its prime, so to speak.

RM: You mentioned these currents of water coming down the hill from the wells up on the fan.

BF: The wells were drilled up on the fan. And of course they didn't have pipelines, so they had natural ditches. And to me they looked like the Colorado River; they were large streams of water.

They drilled on the Kellogg ranch in 2 locations in later years, and got enormous wells - one of them free-flowed 1800 gallons a minute. The other one flowed so much water that they had to cut it down because in the state of Nevada you get a permit for so much water. They actually had to screw the valve down to keep within the limits of their water permit.

RM: The Manse and Kellogg ranches had these wells up on the fan and Pahrump didn't have them?

BF: They had wells but they weren't on the fan; they were right near their spring

RM: In relation to the highway, where would those wells be?

BF: Using the county line, there were probably 2 or 3 on the Nye County side above the road. As you cross the county line there are probably 3 or 4 on the right-hand side of the road.

RM: Fran your description of Buol's place, it seems that he was more interested in trees and grapes and different kinds of plants than [people] on the other ranches.

BF: Well, yes. Now, when we came here he also had the only grocery store. And he had an orchard and a vineyard and he made wine. Now, he did not grow alfalfa or grain . . . occasionally he had a pig that he would let run in the orchard, and as the fruit would drop the pigs would clean it up and then he'd butcher the pig in the fall and that was the end of the pig. But he really didn't have any animals other than that.

RM: It sounds like he was more interested in trees and fruit and grape vines and so on than the other ranchers. They seemed to be more focused on alfalfa and grain and things like that.

BF: Hay, grain and cattle.

RM: Yes. I find the distinction interesting; it's almost a different philosophy in use of a land.

BF: Well, it's individualism. It's just like my father. He was a farmer, but he would've never grown grapes and made wine, so it's just the individual thing. This was the west, and hay and cattle were the west.

RM: And Pop Buol wasn't in that mode of thinking, was he?

BF: He probably wasn't even a farmer. I'm just guessing, but he probably had never farmed in his life. He came here and he opened up his store, and he had the basic staples and . . .

RM: How old a man was he when you knew him?

BF: I would say he was probably in his 60s.

RM: Did he leave, or did he pass away?

BF: He ran his store and grew his grapes and made his wine and whatever, and then he became quite an older man and he couldn't do the job any more. He got some outside help, and then finally . . . he went out of the store business in 1946, probably. But he finally just became an old man and sold his property and moved to Tonopah, where he had relatives, and there he passed on. After he shut the store he continued making wine, but one day the federal people

came out and knocked on his door and said, "We understand you're making wine here." They checked out his wine and the alcohol content was a little high. I understand that in Nevada there is some law that if you're married you can make 2 barrels of wine a year. He wasn't married, and they told him that (I can't confirm this, but . . .) he couldn't make wine anymore, and that was his last year here. This would've probably been '57 or '58.

RM: Somebody said that he had a licensed winery. Is that true?

BF: He had the Number One license in the state of Nevada. But I have no idea of the history of that. When we came here he didn't sell any wine at all. He made a lot of it, but he didn't sell it. He gave it away, and he drank a lot. He used to tell us he drank a quart a day. If you calculate that over a year, that's quite a bit. And then every time somebody came in it was, break out the bottle.

RM: Had he sold wine previously?

BF: I can't tell you that. The way he had large barrels, there, I would assume that he had sold wine in the past.

RM: Could you describe his wine operation a little bit?

BF: Well, his old winery was still up there, and was still intact. The old door was still there - it was a little old tiny door - he called it his jail. He had a big old padlock on it and bars and everything. It's an adobe building with a big wood heater about 4 or 5 feet long, and he had the presses and everything. I remember one wine barrel that he sold to some people I knew - I think it was 500-gallon; it was a large wine barrel. After he sold the ranch and they were leveling the sand hills, they ran onto some barrels of wine. He had little wine cellars in the sand hills. Look out and see the sand hills - that's where he kept his wine; back in there. When they bulldozed some of the sand hills above us here, they found barrels of wine he had forgotten about.

RM: Do you remember any remains of wine-making equipment on the Pahrump or Manse Ranches when you were young?

BF: No.

RM: I've read that they made wine there in the early days. In your reading and research on the area, is it your

understanding that the original Yount bought the Manse Ranch?

BF: That was originally called the Younts' *ranch*, yes. There's one item of folklore that says there was a group that came through here and the Indians wanted them to stay and they took their horses to a spring up here called Horse Shootum Spring. The Indians were supposed to have shot the horses so they couldn't leave. Now, whether that's true or false or what, I have no idea, but the spring has the name Horse Shootum.

RM: There are a couple of versions of that story. And one of their partners bought Indian Springs from Whispering Ben. And then Yount came over here and . . .

BF: But as I read it, there were 2 brothers. One was Johnnie Yount's and I can't come up with the other name. They're buried right up here in the Pahrump cemetery. But both of them married Indian women.

RM: I'm not sure, but I think those were Yount's sons.

BF: But then they also, I think, ended up buying what's now Hidden Hills, which was part of the Younts' ranch. I have some signs that say, "Younts Ranch," X number of miles. And it's not the Manse Ranch.

RM: How did the Pahrump ranch get so big? And the Manse, apparently, didn't get nearly that big, did it?

BF: I just have no idea. All I know is that when we came here it was 12,000 acres, and that's what was purchased the first time that I was old enough to know or care.

RM: When did Pop Buol leave the valley?

BF: I would say he left here in 1957 or '8.

RM: Who took over his ranch, then?

BF: He sold it to a lady named Sully. She saw a chance to make some money. She came here and met Frank Buol and saw all those antiques - the man had a wealth of antiques . . . In fact, if you go to Death Valley and see the contraption they had for shoeing oxen, it has a big wheel on it and 4 pedestals. That was Pop Buol's; he donated it to the museum and they moved it over there. But she saw a chance to make

some money so she bought the property very, very cheap and then advertised it in the Wall Street Journal.

RM: You don't know what she bought it for, do you?

BF: I heard that he sold it to her for \$10,000 and she paid him \$6000 or something. She immediately sold it to a man by the name of Doby Doc, who is a whole story of his own. He was a character, and he was a partner of the Binions; he was a gambler. Originally, I think, he came from Winnemucca or somewhere up north. Doby Doc bought the place in 1959. I remember it well, because that was the year our daughter was born. Doby came driving his Rolls Royce into my yard and introduced himself, and he always called me "Ford." After that, every time he came to Pahrump he'd drive his Rolls Royce into my yard and get out and say, "Hi, Ford. How you doing?" And he was a character. Doby, fortunately, preserved all of the antiques. He had a collection that he sold for somewhere between \$5 and \$6 million. He had a large collection of guns. If you're familiar with the Last Frontier in Las Vegas, Doby Doc owned everything there. He wanted to build a western frontier town.

Then, with his political pull, he got the Gold Strike Inn, this side of Boulder Dam on the interstate. And he moved all of his old trains and antiques and so forth out there . . . all the stuff he had had at the Last Frontier Village. He had a wealth of everything.

RM: When would that have been?

BF: He moved to the Gold Strike in the '60s, because we met him in 1959 and he had a great time over here and then he got this property near the dam and moved all those trains and everything.

RM: Yes, that's in Bill Moore's oral history; Bill Moore got a lot of things from Doby Doc. Bill Moore was the architect who built the Frontier starting in '41. And he wanted to have a western motif, so he went out looking around for things.

BF: Well, Doby Doc owned all that stuff.

RM: That's where he got it; yes. Did Doby Doc bring all that stuff down here?

BF: No, he had warehouses. He told me he had 100 pianos. He loved to play ragtime piano. He would have parties up here on weekends and he'd have, say, Roy Rogers; he was a good friend of Roy



Rogers. And they would hire the local teenage girls to be waitresses and this sort of thing. We could sit on our front porch and hear Doby playing his piano up there; he'd play old ragtime music.

RM: Did he live here?

BF: He lived here a lot of the time, but this was at the time that Benny Binion was in prison in Texas, so Doby ran the Horseshoe Club. When you run a club, you count the money every 8 hours. Somebody asked him, "Doby, why don't you hire somebody to do it?" He said, "Pretty soon he'll have as much money as me [laughter]." Because that was before they had gotten on to skimming. He would have to go into Vegas every 8 hours, so he would come out here and his bedroom had no windows in it. He would come in and close the door and go to sleep, if it was noon, or whatever it was.

RM: Was he afraid of being shot?

BF: Well, I imagine that was one reason. But the other reason was, of course, it was dark. I guess he could sleep any time.

RM: Where did he make his money?

BF: He told us he made his money in "hard gambling, hard whiskey and hard women. " He sold bootleg whiskey in Winnemucca or somewhere up there. I've read his history. He came here from Texas or somewhere back east. He'd been a cowboy and . . .

RM: I wonder if he came here with Binion?

BF: I can't really tell you. All I know is that he never was in business with Binion that I know of until the Horseshoe Club in Las Vegas.

RM: So when Binion had to go to jail, Doby Doc took over management?

BF: Yes. Somebody had to take over because of the license.

RM: How old was he when you knew him?

BF: He would've had to have been close to 70, because when he died he was in his 80s. He still had some black in his hair

RM: Was he a big man?

BF: No he was a regular-sized man. He wore bib overalls, a white shirt and a diamond stickpin. And he had a diamond on his finger - these things were almost as big as walnuts. He always wore a white shirt under those bib overalls so he could fit his diamond stickpin on it. He bought a brand-new Rolls Royce when he came out here; it was probably 1958. '59 is when we met him.

RM: What did he see in Buol's place?

BF: Antiques; and then, Doby wanted to build a bomb shelter. He owned the property south of the Tropicana Hotel - it's still owned by the Binion family. He owned about 17 acres there; it was worth a fortune. He had a lot of his antiques there. So he decided that he was going to build a bomb shelter. This was when we were all learning about protecting ourselves from the Russians, so he went out and took his old bulldozer and started a hole for his bomb shelter. One day a man walked on the lot and he said, "What are you doing?"

He said, "I'm building a bomb shelter."

And he said, "You got a permit?"

And he said, "No, I haven't got a permit."

"Well, you're going to have to come down and buy a permit, and it's going to cost you," I think it was, "\$20."

Doby Doc said, "I don't buy a permit from nobody."

RM: [laughter]

BF: And so he came out here and he built a dandy. Even built one for his Rolls Royce; his Rolls Royce goes right beside him. If the Binions would let you go in there they could show you the old winery and the shelter.

RM: Tell me about Buol's antiques. Did he have a really great collection?

BF: He just kept everything. I remember he had an old oxen yoke - the big piece of wood with the 2 rings around it - and he had these hanging up on his wall. He had his winery and then he had a screened porch with shutters, and that was the store. When it was a nice day he raised the

shutters and when it was a bad day, he closed them. He had a beaver tail he said came from the Spring Mountain Range; that there had been beaver up there when he came. And then, of course, he had old wagons. His car was a Model-A station wagon that he always kept garaged in an old building. And that thing was just like brand new, and he would drive it to town to get his supplies. He had all his winery stuff, and old guns and crocks.

My mother used to sell him milk, and he'd set it out until it would clabber, and then he would drink that; he'd never drink fresh milk. My mother was quite particular about her milk; she sold a lot of it.

RM: He wasn't married?

BF: No. He had been married, and then, while we were here, he married again for a short while and that didn't last very long. But most of the time he was an old bachelor.

RM: Well, it sounds like Doby Doc bought the place for a bomb shelter.

BF: He bought it for the antiques and, of course, for the location - close to Vegas - and then the bomb shelter. And then, he made some wine - a couple of barrels a year.

RM: You don't know what he paid for the place, do you?

BF: No, I sure don't. But that'd be easy enough to find; all you'd have to do is run the records in Tonopah of 1958, '59. There probably were 3 parcels sold in Nye County that year.

RM: Yes [chuckles]. What else do you know about Doby Doc?

BF: That would be a whole story in itself. You know, you should talk to the Binions. Oh, this man was a character. He was known for his diamond and his gold collection. One time in Vegas somebody tried to rob him and they almost did the old man in; they broke his arm. But he never did tell them where anything was. He bought the safe out of the courthouse in Tonopah. Joe Heiligens worked for Doby all the time he was here in Pahrump. In fact, Joe was the only one that could open the safe, and they still have it, according to Ted Binion, and it has never been opened since he died. Joe Heiligens told me that the thing had a collection of silver coins that would bring tears to your eyes; silver dollars He had all kinds of silver dollars.

RM: Did the Binions get the property out of his estate?

BF: No, they took it over before he died because he got too old to come out here, and Binion has a large horse ranch in Montana. So he brings his horses here in the winter time. I've seen as many as - well over 100 head of horses - that he'll turn loose. It's a beautiful sight; they'll come running down and run right in front of our house and on around. And he usually has trainers - people there who train the horses - in the wintertime. He has a big stagecoach pulled by 4 black horses, and we see them go by. In fact, they've got a big barn up there - you can see it in the daylight - where he keeps them stabled.

RM: So the Binions have had it ever since. I guess its uses for grapes and fruit trees and everything has kind of just gone by the way?

BF: Yes. They still water then, I'm sure, but . . . Ted Binion's out here a lot of the time, and they just built a big adobe garage over there, and I understand they have a Rolls Royce limousine in it.

### CHAPTER THREE

RM: Now, we've discussed Buol's place. What other smaller operations were there at this time?

BF: Just west of the Buol ranch, which is today the Binion ranch, on what is today Wilson Road, was the Paul Cayton place. His wife was named Helen and he had a daughter named Darlene. They owned a big tie house that somebody had constructed in a southern fashion, and it was a beautiful place with big old trees, and he just had a small farming operation - he had a little artesian well. All the wells, of course, were artesian; there was no pumping at all at that time. He grew some alfalfa, but Paul was an accomplished musician. He was an excellent musician - he played the steel guitar - and he would go and play in the little surrounding mining towns in California - Tecopa and Shoshone and wherever - and that's how he made his living. I have no idea when he moved here - I'm sure it was in the late 1930s. We came in '44, he probably came in the late '30s. The post office was in a room of this large house and his wife was the postmaster. The mail came in one day a week, on Wednesday. It was brought in from Highway 95, and then it was unloaded at her place; it was usually only a couple of mail bags. She'd sort the mail, and that was the social hub of Pahrump Valley. The mail would usually arrive around noon and everybody, which was 3 or 4, would come there and get the mail and you would say, "How's the cows doing?" And, "What news have you heard?" because all you had was the old radio. There was no newspaper, there was no telephone; that was the cultural hub of Pahrump Valley.

RM: How big was the Cayton place?

BF: It was 40 acres. Right to the west of them, his brother - we called him Buddy Cayton; I have no idea what his name was - his wife was Lonnie, and they had a daughter named Sally Ann. They were here when we first came, trying to farm a little bit, and soon they moved back to Las Vegas. He was in the dry-cleaning business and that's where they lived for the rest of their days.

Paul and Buddy Cayton's mother was married to a man by the name of Ray Van Horn. When Van Horn's father died, he inherited some money. At that particular time, which was somewhere right around 1944, he took this money and you could buy tax land in Nye County then. He bought virtually the whole north end of Pahrump Valley. He bought hundreds - probably thousands - of acres for \$1.25 an acre. He bought what, today, is all of Cal-Vada North, and the Brady ranch, and the

Simkins ranch and virtually everything north. This property all had to be posted. You had to go research every person that had owned this for X number of years (and I wish to God I had one of those posters . . . ), and you had to legally post the property with the names of all the former owners. It had to be posted for a period of time, and then you could go and pay the county \$1.25 and acre and . . .

RM: How' did the people who didn't pay the taxes get this land originally?

BF: Well, now, that I don't know.

RM: Somebody told me that there was a big swap between the forest service, or somebody, and the state. They traded land that the state owned up on Mount Charleston for forest service land down here so that they could consolidate up on the mountain. And then you could buy the land here from the state. Have you heard that before?

BF: The story that I got is that somehow the Mormons were involved with the Johnnie Nines, and that Mormon families had homesteaded this valley. As you remember, when Brigham Young called all the Mormons back to Salt Lake City for the big war in 1858 or 1857, they let everything go - even in the Carson Valley. They walked off, or sold, beautiful farms. But then, that would've been when this was still a territory, so it couldn't have gone back for taxes then, because Nevada became a state in 1864.

RM: Yes; there wouldn't be homesteads here then. Suddenly you've got all this land here. You can follow the Pahrump and Manse Ranches from the 1870s on, but . . . For instance, somebody told me that the original Manse Ranch was traded with an Indian for a gold watch. Have you heard that story?

BF: No, the story I heard was that somebody - a white person - had purchased one of the ranches. And let's say he had paid \$180; I don't know the figure. So then somebody offered the Indian at the other ranch an amount of money, something like \$200 or some dollars. And the Indian said, 'No, I want the same as . . .'

RM: The 180 [chuckles].

BF: Yes. Down the street. Now, again, this is folklore. And it's beautiful; I love it.

RM: Yes, that's a nice story.

BF: Anyway, Ray Van Horn bought this property and ironically, the man almost starved to death.

RM: He put all his money in there and was land-poor?

BF: Right.

RM: How much land did he have? 'I thousand acres, or . . . ?

BF: I would say, that and more. Because the Dorothy Dorothy ranch was probably 1000 acres at least. But he had this property and he couldn't turn it. Finally he sold a large parcel for \$5 an acre, and at that particular time he moved to Las Vegas, bought Jim Cashman's wife's used 1949 Cadillac, and bought an apartment complex in Las Vegas. Of course an apartment complex probably had 3 apartments then. That's where Ray Van Horn spent his final years.

RM: But he still owned part of the ranch out here?

BF: Well, then he sold property along.

RM: Do you know who his first sale was?

BF: He sold it to his brother, who was a Bakersfield farmer. It was quite common in those days for a group of farmers to be together in the San Joaquin Valley. Everett Van Horn and a man by the name of Stringfellow bought . . .

RM: Stringfellow; yes.

BF: Prior to that Elmer Bowman had bought a parcel of that land. It wasn't what he wanted and he made some arrangement and ended up with the Manse Ranch. But Van Horn and Stringfellow bought what is now a large portion of Cal-Vada North. They came in here and they grew potatoes and they did well. But the market; what are you going to do with potatoes that come off after everybody else has harvested?

RM: That's the big killer here, isn't it? They'll grow here, but it's when you come into the market.

BF: Right. The market's over by the time you get in. But that was Ray Van Horn's first large sale. And then of course Paul Cayton somehow was involved in this transaction - probably his secretary or manager or something. And he ended up with some of the property, and he drilled the well

at what became the Bradys' ranch - what he sold to the Bradys. And the old Dollar Ranch, which is now right across the street from Terrible Herbst, down on 160, was where Ray Van Horn originally set up his place. Ray Van Horn was living at Crystal when we came here.

RM: What was he trying to do there?

BF: He started hand-digging a well and was going to farm.

RM: How was he going to pump the water, I wonder. Windmill?

BF: People didn't worry about that in those days.

BF: There were no natural artesian wells at the north end of the valley, were there?

BF: No, sir. In fact, the last natural artesian that really amounted to anything was . . . The well Paul Cayton originally drilled on the Brady's ranch was an artesian well. It wasn't real big, but it was artesian. And that, I'd say, was the last one, going north. And then the last big one was the Peckstein well, which is on the corner of Mesquite and 160; it was one of the largest in the valley. The water in this valley is strange. Some people did very well, and others lost. It was sort of like gold - it was where you found it. Otherwise, you could drill a well on your place . . . Now, where I live right here there isn't adequate water. And yet you can go a mile in either direction and there's adequate water. It sort of cares down in fingers in this valley.

RM: How deep is it?

BF: That's sort of like saying, "How high is up?" In this particular area, you hit the artesian usually at less than 200 feet. And then, of course, you went deeper. On the south end, on the Manse Ranch, they would hit their big artisans down around 800 feet; it just varied. Their water was cold; that's a whole, completely different water system. The alluvial fan that feeds that - the water is completely separate from ours. If you'll look, you can see it. Ours would come down out of the Wheeler Pass Range, theirs would come down out of the Carpenter Canyon. Again, I can't see any farther into the ground than you can, but that's what the hydrologists tell us.

RM: Can you give me the coordinates, in terms of today's roads, of the original Van Horn property?



BF: The original Van Horn ranch, which was just his headquarters - he never really farmed much - would be on the southwest corner of 160 and Country Place Road.

RM: And then where were its outer boundaries?

BF: Well, he owned the whole north end of the valley [chuckles]. He owned it all.

RM: How far do you consider the valley goes?

BF: Well, farmland. When you get into the rocks, you're no longer in the farmland. He owned all of the farmland, which is basically Cal-Vada North.

RM: And is Ted Blosser's place on Van Horn's original land?

BF: I would have to say yes, but it's hard to say. I'm sure he didn't own all of the north end, but he certainly had a large portion.

RM: When did he buy it?

BF: He bought the property prior to our caning here, and we came in March of 1944, so would've been probably 1943.

RM: Let's talk about the Raycraft ranch and your life there.

BF: The Raycraft ranch was between what's Wilson Road and the state highway and from Margaret to East Street. It was 640 acres; a full section. There were springs there and ponds and then some artesian wells that had been drilled with the old steam-fired well rig. It was quite a beautiful place, because the springs would sub-irrigate all around and there was lots of grass. And he had built a white house which was set right in among the trees and in the front was a pond.

It had been Chief Tecopa's headquarters. If I had all of the Indian artifacts that I found as a boy and would give them to somebody, they would thank me, because I would have a wonderful collection. I could take you over there right now and within an hour we would find something similar to an arrowhead, because I know where they are. It was Chief Tecopa's originally because of the springs, and there were mounds.

RM: So it goes way back.

BF: Yes. Chief Tecopa probably never used arrowheads, so it went long, long before him.

RM: You mean, he was modern.

BF: Yes. But it's always interesting [to wonder] where the obsidian and flint came from. Because there was white, black, clear . . .

RM: Yes. The archaeologists could probably tell you; they can tell what deposit obsidian comes from.

BF: But when we moved on that ranch they had sheep. We were there sort of as sharecroppers. It was owned by Jim and Ida Raycraft. I remember her saying that as a little girl she used to play on the ground outside her father's office while he was at work in Belmont. So she apparently was raised, if not born, in Belmont. And he owned this property, and then after she and Jim Raycraft (I know nothing about where he came from) were married they moved down here and he tore some of the old buildings down at Johnnie, so it would've been after the Johnnie-town boom was finished. He hauled them down here on teams and wagons, and built that white house. It was quite a spacious, nice house, with 10-foot ceilings. It was a nice house in a nice setting.

RM: What other buildings on the property were there?

BF: There were a lot of sheep sheds and an old barn and . . . it was a paradise for a child. There was a little shack out here that had the well tools in it, and then there was a sheep shed, and everything was somewhere else, because it was sort of rolling hills through that area. There were lots of trees - willow trees, which were natural, and cottonwoods, and then there were wild grape vines. The wild grape vines would grow up through the willow trees, and we could go up than like a monkey.

We moved there because the well on the property that Dad had originally moved here to farm didn't produce; it wasn't adequate. He could tell he couldn't make a living, and at this time Bob Raycraft (his wife's name was Ginny and they had one small daughter, Jill), had been drafted or something and he ended up going to the army and they left here. We moved on the property sort of as a sharecropper, and my father also had the contract to haul the mail, so he started hauling the mail from the Johnnie Siding one day a week.

They had probably a couple of hundred head of sheep on the place. My dad was a cattleman, and cattlemen and sheep don't go together, so immediately the sheep were shipped. We shipped the sheep. My folks always had chickens, turkeys, guineas . . . we always had milk cows. My dad farmed with horses. I have a lot of his horse-drawn equipment and his harness and collars and all that sort of thing - which will go into the museum. It's in my care; it belongs to my 4 sisters and myself, but it's in my care until [it goes to] a museum. That was the agreement before my father died. Anyway, he hauled the mail and we made our living. We milked the cows and my mother hand-churned the butter - her churn is right there behind us - and she had a butter mold. Of course, this was during the Second World War and it was illegal to sell butter, yet the market was very good - \$1 a pound. She sold as much as 100 pounds a month to Shoshone and Tecopa. The mining areas were really booming because the Shoshone-Tecopa area had the big Anaconda lead mine, the Noonday. And the talc mines were still active.

RM: And the Noonday was really going during the war?

BF: Oh, it was large - they ran three 8-hour shifts. There was a real market for butter; they would drive all the way over here to get it. And there was a market for milk and eggs. Chickens, turkeys - I remember the old fellow who ran the store at Tecopa had a turkey shoot just before Thanksgiving, and my father worked for 2 or 3 days building a crate on the back of our old truck - and it probably 50 turkeys in the back. We went over there and the man paid him for the turkeys and then he paid him, I think, \$10 to sit there all day long and all the miners and ranchers and whoever would shoot targets and then they'd give them a live turkey right out of the back of the truck.

RM: How many cows did you have there?

BF: As many as 20. In the beginning they milked than by hand and then we got a David Bradley milking machine with a gasoline-powered vacuum pump which I still have.

The old milking machine, unless the cow kicked it or stepped on it, just went choo-ka-choo-ka-choo-ka-choo-ka, and pulled the milk out. And then we had a hand separator, a stand-up one, and I still have that. We would crank that old separator and run gallons of cream out. And then later he would haul this cream to the Rancho Grande Creamery in Las Vegas, and there was a market for all the cream you

could haul in there, either sour or sweet. If it was sweet, you were paid a higher price. That's one of his milk cans that we used. They steam cleaned than and . . . I have some more. In fact, I have some with Rancho Grande . . .

RM: How did he haul the cream?

BF: Everybody worked together in those days. It was a wonderful community for everybody working together. And somebody had to go get groceries for the store, so at times my dad would send the cream with the person who was hauling the groceries. In later years we leased the Pahrump Ranch and grew Alfalfa hay, and our market was in Las Vegas, so then he started going in twice a week, and he would haul the cream in and they'd pay him to haul the groceries back.

Anyway, living on the Raycraft ranch as a boy was just exciting. I wouldn't trade my childhood for anything in the world. Even though it was hard work we went swimming in the springs . . . We moved there in September 1944 and we left in December of 1952. The last crop we grew there was cotton.

RM: What was childhood like then?

BF: One exciting thing for me was that when I was a younger boy my sister and I had a war bond. Every penny and nickel and dime we could get, we put into the war bond. Somewhere down the line after the war was over, we cashed it in and I bought a .22 rifle - a Springfield. Unfortunately my niece talked me out of it, but it's still in the family. I paid \$8 for it.

RM: A prized possession for a boy in those days!

BF: I was 8 years old, and I had an \$8 rifle, and my mother would give me one shell. I guess she never thought that one shell was just as bad as a whole box of shells. I wasn't strong enough, after I cocked the rifle, to uncock it. If I ever cocked it, I had to fire it. It was some time before I was old enough to uncock it. At that time there were ducks and they spent the year round here. There were rabbits, there were quail, there were no game wardens, there were no roads for them to come in on [chuckles]. And a boy could just do anything. In the ponds there were frogs, tadpoles and carp 2 feet long. You couldn't eat them, of course, but you always caught them. There were a lot of foot-long fish. When you get hold of a fish 12 inches long, he really put up a fight. You'd stick your arm back in holes that you'd never try today.

RM: Oh, you'd grab them by hand.

BF: Oh, yes. You'd get in a ditch and all back in the ditch the frogs would bore back in. You could run your hands back in there - you didn't know What you would get . . . Anything that wiggled, you'd grab it.

There usually was a white boy or two, but most of my friends were Indian kids. I got along well with them, and I used to understand some Indian I'd never attempt to talk it, but I could tell what they were talking about sometimes. It was just exciting and, of course, we would always have to sneak over onto the Pahrump Ranch where the big ponds were . . .

## CHAPTER FOUR

BF: And then you always had a horse for riding, and the country was wide open. You could ride as far as you wanted whenever you wanted. That was life in general.

RM: What were some of your duties as a kid?

BF: Always chores. Feeding animals. Every kid wanted to learn to milk a cow, and you always had one big old cow in the back that was gentle, and you would milk it. We grew pigs, and you had to put up the hay. My father farmed with horses and my job - on my little short legs - I'd have to stomp the hay on the wagon as he'd pitch it on. It was something that I enjoyed. RM: So the boys had freedom - you were hunting and horseback riding and everything when you weren't working. Did you work a lot?

BF: In the summertime you worked every day.

RM: Did you put in a full day?

BF: As I got older, yes. By the time I was 12 or 13 years old I drove the tractors and whatever. As a boy we had rabbits - you had to feed the rabbits. You didn't have to do anything in the morning during the school season. You would come home and you always had to get in the wood. You had to feed and water the rabbits and the chickens and help with the pigs and the cows. You'd always have to go get the cows - they'd never come in. And of course, in the summertime you'd work long hours. Not every day; there was time for swimming and . . .

RM: What did the little girls do?

BF: Gosh, I have no idea. I didn't care what little girls did.

RM: They probably weren't out in the fields and [chuckles] reaching down and getting frogs and . . .

BF: Oh, some of them were. Not my sisters; they were kind of squeamish, but some of them would.

RM: Where did you go to school?

BF: When we first moved here, it was March. So we went March, April, May and probably into June. The teacher's

name was Helsia Bauer - I'll never forget her. We had a little one room schoolhouse, and when we moved here that filled it up completely. My sister and I had to sit together and our desk was almost out the door. The schoolhouse was located right behind what's now the A & A complex. It was an old tie structure and it had a dirt roof. Old Pop Buol put dirt roofs on a lot of his buildings.

RM: Was it on Buol's property?

BF: Yes; this property belonged to him.

RM: How many children were in the class?

BF: I'm guessing in the teens; probably 15, 16, 17. It went from the first through the eighth grade. My sister was finishing her second year of high school and this teacher was qualified, and somehow or other my sister got to finish up her high school credits for the rest of that year. And then after that she had to leave.

RM: What did she do?

BF: The next year - for her junior year - I had a sister living in Needles, California. Her husband was in the service in the South Pacific, so she went down and stayed with her for her 3rd year of high school. And for her 4th year there was a high school in Death Valley Junction and my father rented a little house over there - all it had was a sink and running water - and she lived over there with another girl.

RM: So basically the kids had to leave for high school.

BF: Yes.

RM: Was there any general pattern? Did most of them go to Death Valley Junction, or did some go to Vegas, or . . .?

BF: There weren't really that many, and most of them went to Las Vegas or went somewhere else. My sister lived over there, but of course that gave us a market for the butter. When my dad would go over during the week, he would haul over a load of butter and some eggs and milk. And boy, the store and the people were happy to get them.

They were Wisconsin farmers, and Wisconsin farmers were different; they always tilled the land. And the dairy fit right into the Wisconsin farmer[pattern]. My mother was

born in a farm house and raised on the same farm until she married and left Wisconsin.

RM: This is an interesting point. You're seeing different cultural backgrounds coming in and using the land differently. Some people are going for the big alfalfa operation. Your family, being Wisconsin dairy-oriented, are coming in and using it in a different way. And it looks as if Pop Buol had his own way of using it. What did people eat then?

BF: Well, of course, beef. Everybody grew beef, and on the big ranches they butchered their own, just like, today, they do in Arizona. And they grew their vegetables - tomatoes, especially. Cucumbers, carrots, radishes, onions; the greatest gardens.

RM: Did they grow potatoes?

BF: No, I don't remember potatoes. They take a sandier-type soil. But there was lots of corn.

RM: How was this food preserved?

BF: Well, my mother canned it, just like they did in Wisconsin. She mostly canned fruit.

RM: Were there fruit trees on your place?

BF: No, we'd usually get it from the other ranchers. All of them had some fruit trees, and fruit was available. You could also get some from Pop Buol.

Mary Ford: Didn't your mother dry beans?

BF: Well, yes. Well, you don't dry beans, they just . . . She grew beans and then you shell them; they dry in the field.

RM: What kind of beans?

BF: They would be a pinto. It was interesting - they would plant the cornfield, and then they'd plant the beans in the cornfields, and with one crop you would get corn and beans. The beans would climb the cornstalk and then you'd go along and pull those beans - I pulled a lot of beans - when they were dry, and then you'd have to haul them. Then you'd have the dry beans to put away. I remember one year she had Mrs. Long Jim come in and she gave her half the



beans to harvest them. They were thrilled to death, because they probably ended up' with 100 pounds apiece, and that was a lot of beans. And then, of course, they grew pumpkins and squash . . .

RM: How did they preserve meat in the summer? Did you have refrigeration?

BF: We had a propane-fired refrigerator, and that's how we did it. But mainly your meat was in the winter months. Now, we'd cure hams - I remember they used to cure it with Morton salt and then hang than up. And oh, it was delicious.

RM: Did they smoke them?

BF: No. It was some kind of an application. You'd have to - every 3 days - and then hang it up in cheesecloth and . .

RM: Did you ever jerk any meat?

BF: No. I have, but not as a family. The Indians used to jerk venison and feed it to their dogs. That was the dog meat.

RM: How about any of those fish you were catching?

BF: There were no edible fish in this area. We did eat frog legs.

RM: Are there big frogs here?

BF: Not real large. Now, over in Ash Meadows these frogs get this big. In fact, they used to commercially . . . They used to get a dollar a pair for legs in the hotels in Las Vegas, and could sell all they could haul to town.

RM: What did you eat in the summer? Ham and these vegetables?

BF: I just don't remember. We ate a lot of eggs and . . .

RM: A lot of bread?

BF: Oh, yes. My mother was an excellent cook. She cooked pies, and cakes and bread and was an excellent cook.

RM: Did you grow your own wheat?

BF: No, we bought the flour.

RM: And you had all this butter. Did she make cottage cheese and cheese?

BF: Not cheese; just cottage *cheese*. Cheese is a whole new field, even though that's what they sold their milk to in Wisconsin - that was all cheese factories. But making cheese is a whole process.

RM: But there wasn't much beef in the summer?

BF: No. Of course, we could keep a certain amount. But you ate a lot of chicken and turkey and rabbit.

RM: And then in the winter you went more for the beef and . . .?

BF: Pork and beef. But always eggs - always lots of eggs.

RM: Could you describe woman's life on one of these isolated ranches?

BF: My mother lived just like they did in Wisconsin; they worked hard on the farm. It was work from sunup till sundown. One day was laundry, and one day was ironing, and all the rest of the days she helped milk the cows and processed the cream in the milk shack.

We had a gasoline-powered washing machine. And we had propane lights, but my father always had a gasoline-powered car generator with a little Briggs and Stratton or Maytag gasoline engine and a couple of car batteries. He'd go out of a night and pour in a cup of gasoline, and when the engine died, we went to bed. And the radio was run off a car battery. We had a big old radio that stood in the corner and it was kind of the social center of the home in the wintertime. Of course, in the summertime we always went to bed when it was still light. As a kid I never cared for that. It was before Daylight Saving Time, and they would go to bed at 8:00 and get up at 4:00 in the morning.

RM: Why was that? I never understood why farmers did that.

BF: I never did either, and the first thing I did when we got married . . . Of course, being raised on a farm I didn't have brains enough to get off of it. We bought this little place and started farming and the first thing I did was to teach those old cows that, "When I get up, you're going to eat [laughter]. And I'll feed you before I go to

bed. But you can forget that baloney about before the sun canes up." And they didn't care. They learned; they were waiting for me. But you have to milk the milk cows every 12 hours. So you have to milk at 6:00 in the morning and 6:00 at night.

RM: How many cows were you milking?

BF: I'd say at the most, probably, 20. It probably ranged anywhere from 8 to 20.

RM: What breed were you milking?

BF: My family liked Guernsey-Jersey, because of the cream. You got 5 gallons of that old blue Holstein milk, but you'd have to squeeze 5 gallons to get a pint of cream. The pigs got the skim milk and we sold the cream.

RM: How many hogs were you feeding?

BF: It varied. He would probably have, at the most, 5 or 6 sows and then they would have 6 to a dozen pigs. This was mainly in the wintertime, because pigs can't take heat. And if a sow would have her pigs in August, they'd all be dead, so it's sort of a winter project.

RM: And did you have horses?

BF: Yes; he always had work horses. He had big Percherons; he loved big horses. And then, of course, we had some saddle horses.

RM: How did you deal with the heat in the summer?

BF: You just opened the windows and let the breeze come through, because you had 10-foot ceilings, and the house was built under the trees. That worked against you at night, because the trees hold the heat. My father and mother had a little place - he called it his dog house - a little building with screened windows all the way around it which was out from under the trees. That's where they slept in the summertime.

RM: Did most people have this dog house type thing?

BF: No, they just grinned and bore it. Because everybody - you had small gasoline-powered light plants and . . . for instance, a 1 1/2 kw ran the Pahrump Ranch. That meant if

they had 8 houses, 8 houses could each have a couple of light bulbs and that was it.

Now, when my wife and I got married in 1958, we had the same thing, but we did it a little differently - I suppose because we made a little more money or something. During the hot, hot days we would run a cooler. And when she would want to iron or wash, she would run the light plant. But usually, at night, you'd just grin and bear it, because to hear that light plant out there running, and know you were paying for it, you didn't sleep very well.

RM: And most people didn't have a little screened porch?

BF: A lot of people used to sleep outside, but, for instance, on the Raycraft place there was so much water around that the mosquitoes would eat you up.

RM: Could you talk about social life in the valley during this period?

BF: People seemed to like to get together. For instance my father was sort of a jack of all trades, and one of them was a barber. I still have his old barber chair; we're going to recover it and put it in the new room we're adding on the back. He had hand clippers. Once a month, or maybe it was every 3 weeks - however long it is till you need a haircut - they would invite us down for a Sunday. So we would all go down to, let's say, the Manse Ranch for a whole day. My mother would probably make some pies and a cake and whatever, and they would make something, and Dad would spend the whole day cutting hair

RM: So everybody from the valley once a month would gather at somebody's place?

BF: Something like that yes. The ranches . . . Now, there was always a bit of conflict between the young ranch workers at the Pahrump and the Manse Ranches - just something to make life more exciting.

I remember one time . . . We had our own school district - the Rose School District - and it wasn't supported by Nye County. I have no idea why it was the Rose School District. The teacher was paid \$200 a month or \$125 or something like this - some large sum - and board and room. The ranches would provide part of their bunkhouse or some place for the schoolmarm to live in. I remember plainly one particular time: it was getting close to the end of the school season and they didn't have enough money to pay the teacher. So they had a bingo party and everybody

in the valley came up to the old hotel on the Pahrump Ranch, and the women had *pies* and cakes. (And as a little kid, boy, you get into those pies and cakes; it was kind of nice.) That's how they raised enough money to pay the teacher's salary for the rest of that year. And the next year the taxes came in.

RM: Were the taxes coming locally?

BF: I suppose you got taxes from the county, but you didn't get any subsidies. Otherwise your school tax was X number of dollars for the Rose School District. Of course, they combined it after that.

RM: The county was very poor during this period, I've been told.

BF: Yes. Just like the roads. When we came here, they graded the roads once a year - in the wintertime. The reason they did it in the wintertime was because up north there was snow and rain . . . it used to snow more up there - it used to be common to have 2 or 3 feet of *snow* up in that area. So the graders, or grader, whatever it was, would grade through Pahrump Valley and off they would go. We were really isolated. The only time you'd ever see anybody from Tonopah was at election time. And here they'd come, trudging in, and they might blow 3 or 4 tires. It's kind of ironic from the time we moved here, my mother was on the election board. After she [stepped down] my wife is on it, so there's been a Mrs. Ford on the election board since 1944.

RM: Did the women get together for sewing groups, or . . . ?

BF: At that particular time they didn't because of transportation. Gasoline was rationed and I remember that my dad would go get the mail, come back, and park the car. It wouldn't start again until the next Wednesday when it was time to go after the mail. And we were only 1/4 mile from the store, so it was the kids' job to walk over and bring back what supplies we needed. You didn't buy bread and ice cream, because there was none.

RM: Yes. Was there any religious life in the community?

BF: Absolutely none; they were too busy working at that time.

RM: Did the men get together for things like clubs?

BF: At a later time families named Wards and the Turners - Dutch Turner - moved here. They played musical instruments. And by that time the trading post had been built. That was the social center. That's where the post office was, and once a month or every 2 weeks or so they'd have a dance over there and whoop and holler. And then of course the tavern - the first bar - was put in there about 1946. At that time it was illegal - by federal law - to sell an Indian alcoholic beverages. Well, Pahrump was a good market. And everybody said when the Indians drank - got firewater - they went crazy. So, when the Indians would drink and get firewater, they'd go crazy.

RM: Yes; a self-fulfilling prophecy.

BF: Yes. They'd put on quite a show for you.

RM: What was the name of the first bar?

BF: It was the Pahrump Trading Post.

RM: And then when the Wards took it over they stopped it, didn't they?

BF: They dropped the liquor license; yes. That building's still standing.

RM: If a person wanted a drink, where did they go?

BF: You'd have to go to Shoshone or Tecopa or Death Valley Junction. I remember when you'd get over there the men's tongues were like this. A man, in those days, didn't go sit in a bar all day long. He'd go buy a drink and go on about his business.

RM: Oh, it was more solitary, private drinking rather than social drinking?

BF: Well, there were the miners; but I'm talking about the ranchers. The ranchers would go from here to Shoshone to get supplies, and they would go in, and the kids would get an ice-cold pop, which you hadn't had in months, and the men would get an ice-cold beer, which they hadn't had in months, and you would head for home. And that was the end of the drinking. Of course, there was always a drunk out back sitting behind a tree.

At Shoshone and Death Valley Junction there was no bar and it was illegal to drink where you purchased the

alcohol. So they always let them go into the storeroom, or out back under a tree or something, and that's where they drank their booze. In Death Valley Junction they had the storeroom, and the men would go back there. You couldn't buy hard liquor at all - only beer. You'd go back in the storeroom and if there was another guy in there drinking a beer I guess you could socialize with him. It was the same way in Shoshone. You could buy a beer, but then you had to go out under the tree or stand in the shade, or something. But in Tecopa they had what they called the Snake Pit and it was a rip-roaring, full-blown bar, but with beer - no hard liquor.

RM: Why was that?

BF: Even today - to my knowledge - the only hard liquor you can buy is in Shoshone, and Senator Brown finally got a hard liquor license [for] The Crow Bar.

RM: I think in Death Valley Junction there was no liquor because Borax Smith forbid it. Was Shoshone basically Mormons?

BF: Well, when we got here they weren't Mormons.

RM: Fairbanks was a Mormon, but he was excommunicated. Were the Browns Mormon?

BF: Well, Charlie Brown - no. In fact, the kids went to Catholic school, didn't they?

Mary Ford: Charlie Brown said he was a Baptist.

BF: Did he really? But the kids went to Catholic school.

RM: I was just trying to figure out why they didn't serve hard liquor there.

BF: Well, miners is one good reason [laughs].

RM: But you would think that . . .

BF: Miners are fighters when drinking.

RM: Yes, but in every mining camp there ever was, there were more bars than anything else [chuckles].

BF: It had something to do with the state law; probably population may have had something to do with it. Because I

know that finally Charlie Brown, being a state senator, got a hard liquor license and opened up the Crowbar. And then they sold hard liquor out of their store. But Tecopa, to this day - I haven't been over there in 20 years, and certainly not in a bar - and they only sold beer and I don't know that you could buy wine.

RM: The unavailability of liquor might account for Pop Buol's winery and his efforts.

BF: It could be. Also, during the Rhyolite days there was an old Indian named Bob Lee who made bootleg whiskey down here in the lower end of the valley in the bootleg days.

RM: During the bootleg days - I've been told - bootleggers were plentiful in Ash Meadows and in Beatty. It was a real industry; in fact, it was the heart of the economy.

But getting back to the social life of the valley during this period, it sounds like people lived in isolation. Is that a fair description? BF: Well, you had to be in isolation to a point. Once a week or so it was quite common for these people to come and visit, but it would maybe only be once a week. Ladies would always make pies and cakes and whatever, and for a little child, it seemed like it happened every day. But it probably only happened once or twice a month. I know it happened once a month with my dad and his barber shears.

RM: Did he get paid?

BF: Yes, I think they gave him a dollar a head or something to do it.

RM: That was good money; yes.

BF: Oh, you bet. It was worth his time - he made \$8 or \$10.

RM: Well it sounds like your father was fairly prosperous, with the butter and the haircuts and everything?

Mary Ford: He had a good wife.

BF: But my father was the type of person who just enjoyed life. He'd live it exactly the way he wanted it. Then he became a well driller. He was the 47th person in the state of Nevada to get a wall-driller's license and he drilled a large share of the wells in this valley at that time.



## CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Button, we left off discussing your life on the ranch and so on. Again, how long did you live there?

BF: We lived on the Raycraft place from September of 1944 until December of 1952.

RM: Is there anything that you wanted to say, additionally, about life on the ranch?

BF: Well, we should [include] the little red schoolhouse. It was called the Rose School District. There has been a lot of controversy over when the little red schoolhouse came to Pahrump. Well, in the late summer of 1944 a group of ranchers moved the little red schoolhouse from the old clay camps - the clay pits - over in Ash Meadows, which is right near the California-Nevada line. It took them some days to jack it up and put it on a truck and haul it over. At that particular time it was set up south and west of what is the bank today. And that's where it sat for a number of years, even though it was only used until the '51-'52 school season.

From 1944 to '45, which was the first school year in the red schoolhouse, the teacher's name was Ruth Dewey. She taught one year here and then she went into Las Vegas and for a number of years was involved in the juvenile department - I think she was the head of Child Haven. And then in the 1945-'46 school year there was a young woman by the name of Norma Snyder. And then from 1946 to '47 an elderly lady named Mrs. Roeclift came. She didn't care much for the valley at that time, and for the way she had to live, so she was only here a short while - I would say less than a month. So we didn't have a school teacher until around the first of the year. Then there was a young woman named Barbara McQuarry who came from Tecopa. I don't even think she was a certified school teacher, but she had taught in Tecopa under the same circumstances, and she finished out the year. Then from 1947 to 1951, a lady by the name of Clara Sturman [was the teacher]. She was quite a person - she was born a southerner in the day of the horse and buggy, and she lived a plantation-type life which fascinated the kids to hear about. And then in the 1951-'52 school year there was a woman by the name of Blanche Wright, who came from Michigan.

At that time they moved into the area where the grade school is today. They acquired 2 barracks buildings from Indian Springs or Nellis or Hawthorne or somewhere and

moved than in. One of than was converted into where the teacher lived - it was still a one-room **school** - and the other one was later . . . we put a floor in it and it was sort of the town hall, even though it was a **school** building. Of course, later it was converted into a classroom.

RM: How did they divide the grades up between the two?

BF: I just don't remember. It was a one-room **school** up until about '53, '54, when they had 2 rooms and 2 school teachers. Then they tried to hire a husband and wife team.

RM: Did population growth account for the change?

BF: Yes. After 1950 or '51, . . . The farmers from the San Joaquin Valley had heard of Pahrump and they started coming over here and buying cheap property and drilling wells and starting to farm. At that time the valley started growing considerably because they needed more help and . . .

RM: I see. So it was population pressure that drove the old red schoolhouse out of use?

BF: Right. It was just too small.

RM: Where did the teachers live who taught in the little school?

BF: Between '44 and '46 the teacher lived at the Manse Ranch because the quarters were available and there were a group of children down there that had to be transported the 6 miles - which was a long distance of gravel road - each day and home at night. The school teacher would drive a car and transport than or, later, ride in the car. Then from 1947 to '51 they had a little trailer house right on the grounds behind the little red schoolhouse where the teacher lived.

RM: Were they single women?

BF: The first 2 were single, and then Mrs. Sturman had a husband. He had arthritis or something and he liked to go to the hot baths. Her home was between Downeyville and Colfax, California, which is up north of Sacramento - Susanville; north of Susanville.

RM: I wonder what brought than here?

BF: I would say, probably, the Tecopa Hot Springs. He liked to take the baths, and that was a cure-all, especially for arthritis and that sort of thing in those days.

RM: Could you discuss what a day in the schoolhouse was like?

BF: The most interesting thing was discipline. It was either discipline or the stick - one or the other. The classroom was totally quiet and one of the advantages to the younger children was hearing the older grades reciting and so on. I can remember, in the 3rd and 4th grade, hearing about Shakespeare and all these characters, and I didn't understand, yet at a later time . . . And the same with math; I did fairly well in math. Math problems, and even English problems . . . you'd see them get up and diagram a sentence on the board, and I think the younger students really had an advantage. But discipline was very necessary, because it had to be totally quiet. And while the teacher was listening to, or helping, one group, you had to be doing your own thing.

And of course you knew all the kids. When I graduated from the 8th grade I was the head of the class - there were 2 of us, and I was number one, and that was exciting [laughter]. I really am happy to say I spent 6 years in a one-room school. Then I graduated from the 8th grade.

Out in front [of the school] was the landing strip. An airplane would land there occasionally and it was so rare that school would stop and all of the students would march over to the airstrip, which was probably 1000 feet away, and look at this airplane. The school was probably 100 feet off the main road, near the present road. It was just an old gravel road, and when a car went by, it was quite a thing, because everybody would want to look out. I remember the teacher set up certain individuals, and it was their job to get up and say, "Oh, it's Mr. Bowman," or, "Oh, it's . . . [laughter]

Another person who should be brought into this is a man by the name of Elmer Bowman. When he moved here with his family and started to do more development on the Manse Ranch, he was very active . . . He had been a school teacher in his younger life and he was very active in the community, including the school. Immediately he was on the school board (my father was also on the school board). Toys and balls and this sort of thing were really quite rare during the Second World War and everything was hard to get. It was always Elmer Bowman who brought us in the new supply of books, or the new supply of toys or the new supply . . . He was such a grand man.

RM: Was this out of his personal funds?

BF: NO, he was just a member of the school board. We were under the auspices of a lady by the name of Roxy Copenhaver. She was the Assistant Superintendent of Schools in the State of Nevada, and her office was in Las Vegas. Everything was picked up through her. Once a year she would show up, and it was almost as if the Queen of England had arrived. She would come around and ask us to read this, and how are we doing with that and so on and so forth. It was really enjoyable; I enjoyed the one-room schoolhouse.

RM: How would you compare the education you got there with, say, the education your daughter got as the school system evolved?

BF: One thing we were taught was patriotism. During the Second World War, you were a patriot; you were for your country - you saluted the flag every morning - it's just something you did. When my daughter went to school, especially in high school it was during the Vietnamese War. Patriotism and saluting the flag and all that sort of thing was something that this new group of school teachers who were just coming out of college for our new high school didn't bother with.

I really feel bad about that, because patriotism was something that we just did. When I first started to school down in Yermo (I went almost the first 2 years down there) that was the first thing we did. It was first through 8th grade in a 4-room school, and each morning you would line up and salute the flag, and then the groups of students would file into their rooms. And once a month you would sing the "Star Spangled Banner" and "America" or something, and it was just something you did. And that's one of the things a lot of people have lost - their respect for the flag. RM: How about at the academic level? Do you feel like your training was as good as hers?

BF: To get out of the 8th grade, we had to know, and write, all the presidents of the United States and the Preamble [to the Constitution] and the Gettysburg Address. We were graded so that minus a comma was minus a point, and minus a period was minus a point; minus a capital . . . So you didn't have to miss many commas or many capitals. Fortunately, I did very well. And I have remembered a lot of that stuff; it's really surprising. We had completed our studies and we had 2 or 3 weeks left to graduate from the 8th grade, so the teacher had us write songs. She would

pick a song, like "The Star Spangled Banner," and we'd have to write it. We could study until we were ready; we didn't have a time limit. She'd say, "You study this until you're ready," and then we would have to sit down and write it. It was really great. The President's Oath and . . . I remember I just had a terrible time with the Gettysburg Address, but I struggled through it somehow.

RM: And then you moved off the Raycraft ranch in '52?

BF: Yes. And the house that we're in now was being built. My father had traded well drilling for \$15 an acre and I think he probably got \$3 per foot. He traded drilling a well or two for some property out in the west side of the valley and we moved out there from December 'till March - about the 13th or 14th or 15th - and we moved into this house, which was brand new at that time. It was smaller than it is now; we've added on to it.

RM: How many acres did he acquire here?

BF: There were 160 acres originally in this property, and again, it was another story of the well not turning out. We had a deep irrigation well and after he made the arrangements to purchase this property, the well didn't turn out. It wouldn't produce adequately. You would have had to have 500 or 600 gallons per minute to farm 80 acres and make it pay and this well only pumped about 125 or 130.

RM: How were people pumping water at that time?

BF: They started pumping strongly with diesel-powered engines in about 1952, and pumped with those until the power came in.

RM: When did they actually start pumping?

BF: I would say about 1952.

RM: And by then it was cotton. Was that what they were pumping it for? BF: Well, as the north end of the valley developed, and they started drilling wells, each time they picked up a large well the wells on this end would go down. So as you had more development, the free artesian flow started falling down.

RM: Then it was noticeable right at first?

BF: Soon; very soon. I would say '52 or '53 is when they started putting pumps in these artesian wells, and of course they really produced because they had a head on them and when they pulled the head off, they really produced

RM: So your father wasn't able to farm the parcel that he had?

BF: No. He also was a well driller, and you'd have to say that that's how he made his living and fanning was sort of a sideline. And we always had cows.

RM: When did he get into well drilling? It sounds as if he was pretty much a farmer when you first came to the valley.

BF: Yes, but he did a little of both. The first well he drilled was in 1948, but there wasn't that much activity here, so he drilled some and he farmed some. As I got older I was able to help.

RM: Could you talk a little bit about water and well drilling and all that? I don't know how much you know about it . . .

BF: I'm a licensed well driller [laughs].

RM: Tell me about well drilling here. You mentioned that there are apparently 2 aquifers here.

BF: There are 2 aquifers plus many different formations in the valley at different depths, and many wells were different. My father would drill one well that, let's say, would pump 800 gallons per minute - and that's a good well - and then he might move 1/2 mile down the valley in one direction or the other, and maybe the next well would only pump 200 or 300 gallons per minute. And they would range from 400 or 500 feet to, maybe, 700 feet. He didn't drill some of the wells because they required larger rigs. Some of them were around 1000 feet - that's about as deep as they go.

RM: There's water in different strata, then?

BF: Yes, and in different formations.

RM: Is there one stratum that everybody wants?

BF: No, because they're all different. And of course today all the big wells have been drilled. Anything now has to be a redrill, so to speak.

RM: Why is that?

BF: The state of Nevada owns the water; the state of Nevada controls the water. You apply for a permit and get a water right and then you have to prove "beneficial use," and it's a complex pain in the neck.

RM: That's to drill an agricultural well. That's not true for a domestic well, is it?

BF: No, but now they're starting to curb commercial. For instance, if you went up on the corner and bought a piece of property and wanted to put in a laundromat or a grocery store or whatever, in certain areas they've stopped it.

RM: In certain areas of the valley?

BF: Yes - on what they call the fan. They always had a hypothetical fan up here. You can't see it so much now, but it used to be that you could look up there and see a white streak. Of course, now you're seeing all white streaks because of the roads. They always called that the "fan." The hydrologists said that the water came down to that and it's a long story - I don't even know how it works, and I don't believe it anyway . . . Everything from the top of the mountain down to about where we are is now what they call "on the fan," and they don't allow commercial or new agricultural wells.

RM: Do they allow domestic?

BF: There's no control on domestic - only the amount you can pump. You can pump 1800 gallons a day. If you own a piece of land in the state of Nevada, it's your God given right, I suppose, to drill a well.

RM: But why don't they want you drilling on the fan?

BF: They have what they call the recharge, which they have calculated as [so many] acre-feet per year. There are a lot of us who don't necessarily agree with it, but that doesn't make any difference - they have still calculated it. Through the '50s there was a lot of development in here and they over allotted the hypothetical recharge. They over

allotted by, probably, 50 to 75 percent. Of course, now the agricultural [use] has fallen off.

Today the state is nervous that they have given away all these water rights, yet they don't feel the water is available. <sup>Nag</sup> that the agricultural [use] is falling off, they are starting to grab some of these water rights. State law reads that if you don't use it at least once every 5 years they can grab it. There is a lot of property in this valley that you just can't afford to farm anymore; it's just too expensive.

RM: Is that because of agricultural markets, or because of the water's too deep, or what?

BF: Inflation, to begin with. It used to be that you could buy a tractor for about the price of a car. [A comparable] tractor today might cost you \$25,000 or \$30,000. And I'm not an expert today on the price of cotton, but it's my understanding that cotton today is just about the same price it was 20 years ago, but alfalfa hay has gone up. We used to cut hay, bale hay, load it on a truck and transport it to Las Vegas for \$25 a ton. Today it runs around \$100 a ton, and you come out here and you pick it up. So they can do pretty well with alfalfa hay.

RM: But the state is slowly taking the agricultural water rights - is that what's happening in Nevada?

BF: Only the ones that are not being used. And also, when you subdivide. For instance, when you subdivide a piece of property and if you're in this prime area of the valley, you have to relinquish your agricultural water rights to subdivide your property.

Now, this gets confusing; I'll go very slowly. An agricultural water right is 5 acre-feet per acre per year. When you subdivide, you have to give up 2.02 acre-feet per year. So actually, for each one acre of agricultural water right you can get 2-plus acres of subdivision. But still, you have to give it back. And most farmers owned more acreage than they owned water rights, because land was cheap when they purchased it.

RM: Oh, when you bought land here, you didn't buy water rights?

BF: Well, in the beginning . . . Let's use the '50s. You would buy a piece of land, and then you would make an application to the state of Nevada for an agricultural



water right. It had to be advertised in the newspaper, and if your neighbors didn't contest it, they would give it to you. That started the ball rolling and they would give you the permit. Then you had to drill the well, and you had a certain period of time to do this in. Then you had to pump the well and irrigate the ground, and it was called "beneficial use." First you had to hire a surveyor to make a map and locate the well site, then you had up to 5 years to pump the well and irrigate the property. Then you had to hire another surveyor and make another map, and they would give you the water rights for the property that you were irrigating. If you had 500 acres and you were only farming 100, you're only going to get 100 acres of water

RM: Oh, I see; basically you had to be using it to get it.

BF: Right; which created a lot of waste. Under the Desert Land Entry program - I think it was called the Pittman Act - a lot of people who were financially able would come in here and apply for - let's say - up to as much as 320 acres. They'd drill 2 or 3 wells, and then make an attempt to farm - it was sort of a phony farming operation - and then they'd get all these water rights and go back where they came from. They were in good shape, then, for at least 5 years. That's why some of them are losing the water rights - their 5 years have expired.

RM: And present usage in the valley recharges a head now?

BF: That's correct. There are 2 stories: one will tell you the water level's still dropping . . . on my property it hasn't dropped one foot in the last 30 years.

## CHAPTER SIX

RM: Button, when they drill an agricultural well, what is its diameter?

BF: Normally they would want quite a large diameter well, because they have to put a large pump in to get a large amount of water. A pump that will pump the amount of water you want usually is 8 inches in diameter. It's a little larger on the outside and then, of course, the collar, but the bores are always larger yet. So you would have, let's say, an 8-inch pump with 10 or 12-inch bores, because the larger the bores, the more water it will force up the pipe. Probably the average wells that were drilled, even though at this time they were artesian, were around 16 inches in diameter. Some were 20, some were 18

And with the artesian wells, they would drill down somewhere around 200 feet. They would want to set their well casing on something solid, and throughout the valley somewhere down around 200 feet - I think ours is 180 - they would hit a hard shelf of limestone or something of that nature and they would set their well casing on this, and they would do what they call "cementing it off." They would dump bags of cement down the hole, and my father, for instance, would pull the well casing up as high as he could, which was normally about 20 feet, and then all the cement would be down in the bottom and he would set the casing down in it. And I say cement, not concrete; it was just bags of cement. And then they'd let it set a few days and then drill right through that, which was no problem - cement is soft [compared] to limestone and caliche. Generally when they went through this layer of limestone they would hit artesian and that's where the flow would start. They would have to have a good seal, or the water would come up around the casing and filter into the upper strata. So later my father would go back and perforate a lot of these wells, to pick up those upper strata, because sometimes there'd be a couple of hundred gallons a minute in the surface waters.

RM: Was there was one very productive stratum below this limestone?

BF: Well, maybe there was 1, 2, 3, or more; it would just depend. The old drillers would just drill and drill until the farmer ran out of money or got enough water, one or the other. In both ends of the valley they hit some large artesian wells - 1800 gallons a minute of just free-flow

water. And that is good. That cuts down the cost of agriculture considerably.

RM: Were they using submersion pumps?

BF: No, they were called turbines. They had bores on the bottom, and they had a pump rod that went clear down into the well and the engine sat on top. They **had what** they called a gear head, which was a reduction sometimes.

RM: I see. So they had a drive shaft going clear down to the bottom of the well.

BF: That's correct. And there were bearings every 10 feet. Some were oil lube, some were water lube. The water lubricated on the stainless steel shaft running in a rubber bearing. There were the pros and cons . . . if you had sand, which fortunately we didn't have much of, it would eat them right up. With the oil lube you had 3 tubes - the well casing, then an oil tube which would be, like, 2-inch pipe. And then you had your pump shaft inside of that which the bearings lubed. It was in oil constantly and the water went up on the outside.

RM: You said that when they started pumping a lot down at the north end [the water pressure started dropping]?

BF: Even the artesian wells on the north end started pulling the head off the wells up here.

RM: How much of a drop did you notice, and how soon?

BF: I would say over a period of 4 or 5 years it was enough that the farmers said, "Hey, we're going to go out of business or we're going to put pumps in - one or the other." And so they started putting pumps in.

RM: What happens when a well starts dropping? Does the farmer then have to drill deeper?

BF: Generally, they would just have to lower their pump.

RM: They didn't put the pump in the bottom, then.

BF: No, usually the pump - a 200-foot setting was a lot of pump. And a lot of the artesian wells only had 60 or 70 feet, because they just had to pull the pressure head off. A 200-foot setting would probably be the deepest; there may have been one or two that were more than that. But the

farther you have to lift one, the more it costs. It's just like these electric motors. You see some of them around here that are 100 horsepower, and larger; the electrical bill is just astronomical.

RM: What happens to the old wells once they've been abandoned?

BF: Fortunately, at this time there are very few of the old wells that are truly abandoned, and the ones that are have a metal cap welded on them. After the little girl in Texas fell into the well shaft we had quite a drive of going around here getting these welded up. There were actually more domestic wells, which are 8-inch. We think we have these all capped. The Division of Water Resources feel they have them all because each one has a number.

RM: Now, you mentioned that you wanted to talk about the next store in the valley?

BF: Frank Buol had his grocery store, and to him it was a nuisance; he'd rather be out working in his grapes and his fruit trees. A relative of the Cayton's - I think it was a cousin - named George Brooks moved here from San Diego with his family. I believe he had been here earlier; in the '30s or something. He moved up here and built what was called the Pahrump Trading Post where the A & A Market is now. The old building is still standing; it's been added on and whatever. It's interesting - it's built out of railroad ties and then the roof is redwood bridge timbers. They were 3 to 4 inches thick and 12 inches wide. If they ever tear that thing down, they've got a fortune in wood.

RM: Is the building itself part of the A & A Market?

BF: No, the A & A Market is a new building; it's been in there less than 5 years. The health department said that railroad ties and this sort of thing could no longer be used so they had to build a new building. But the old building is still there, and today I think it's a second-hand store or something. It's been remodeled and so forth. George Brooks moved up here - his wife's name was Jonnie and he had 2 sons, Mark and Glen.

RM: What year was that?

BF: That would've been somewhere in '45-'46. I remember this because he bought one of the first brand-new trucks

that came out after the Second World War. I think they called it a '45, but it was probably a '46.

RM: How much of a hiatus was there between Buol and Brooks, in terms of having no store here?

BF: There never was a period when there was no store. He bought property from Pop Buol. He just went up the road, and when he came, he knew that he was going to build a store and Pop Buol probably told him, "I'll give you my store - you just build a building and you can have the business."

And the post office went up there also. I suppose his cousin said, "We no longer want the post office. We're going to move out and start a new farm out farther north, so you can have the post office." And at that particular time there wasn't a bar in the valley, and they opened up the first bar.

RM: Was this all in the same building?

BF: There was a division, but it was all under the same roof. The Pahrump Trading Post was there for a number of years. It was owned by the Brookses and then they sold it out to the Ward . . . Penell . . . and the Turners were somehow involved in it. And then after Guy Penell passed away his brother ran it and then he sold it to the Burketts. The Burketts came here around January of 1953. And Katie and Frank are a legend of their own in Pahrump.

The Burketts then sold it to Fred and Helen Harris, who in turn sold it to their son - his name was Buddy Dodge - Robert Dodge. He sold it to the people who own it today.

RM: When did PJ's open?

BF: I would say' within the last 6 or 7 years; in the '80s.

RM: Was the Pahrump Trading Post the only store up until PJ's?

BF: There was quite a nice, modern store that opened up where today the Cotton Pickin' Saloon is. It was a block structure. The man came in here from Vegas - he was an experienced person in the grocery store business, and he moved into Pahrump, and it probably took him 2 months to go broke and shut down. Whether it was that people were obligated to shop down the street, or whether they didn't like him or his prices I have no idea; I can't even tell

you the name of the market. It would probably be in the '60s somewhere.

RM: What was the next business - after the Pahrump Trading Post - to move into town?

BF: It was sort of dormant for years. The Revert brothers out of Beatty built a Union 76 gas station in 1955 on the location where the bank sits today. My brother-in-law worked for them and he immediately had the lease on it. He and my sister, Leroy and Mary Vaughn, built a little restaurant there - a little coffee shop, they called it. They just had a nice little business there, but it got to the point that it was too much for than to handle, yet they couldn't afford to hire somebody to work. I have read, and heard, that many, many businesses fold up right at that point. You can't handle it all yourself, you're working yourself to death, and you can't afford to hire somebody. They sold the lease to the <sup>Mankins</sup> and moved to Las Vegas.

RM: When did the Mankins come into town?

BF: They came here as homesteaders. You could have a homestead and Desert Entry both. Bill was an iron worker and a welder, and he worked at the Nevada Test Site. When he came here they had their little homestead, and Bill will tell you, today, he never was a farmer, he never will be a farmer, and he didn't like farming. But it was a good way to get a piece of property. They had a little house there about the first part of 1955.

RM: Where was their place?

BF: The original homestead would be on the northeast corner of Vicky Ann and Manse - they had 160 acres there. I know they were here in the very first part of 1956, so I'm guessing that they came here in 1955.

RM: What was the name of the little restaurant?

BF: What was the name of the little coffee shop? I don't think it had a name.

RM: What did people do for gas before the 76 station?

BF: They had one gas pump at the old Pahrump Trading Post - one gas pump, and that took care of it.

Also, the peak of the diesel-powered engines was just prior to when the Reverts came in and built the gas station. They came in here selling gasoline and diesel in bulk - they had a bulk dealership. My brother-in-law went to work for than, and then they said, "Hey, let's build a gas station."

RM: Oh, they came in here with diesel first.

BF: Both diesel and gasoline.

RM: And that was all spawned by the cotton, right?

BF: Oh, yes.

RM: What was the next business that you recall?

BF: Well, the gin, I guess, but we'd have to get into the bars. Prior to that, in around 1951, there was a man by the name of Dan Murphy, who built a bar just in from the California line towards Shoshone. It was Murphy's Bar and he ran it for awhile, and then it was sold to Jim Cruse, and . . . It was the second bar in the valley. The first bar was at the Pahrump Trading Post, but when the Wards and the Penells bought it, they closed it down.

RM: What was the effect of this bar on the valley? Did it begin to sort of serve as a little social center?

BF: Well, in those days - and of course I speak for my own family only - the women of family didn't go to the bar and the women of my wife's family didn't go to the bar. (Of course, she wasn't here at that time.) It was mainly for the miners and . . . We have to inject this - it was illegal to sell Indians liquor so there was a super market in selling Indians liquor. They'd sell it out the back door to them. They didn't come in and sit down on the bar and whoop it up. There was quite a lucrative market to selling the Indians liquor.

RM: I've always thought it was so unconstitutional to say that one group can't have liquor [laughs].

BF: I'd have to agree on that point. But the bars at that time . . . I can remember as a teenager it was exciting on Friday and Saturday night to drive to the mining towns and park outside the bar and watch the fights.

RM: There were a lot of fights?

BF: Oh, constantly. That was the name of the game. Murphy's Bar was still open, and then the county commissioners issued a second license and they built what was called the H & H Bar, which stood for Harris - Fred Harris and Horgan - Lionel "Rusty" Horgan. The H & H Bar sat right behind what today is the Watering Hole. (And there's a story connected with that - it mysteriously burned down one night. But that was the old H & H Bar.) And then a fellow bought that bar, and built what's now the Watering Hole.

RM: Did he buy it after it burned down?

BF: No, before it burned down. He bought this bar, and the property, and then he built a new bar, which is now the Watering Hole, but at that particular time was the original Cotton Pickin' Saloon. And mysteriously the old bar burned down. They put a couple of guys in jail for it.

RM: Oh - was it an insurance deal, or what?

BF: Who knows [laughter]? It burned down, and the insurance . . . They didn't stay in jail long. I think they rode the one guy out of town and the other one joined the navy.

RM: When was the H & H constructed?

BF: The H & H Bar was built somewhere right in '54-'55.

RM: Then when did the guy come in and build the other one, next to it?

BF: That was after we were married. Joe Heiligens built it, so it would be after '59. Probably 1960.

RM: And then when did it burn?

BF: Just about 3 days before they were to open.

RM: [laughs] Oh, OK. How did that bar differ from the other one? There wouldn't have been as many miners and all there, would there?

BF: Well, by this time there were more people in Pahrump. And then of course there was more activity and the paved roads were completed by then, and of course you always had a miserable brothel somewhere. In this particular case it was in Ash Meadows, so some of the travel would come from Vegas through here.



RM: OK, let's talk about the brothel picture. What was the first brothel in this part of the country?

BF: The first brothel was opened up somewhere around 1955 - I'm going to use that as a round figure - at the saloon out this side of the California line; Murphy's Bar. At this time it was called Jim Cruse's Bar. An old miner, Jim Cruse, bought the bar from Dan Murphy. They put in a brothel there in the back, and we had quite a Mormon colony, who were great people. Elmer Bowman, the person I was talking about, knew a lot of people in the right places, [including] a lot of political people in Carson City. It seemed as though Nye County has always been just sort of lax, you know: "So there's another brothel that opened up. We . . . Where's Pahrump?" They were getting a lot of pressure and finally it got up to the attorney general's office.

And the fellow who opened the brothel [saw it as] kind of a joke. He was a bartender in the old McCarran airport.

RM: Was that Cruse?

BF: No, the fellow that opened the brothel. Cruse owned the property, but there always has to be a manager - and I use that term very carefully. I can't remember this fellow's name, but he was a bartender at the old McCarran airport. And somebody, one day, said, "Why don't you open a little brothel out in Pahrump?" Because you can't have one in Clark County and they had just started to pave the road . . . The road was paved from Las Vegas out here, but it wasn't paved from the corner to the California line. They had just started the road project, so this would've been in late 1955 - probably October, November, December. He opened up his little brothel out here, and everything was going swell, but apparently the other brothel owners didn't much care for him doing this. They sent some thugs down here one night and went in and they beat the place up and broke the windows out and in the meantime, about the same time, Elmer Bowman had put the political pressure on. So that was the end of the brothel. I'd say its lifespan was, maybe, a month.

Then soon after that, the old Ash Meadows Lodge, which had originally been built in the '40s as a dude ranch and a place for people who were trying to acquire a divorce to come and live for 6 weeks. (This was quite a lucrative business, even in Las Vegas.) Well, divorces weren't as popular, or they'd rather go to Vegas or something, so the old dude ranch was sort of fading out and it was turned into a brothel.

RM: Who made the conversion there?

BF: Anne Weller was the person who owned it, and then her manager was Lyle Gross. He had been a cab driver in Las Vegas; that's where his connections came in.

RM: Who was Anne Weller? Do you know anything about her?

BF: All I know is that she had apparently owned a bar in Las Vegas. She was an interesting and independent sort of a woman.

RM: Is she still living?

BF: Oh, I don't think so.

RM: Was she an older woman at the time?

BF: She was probably 50, wouldn't you say? Maybe not quite 50. Do you think she was older? She was probably about 50, and this would've been around '55, '56, '57.

RM: So this was shortly after the failure of the first brothel?

BF: Correct.

RM: How much did the presence of the Test Site, and the increasing activity there, have to do with the opening of Ash Meadows, and maybe even the first brothel down here?

BF: Absolutely none, I would say. Maybe some in Ash Meadows, but the problem was roads. They were so bad, and so rough, that Ash Meadows probably got the bulk of their business out of California.

RM: Coming up from where?

BF: Well, I never hung around the brothels or socialized with the people who went to them - all I know is what I was told. The Ash Meadows Lodge was a real nice place. It had nice motel rooms, a nice swimming pool, a big hall and they always had a good cook. We would drive over there to have dinner, rough road and all.

RM: Was this before its conversion?

BF: Before and after. The brothel was a little building out back. In fact, you could take your wife and family over

there, and have a grand time, and never know it was there. They didn't have circus lights and everything at brothels in those days. There was one little red light over the door, and you thought it was to keep the mosquitoes away. But the roads, again, were just so bad. The Test Site workers did come to Ash Meadows some; there was no doubt about it. In wet weather they didn't do too well.

RM: [laughs]

BF: But in dry weather they did quite well.

RM: [chuckles] When did Ash Meadows open as a brothel?

BF: New Year's Eve of 1957 is the night my wife and I became well acquainted. I used to play in a little western band, and we played there that night, and that was the first I had ever seen any of the girls there. So probably you could nail it down to 1956.

RM: Can you tell me about the operation of Ash Meadows as a dude ranch and divorcee place?

BF: I had a brother-in-law who wasn't my brother-in-law at the time; he was a young fellow - and that's how I became involved in the western band. He played his guitar and he was a tall fellow - wore a cowboy hat and boots - and he was the person that took the dudes out for their horseback rides.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: You were going to give me a little history on the Ash Meadows Lodge when it was a resort.

BF: It was originally built by a man by the name of Berry, and I don't know who put up the honey. He came up here from the southern California area and had a dream of building this dude ranch. This would've been in the '40s probably 1946, '47 or '48. He had interesting little signs. If you would drive down the road to Baker and to Los Angeles [you would see] little signs made out of mesquite. He usually used one that was a crotch or something, and these old, rustic mesquite posts, and it would say, "Ash Meadows Rancho." You would see than all the way down, as far as I ever went. I was never down farther than San Bernardino. In those days you just went alongside the road and put up a sign.

His plan was to have a dude ranch, and he built this real nice, Spanish-style place with a red mission tile roof. There was a bar and a little dance area and the dining room. And then, of course, the kitchen. All this is still intact - the old stove is still intact - it's now a mining company. Then there was a large room with a fireplace and then big french doors opened out onto a veranda with grass and a pond and whatever. And then out back was a line of rooms like a motel on the right and the left. I would guess there were a dozen or 14 rooms

RM: Before that, what was there?

BF: It was just ranches. Ash Meadows was always sort of a mud hole, really. A lot of people lost a lot of money there thinking they could raise cattle. With the alkali and the salt grass and whatever, animals have to feed on the outside area of Ash Meadows and come in just for water.

He built the dude ranch and he had a nice big barn and corrals. At that time in the state of Nevada you had to be a resident for 6 weeks before you could get a divorce.

He had an airstrip, and he had a telephone, which was something different - he put it in himself. They had removed the old line that had gone down the T&T Railroad from Shoshone to Baker, so he and a crew of ranchers and farmers and miners got the poles and the wire and strung it and put a telephone line up to Death Valley Junction. And this was really something for us, because a lot of folks in Pahrump, rather than drive to Shoshone, would drive to Ash

Meadows to make a phone call. There just was nowhere to make a phone call.

RM: So you'd go there and have dinner and a little outing.

BF: Right. And it was the best dining area in this part of the country. In Death Valley Junction or Shoshone or Tecopa, you couldn't go in and sit down and have a family meal. And they always had an excellent chef over there. It ran for a few years like that, and I can't tell you exactly when it stopped being a dude ranch.

Then a fellow by the name of Ben Knox acquired it somehow and at this time he put in a few slot machines, and that was about the extent of the gambling. It was always sort of an out of the way place until they put in the brothel. And then of course that drew a clientele that patronized the bar and the slot machines and . . .

RM: Did Anne Weller have backing, or was it an expensive conversion to make?

BF: To a brothel?

RM: Yes.

BF: I would say probably a couple of thousand dollars . . . all it was, was a little building out back, so there shouldn't have been a great expense. Then that burned down and they built another one later on.

RM: Was it arson?

BF: I don't think so. I don't know of any reason why it would have been.

RM: Do you remember about when that burned down?

BF: Not really. It would've been in the '60s some time. I can't nail it down, but they rebuilt it immediately, and the building still stands.

RM: Did they build on the same spot?

BF: Actually it was a little farther back in, because it was more hidden back in the trees.

RM: I can remember when I worked a Mercury, guys would go over there, and it was always highly regarded as a brothel

[chuckles]. I've never been over the road or anything. I remember it was a long drive for guys to get over there.

BF: In the wintertime it was really treacherous, because the water level was high over there in the wintertime - it would rise. And if you got 6 inches off the tracks, you were stuck. A lot of those roads were only one-lane roads, so if 2 cars would meet . . . It was really treacherous.

RM: How long did Weller operate it as a brothel, do you think?

BF: Again, it's just hard to say. After she either sold it or whatever she did, it was still a brothel up until . . . There was some squabbling and there was a split, and then there were more brothels and a number of other things, and I just can't remember.

There's a story about when it closed up as a brothel. There's a fellow in Ash Meadows by the name of Pete Peterson. He's an old cowboy who's lived there 50 years. He worked on the Boulder Dam, and that's how he found Ash Meadows - he was Canadian-born. But he's quite a health person - a health nut, so to speak. And what Pete used to do to get all the impurities out of his body was to go down to Death Valley Junction and rent a room so he was away from everything, and spend - I believe it was 10 days or 2 weeks - on nothing but distilled water. This was to cleanse his body of all the impurities - all the alkali, and the alcohol, and all the bad stuff that Pete had consumed for the year; and he did this once a year.

Old Pete talked the fellow who was the manager of the brothel (and again I use this term very carefully) into this. He said, "Hey. If you want to become real healthy now, you just do what I tell you, and you'll do real well."

So he talked this fellow into it. And lo and behold, the guy died.

RM: While on the fast?

BF: He fell dead. Needless to say, that was the end of the brothel. Now, whether he had the money, or what he had . . .

RM: Oh, he wasn't Weller's manager - he was somebody who had subsequently purchased it?

BF: Correct. And I just can't give you the name. But when he died, that was the end of the brothel at Ash Meadows.

Since then, nobody's ever challenged it to put another one in, and now it's owned by a mining company out of Australia called the East-West Mining Company.

RM: What are they trying to do over there?

BF: They have zeolite, which is a type of a clay used as a deodorant and used as a filter. It's used in kitty litter and a number of other things. They use it around stables as a deodorant. I guess they have a fair market; they have a little mill there. And there are 2 kinds or 2 colors. There's one that's white and one that's green. They're mining the white, which is on the California side, and hauling it over and milling it and sacking it and shipping it out. They are mountains of the green stuff there, and they said they're saving that. I suppose it'll be worth more money some day or something.

RM: What was the next stage in the brothel history of the area?

BF: The brothels sort of took off somewhere, probably in the '60s or early '70s. And fortunately, they didn't come into Pahrump Valley, though a couple of them tried. I, Harry Ford, am personally responsible for the ordinance that does not allow brothels in the unincorporated town of Pahrump. And for years that kept the brothels out of the unincorporated town of Pahrump. I hope history will record that, because I have told many people that I am responsible for that ordinance.

But we had a man come in and challenge it. He said, "Ah, that bunch of farmers didn't know what they were doing," so he opened up a brothel right out in front of Tim Hafen's house, up on the hill up there.

RM: About when was this?

Mary Ford: I think it was 9 or 10 years ago.

BF: Well, then it would've been the '70s. So it would've been, probably, '76 or '77. Anyway, they opened it up right in Tim Hafen's yard. And I'll never forget this . . . at the town board meeting when I brought this up (and I knew Robert's Rules of Order and I knew the proper way to approach this) we brought it up as a motion, and our form of government at that time was a town hall sort of thing. And remember, Tim Hafen is a good friend of mine. He laughed and said, "Do you think we need something like that? Do you really think that?"

And I said, "Well, now is the time to enact an ordinance. Because once they're in here it's too late." This would've had to have been in the '60s, probably - '64, '65 - somewhere along in there. It was Town Ordinance Number 3.

RM: And it was passed through the town board?

BF: The town board was an advisory group to the county commissioners, who had to do everything. The town board took the motion to the county commissioners, who drew up the ordinance. This was the same in all the towns - Tonopah has one; Beatty has one; every other town has one. But as I remember, Tim Hafen just laughed, "Yes, I can't believe this. What are you talking about?"

But the ordinance was drawn up and it just lay there. And one day Tim Hafen looked out, and the red light was burning out in front of his house, and all of a sudden he said, "Hey, hey! What about that ordinance?" And so immediately the sheriff went and arrested the man for violating the ordinance. Well, he took it through the court system.

RM: What was the man's name?

BF: His name was Walter Plankington. He took it through the court system and I'm very proud of this, because it went through the district court, the Nevada Supreme Court and the 9th circuit court in San Francisco. And each time, they ruled in favor of Nye County. He applied to the U.S. Supreme Court, and they turned it down; they wouldn't hear it. If there's nothing else I've ever done in my life, I'm proud of this.

But unfortunately, at the time that we drew the ordinance up, all the private land ended at the township line down on the south end of Pahrump Valley. After the ordinance, time loped along and a farmer named Carberry who was an aerial crop duster and had a crop-dusting business came in. He was quite a large farmer down in the San Joaquin Valley, and through the Desert Land Entry Act he acquired a lot of property, and some of it was outside of the unincorporated town of Pahrump - outside of this township. Now, had we have drawn this thing to go from the California line to the Clark County line, we would have covered all of the area. But we didn't; we chopped it off at the township line, and there the ordinance ended. So this man did a little shopping around and moved outside of town. Then he took it through the court system, and the good old courts ruled in his favor.



RM: What do you know about him personally? Plankington - is that . . . ?

BF: I don't know anything about him personally.

RM: So then he constructed a new brothel?

BF: Well, he moved in a bunch of mobile homes, which is the way they construct brothels. It operated for awhile, and then, mysteriously, one night it went up in flames. Well, the man was very brilliant - that's the only thing I can give him, and I hate to give him that. But he really flaunted this. I understand it was all over the United States, and many parts of the world. He immediately moved in some more mobile homes and of course history has recorded what's happened since that time.

RM: Yes. That is the Chicken Ranch, right?

BF: Right. But, there is one thing remaining. This man - when he lost through all the court system (because of Harry Ford's ordinance) - still had to pay the piper; he still owed the county some jail time because he had violated the law. They started negotiating, and part of the negotiation - and I would stand to be corrected, because I suppose you'll never know - that he could spend the time in a halfway house in Is Vegas. Now, Peter Knight wanted to send him to Fort Leavenworth or somewhere . . . The reason - and again, I stand to be corrected - that he was allowed to spend it in a halfway house was that he would sell his brothel and be gone. So he sold it for a nice \$1 million and stuck the million dollars in his pocket and jogged on down the road.

RM: And he sold it to Russ Reade?

BF: Well, there's a corporation involved. Russ Reade owns a very small portion of it - I think about 5 percent.

RM: So Russ Reade is mainly the manager - is that it?

BF: That's correct.

RM: How do people in the valley feel about the Chicken Ranch?

BF: Well, originally, of course, they just boiled over it. And then it was put on the ballot as an advisory thing, and

it was written so trickily that what it actually said is, "Do you want brothels to be legal, or do you want brothels to be illegal?" It was written so, "You're going to get brothels how do you want them? Do you want them legal and we'll tax the devil out of them, or do you want to get them and not get anything out of them?" And so by something like one vote - it may have been 4 or 5 - they voted in favor of legal brothels. So we get that stuffed down our throat forever.

RR: Are they generally not supportive, or are they ambivalent about the Chicken Ranch?

BF: Well, at the time - and all I can speak for is a group of people that I'm acquainted with - the old-timers were adamantly against it. In fact, they cheered when it burned down. But there was also a group that was strongly for it - that this fine man came in and he . . . They have the misconception that it stops rape and it stops venereal disease and it stops heart trouble and ulcers and cancer and corns on your feet - everything. 1(: It mainly caters to Las Vegas clientele, doesn't it?

BF: The brothel business has really changed. Twenty years ago it was some old miner that got drunk and went up to the brothel and today it's a highly technical, well advertised, well governed, well controlled business. I would say that 90-plus percent [of the clientele] are conventioners out of Las Vegas.

RM: Is that right?

BF: Yes. We work on the roads, and there's a constant stream of Hertz Rent-a-Cars going in there. And, of course they have limousine service and they even had an airplane that came in there for awhile, but they stopped that. It used to be illegal to advertise, and that really cut down, because . . . But they're tricky. There's a little sheet in Las Vegas - I can't tell you the name of it now - and I've seen dozens of them thrown out along the road. It wasn't an advertisement, it was called an editorial, and you could put an editorial all over the world. But now, advertising . . . I don't know whether the law still reads that way or not; you can't advertise in Nye County. But you can advertise in Australia, or Clark County or anywhere [else] in the world. [And it involves] large amounts of money. I think the Chicken Ranch claims that they took in something like \$2 million in 9 months, and that's a pretty big business.

RM: That makes it the biggest business in Pahrump, doesn't it?

BF: In Nye County and Clark County [laughter]. It's not a mom and pop business. But it's a very lucrative business, and their clientele is completely different. One thing that's interesting, and history should record, is that it's my understanding that they don't cater to blacks. I couldn't stand on the Bible and say this; I just know of black fellows we've met along the road who said, "Hey, I was down there and they said they're having a closed party. Can you tell me where else I can go?" I've often heard that. And I don't know how the county can license a business . . .

RM: That openly practices discrimination?

BF: Right. But each county commissioner says, "I inherited the brothels; I'm just trying to make the best out of it."

RM: It seems they'd keep a black girl there.

BF: They do. They have black girls, Chinese girls, every kind. But they don't seem to cater to black clients.

RM: And that's where the whole brothel history is today?

BF: In terms of the valley; yes.

RM: Why don't we talk a little bit about the Test Site and what it's meant in terms of the development of the valley?

BF: Roads are the lifeline of the west, I suppose, but Pahrump Valley in general. I can say that because I have 32-plus years' experience, from dragging the rocks back and forth to the paving we do today. Originally, the farmers would have liked to have seen the road paved out to Johnnie, because I guess we didn't know any better. That was the way to Las Vegas.

You went out to Johnnie, and around, and it was 100 miles.

But Dorothy Dorothy was a strong worker in the Democratic party, and in those days [the state] was pretty well controlled by that party. She got to working with the right folks, and they got the road through the other direction. Well, that was all fine, great and good, but the Test Site was roaring over there. I remember old Highway 95 ended up with the name "the widow maker" because of the heavy traffic. Today the road from here to Las Vegas is starting to remind me of old Highway 95.

RM: Yes, I agree.

BF: During the Second World War when gasoline was rationed, you might drive from here to the Johnnie Siding and on to Las Vegas, which was a 3-hour trip, 100 miles, and you wouldn't see that many cars. Maybe you'd see 20 cars in that 70 miles. Well, as soon as the Test Site opened, it really started to move. They shut the Test Site down completely for a while when they signed a test ban treaty and the next time they opened it up, it really went wild. The first atomic bomb that we remember was in, probably, the fall or early winter of 1950. We didn't know anything about it and my brother-in-law was running a tractor at night, and he came in and said, "Hey, I saw this flash that you wouldn't believe."

But the road from here to the Highway 95 was so bad that nobody moved in here at that time. Then occasionally through the mid - '50s somebody would move in here and drive it every day. Bill Mankins was one of them. But it would just tear the car up. Probably you could count on one hand the number of people who lived here and worked at the Test Site. Had the Johnnie Road been paved at the time the Test Site [began] Pahrump would probably have 20,000 people here today. Because they moved to Indian Springs, and Indian Springs went from a ranch to . . . just like this. The hay fields went down the tube and mobile homes moved in, and they were charging them \$100 a month to live there when you could live for \$20 anywhere else in the world, probably So we really missed out on the Test Site. Then along about in the '60s, people started braving the road.

RM: It was still dirt?

BF: It was still dirt. In 1966 the Jennie Road was paved - it was the extension of [what was] at that time Highways 16; now it's 160. It started in at the old Highway 93 that goes from L.A. to Labs Vegas - that's not Highway 93 . . .

RM: I don't know what it was called.

BF: I think it was 91. Anyway . . . It made the loop past Blue Diamond, where it does right now, and through Pahrump and on over to the Johnnie Siding and Highway 95. That virtually opened us up to the Test Site and then the people who worked there moved to Pahrump. They would carpool or drive individually. Just prior to that, you could probably count on one hand [the people who worked at the Test Site]. And a lot of them were people who had horses.

One of the reasons that they moved into Pahrump is that they could move out here and there were no restrictions. There were no building codes, they could set up their mobile home, they had their own individual wells, their own septic tanks, they could build a horse corral, they didn't have to slip \$5 underneath the table to do this sort of thing. That was why a lot of people moved to Pahrump. There was good and there was bad in it. There were the people who moved in and built a nice place and had their horse corrals, and there were people who moved in and lived in an old bus and had pigs sleeping under the bus. So it worked both ways. They're trying to destroy that [freedom] today, whether it's good or bad . . . hay fields went down the tube and mobile homes moved in, and they were charging them \$100 a month to live there when you could live for \$20 anywhere else in the world, probably. So we really missed out on the Test Site. Then along about in the '60s, people started braving the road.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

RM: We were talking about the impact of the Test Site on the Pahrump Valley growth and you mentioned the paving of the highway in 1966 . . .

BF: 1966 was when the Johnnie Road was completed; that was the pavement from Pahrump over through Johnnie to Highway 95. This put the gate of the Test Site about 40 miles from Pahrump. Not only was it 40 miles from Pahrump, it was just a pleasure trip to drive out there, because the men who had been driving from Las Vegas on Highway 95 had been driving on the widow maker, [so called] because [that road] had killed so many people. And of course it was some time - I can't recall exactly when it became a divided highway, but even after, the traffic was wall-to-wall going out and bumper-to-bumper coming back.

RM: And they weren't running buses in those days, were they?

BF: Well, even if they did . . . If you drive the road today, there are buses, buses, but there are cars, cars, cars. There are a lot of military, and engineers; there are a lot of Test Site vehicles.

But it was a pleasure; people would tell me that they would just relax driving to work. And then somebody would buy a van, and maybe the van would haul 8 or 10. And they would charge \$1 a day, and you could ride out there for \$1 a day.

Then the big thing here was when L.T.R. - I think the West Side Bus Company was the first one that had the contract, but after the West Side Bus Company, L.T.R. had it out of Las Vegas. Bus service was a big thing, because along about 1974 or '75 we had the gas shortage and gas went from 38 cents a gallon to \$1 a gallon. It really put the crunch on the Test Site workers, and they really started carpooling. The bus was a blessing, because now for a couple of bucks a day (they're subsidized by Reynolds Electric, which is subsidized by the government) . . .

RM: Do they run buses out of Pahrump to the Test Site now?

BF: Oh, yes. There are probably 6 buses a day - maybe 8 - because there are different shifts and different locations. But the Test Site has been a big boost. I wish I had the statistics here, but I would say, at one time, probably close to 50 percent of our economy came out of the Test

Site. RM: So any reduction in activity on the Test Site might dramatically affect . . .?

It would affect Pahrump. It would affect Las Vegas more, but it would affect Pahrump - I'd hate to estimate - 10 to 15, maybe 20 percent. I know when they had the strike over there within the last year it made a big impact - they were talking about something like a million dollars a month into this valley. Of course, I would stand to be corrected. I'm trying to recall what the newspaper says, and sometimes they exaggerate, but they were talking about as much as a million dollars per month.

RM: Then once the road was finished, there was a perceptible change in terms of population growth here?

BF: That is correct. And also in the school growth; that's where you can really tell how you're growing - watching the school grow. Bill Beko won the lawsuit with the government, which took years in court; I think he won somewhere around \$5 million dollars. [Out of that] about \$1.2 million was paid in cash for our brand-new high school. That was built in about '73. My daughter went 3 years to the brand-new school and she graduated in 1977. In her freshman year the new school wasn't finished, so they held the high school in the community building and the park was the football field. We put up 2 goal posts at the ends . . .

The high school had to add more rooms, and then add more rooms, and then they built a whole new school, which they call the middle school. Then they built another whole new school which they call the intermediate school. And then they had to bring in modular classrooms, and they've got them staggered around all over the place. And right now the high school is jam-packed - they have to build another high school. They just finished adding on to the high school, and the county is talking about a new bond issue that would build us a brand-new high school.

RM: That brings up my next question. What things other than the Test Site have spurred growth here?

BF: Well, of course land sales. If you would like to hear another story• •

RM: Sure.

BF: My father called himself a realist. He wasn't a Christian, he wasn't an atheist, he was a realist; he believed in the world the way it was. My wife's father was a Pentecostal preacher, and of course they're quite

emotional, and they have prophets. After my wife and I were married one of their prophets came by; a friend of the family. He sat here, and he started having one of his visions. He told that my wife and I would have a long, good, prosperous marriage, and it'll be 30 years this year, so he was correct on that. And a number of other things. And then, out on the west side of the valley, he started seeing things sticking up. He could see them sticking up and he couldn't tell what they were. He said it could be oil derricks, but he couldn't see what it was.

So I would go out and sit on my father's front porch. He lived west of here on David Street and Charleston Park. He had his old barber chair on the front porch, and he would cut my hair every 3 to 4 weeks. I'd go out and sit in the old barber chair, and he'd cut my hair and I was telling him about this. I said, "Dad, this man said that we're going to have these things sticking up, and it's going to cause the value of land to go up. It's going to mean money for the people of Pahrump Valley."

My dad kept on cutting my hair and that was the end of that. Maybe 3 or 4 years later I went out there for my haircut and I was sitting there and he was cutting my hair I said, "Dad, remember what that prophet said about those things that were going to be sticking up?"

And he said, "Yeah?"

I said, "Dad, look out there and tell me what you see."

And he looked out there, and he got this grin on his face, and here were the power poles. I said, "Dad, did that raise the value of land in this valley?"

And he said, "Yes. It sure did, son." And that's the end of the story. But that was really interesting, because there we sat, in the same barber chair, and the power had come in and the power poles were sticking up, and that was a big boost to this community.

RM: So power was another big factor.

BF: It was the big one. In my estimation, roads are the lifeline, because I'm in the road business - roads and power. The REA, came in here, and when they come in, it makes no difference if you're one person and you're 10 miles out on that side of the valley, they run you a line. They don't do that today because it's not a new system anymore. But they would run it for the new system.

RM: When did power come?

BF: It was in about 1962 or '63.



RM: Then that set the stage for future growth, didn't it?

BF: Right. When we first got married in 1958, there was no power, and, of course, bringing a new bride in, I wanted to provide everything. We moved into this house and we had a little propane-powered generator that was big enough to take care of adequate lights if we didn't run too many things at one time. It would run the washing machine and a swamp cooler in the summertime.

RM: All at the same time?

BF: No. You couldn't wash and run the cooler at the same time. [laughter]

BF: It was powered by propane; our lifeline was propane, which was 20 cents a gallon. We used 100 gallons a month so our utilities were \$20 a month. We farmed, and we had a diesel-powered engine, so we filled the overhead tank with our diesel-powered agricultural well for our water supply. Everybody in the valley did this. At night you'd turn the lights off, and then we used the kerosene lamp when we'd get up of a morning until daylight came. But when *she* moved over here we had all of the comforts of anybody's home, [though] it was a nuisance because you couldn't have a deep freeze. You had to have a propane refrigerator and you had to have a propane stove, which we still have. We like it because when the power goes out . . . Of course, some people had wood. We also used propane to heat the house. We lived quite comfortably and quite economically. I remember a new car was \$2500. Your payments were \$50 or \$60 a month for 3 years, and today it's \$300 a month for 5 years. And your power bill's \$100 a month.

But anyway, power was a big thing; I'll never forget when it came in [chuckles]. I left the light on for 24 hours because I didn't think that it was going to stay on, so we slept that night with the light on.

RM: [laughs] You couldn't believe it?

BF: Yes [laughs]. And then I don't think I let her turn it on for a week so the meter wouldn't go around. But anyway, power was a big thing. Because now an individual could move to Pahrump, where land was available.

There had been a group of lawyers who came in here from Los Angeles and bought large parcels of land on the west side. They subdivided the property, and in those days there were absolutely no subdivision rules and regulations,

so they subdivided it with no roads, no survey, no anything. They bought this property for \$60 an acre, and they subdivided it on paper and started selling it for \$495.

Their biggest market was the Stars and Stripes magazine. And hundreds - maybe even thousands - of military men bought this property. In fact, there are a number of them still here today. [They bought it for their retirement] 10, 15, 20 years from . . . Some of them would come to the valley, and drive in and say, "My God, I can't believe I bought that," and they'd keep on going. The next guy would come in and say, "This is just what I was looking for," and he was thrilled to death.

RM: This was the first significant subdivision in the valley then?

BF: Right. This was right after . . . we got married in 1958 and it was probably in '59 or '60.

RM: Do you remember any of the names of the dividers?

BF: One of the lawyers was Corbin. He was the most prominent . . . in fact, Corbin still owns some of the property.

RM: Where was that initial subdivision?

BF: There were a number of them. There was Charleston Park Ranchos, and Cal-Vegas Ranchos, and there were thousands of plots. They owned the balance of the section where my father owned 80 acres; the balance of that 640 acres was all one-acre lots- Today those are starting to fill up and it's a concern to the health department, **because** that means in a section one-mile square you could have 640 septic tanks and 640 wells. And pretty soon one guy's going to flush his toilet and the other guy's going to be drinking it. Of course, that's exaggerated and I hope it never happens - I hope we have a water system in here long before that.

RM: Do you see a community-wide water system?

BF: Oh, certainly. Cal-Vada's Central Nevada Utilities just ran a line into the town area - PJ's and all that - last weekend. Also, they've crossed the road and come over to the old Raycraft subdivision, around the Cotton Pickin' and that area. And they're starting to feed that area. And they're also feeding above the community center. So I think

you'll see a water system. A sewer system say take a while, but definitely a water system.

RM: You've spent most of your career it the road business, haven't you?

BF: The summer that I was 16 years old, which was 1953, the state highway . . . it was sort of ironic. Different counties would allot their monies in a different direction. I can't describe this fully, because I don't understand it fully, but Nye County built their portion of Highway 160, which ran from the Nye County-Clark County line; it was probably 14 miles, and it stopped out where Cal-Vada is now. So when you would drive into Pahrump, you would bounce over a gravel road from Shoshone or from Highway 95 - because there was nothing going the other way. And all of a sudden you would approach this beautiful paved road with a white line, with culverts, with guide posts - and it was a beautiful road.

When I was 16 years old, it was hard to get help in Pahrump and I worked for the state highway department with their engineers. I was a chain man/rod man, which was just the kid who did all the work and all the running around. But I did pick up some knowledge of road building and of engineering. After the job was completed, they took a liking to me or something and they put me in the office, and I spent some time working up the dirt sheets. This was running an instrument called a buggy - you would measure the end areas, and you'd have to go around twice.

RM: Could you explain that in a little more detail'

BF: OK. In those days a contractor would bid a job by the cubic yard of dirt he'd have to move, either in or out. They go through and shoot the thing - do the survey - and take elevations. So now they know what it is when it starts. Then it goes into design. (Now it's all done in a computer; in those days it was done with a hand crank calculator.) When the road is completed, they come back in and put these on paper every hundred feet, and it's called an end area - it will look like this. Then they take the natural ground and add, or subtract, from what you have here. They come back through and do elevations again, and at that particular time, in 1953, I can't tell you the [technical] name, but it was called a buggy. It was a little meter that had a wheel on it, and you would set it on zero and go around this. It was calibrated and you would read it and write it down, and then you'd have to go around it again, because they didn't trust you the first time, and

then you would average it. These were every 100 feet down the road, and every 50 feet on curves. Somebody would have to go into the office and, being the kid, that was my job. Then they left and it was all over.

When I was 18 years I old felt I had become a man, and no longer was satisfied working with my father on the farm and well drilling and all of that, so I went to work for Nye County. This was November the 15th of 1955. In the '40s, as I told you, the roads in Pahrump were graded just in the wintertime - once a year. The road crews would come through and grade the roads and then go on.

RM: There weren't many roads, were there?

BF: Well, miles-wise it was just the loop through the valley and back. There was the main road, and then the road going down towards Shoshone and then there was a loop back through Stewart Valley, through Ash Meadows, over to the California line and back across the dry lake through Crystal and back here. It was probably - I think we used to figure around 100 miles all told.

In about 1950 they put a crew down here that stayed here all the time, but **they worked** from Beatty to Pahrump. You had one man who was a grader operator and a man who followed him in a dump truck - they didn't use pickups then - and he pulled an old, 4-wheel living quarters. Wherever the grader ended that night, that's where they set up camp. They had water, and the toilet facilities were the mesquite bushes down the road. That's how they worked, and they worked 6 days a week.

Prior to the time that I went to work, **they went** to a 5-day work week but we still had the area from here to Beatty. There were 2 of us. We would still live in the trailer house, only by this time the living quarters were a little better. And you had a definite place to set up camp. We'd camp in Amargosa, we'd camp in Beatty . . . we didn't stop along the road and camp; we'd drive out 10 miles or so. So the job had become a little better, and the **pay was** great - I started out at \$300 a month. Then I worked 9 months, and I got \$350 a month. Of course, I was single and I would go wherever the **work went**. We would work in Beatty . . . in fact, we went clear up to what was Scotty's Junction. It was called Riggs's Junction then, [for] Slim Riggs. I was 18, and then 19, and 20 and it made little difference to me where . . . I liked home, but wherever we stayed, it all paid the same

In 1961, when I was 23 years of age and had 6 years with Nye County, Ralph Lisle in Beatty was the county commissioner Be told me, "We're going to split it up. We're

going to hire a man for you and you'll be in charge in Pahrump and we're going to hire a man for the other fellow (whose name was Eldred Moore), and he will be in charge in Beatty. And so you will still work together when you . . . because we only had so much equipment. By this time, we had acquired 2 dump trucks and a loader and a grader and an old pickup. So I'd have the grader and a pickup, and he'd have the 2 dump trucks and the loader. And then we would switch back; I'd have the 2 dump trucks and the loader, and he'd have the grader. This didn't work very well, but it did the job.

Then I didn't have to leave the valley anymore except on special jobs. If we had a special job, then I would have to go and help on it. At that time we had our own road crew for the Pahrump-Ash Meadows-Crystal area. It was mostly just maintaining the roads and hauling a little gravel, and we spent more time out of the valley than we did in the valley. It would take us 2 weeks to make the loop out and around, and then one week to do the roads in Pahrump, so it was about a 3-week loop. Then we'd stop somewhere along the road and haul more gravel.

RM: There were no paved roads in Pahrump aside from the highway then, were there?

BF: OK. The first paving was in 1959. At that time, there were only ranches in the south end of the valley - the Bowmans' ranch and the Frehners' and Perry Bowman and Tim Hafen - a group of ranches, all on this road. And so we paved a portion of Hafen Ranch Road - about 2 and 2/10 miles. It wasn't paving, it was oiling. We took the pit run gravel and the trucks came in and we mixed oil (asphalt) with it and put it down. It still was rough, but it wasn't dusty.

Through the later '60s and into the '70s, asphalt was cheap - during the Vietnamese War. Asphalt's a by-product of jet fuel and gasoline, and they had asphalt almost to give away. It was cheap, and we would put in 5 to 6 miles per year - that's why we have so many paved roads in Pahrump today. [Now, the price of asphalt is] astronomical. We used to get a 25-ton load of asphalt, delivered from Bakersfield - and they would give us 2 hours free spreading time - for \$600. And today, delivered here from the railroad siding in Las Vegas (at Arden, actually) it's \$200 a ton, plus you have to pay for your spreading time. So there's no free lunch.

RM: How many tons does it take to make a mile?

BF: When we first started out, we would put 75 or 80 tons of liquid asphalt into . . . let's say 1000 yards of gravel, we would put in 80 tons of asphalt (that is, per one mile). But now, of course, we have more traffic and unfortunately those 5 or 6 miles we were building per year are deteriorated and need to be replaced. Today we contract hot mix concrete-asphalt, which is a stronger grade. And of course we have to put a better base under it, and you just have to go with the flow. Before, you might have had 20 cars a day, and today you may have 200 cars a day over the same road. And of course lots of trucks. As the valley grows, the trucks have to keep hauling down the old roads to build new ones.

But I can say that I have seen all of the roads in Pahrump Valley built or rebuilt, and I have been in charge of all the southern county roads, and have been the inspector on all of the subdivision roads. Roads really have been my life.

RM: How many miles of paved roads are there in the valley now?

BF: I would have to be in my office to tell you, but I would say somewhere around 120 or 130 miles of county paved roads within Pahrump Valley. [The first country road was oiled in] 1959, the first portion of highway was built in 1953, the second was built in 1954, which tied into Las Vegas, and the one to Shoshone was started in 1955 and completed in 1956. And then 10 years later the Johnnie Road was completed in 1966.

## CHAPTER NINE

RM: Button, since we last talked you thought of a couple of things that we ought to include.

BF: This valley didn't have a fire department or any type of fire-fighting equipment, so in 1971 a group of the fellows decided a volunteer fire department would be a good thing to put together. Through a trade we acquired an old 1947 fire truck from Beatty, and they came down and showed us how to operate the thing. Then we purchased a 1952 Federal from the city of Las Vegas - it was a training truck and it was a good old fire truck for our needs.

In 1972, Pahrump Town Ordinance Number 5, enacted by the county commissioners, created the Pahrump Volunteer Fire Department. I suppose mainly because I worked for the road department and we had a large shop and a mechanic, I was made the assistant chief in charge of the equipment and training. We had about a dozen fellows who were real active, and it's sort of ironic - as soon as we got the fire truck we had quite a few fires.

At that time we also started the ambulance service. There were a group of non-firemen, and then the firemen became involved in it, and we housed the ambulance in our soon to be built new firehouse. Also we started what has ended up today as the search and rescue service. But this was all through the fire department - the same group of men and equipment.

And to raise money - and I sort of regret this today - the fire department started selling fireworks. It was just a gesture to raise a few dollars. The first year, I think we raised about \$600. My wife and I and my daughter and the other fellows and their families would take shifts . . . Well, the volunteer fire chief, who was also a Las Vegas city fireman, got the idea to put an ad in the Nifty Nickel in Las Vegas. This really turned it on, because in Las Vegas you couldn't buy fireworks. Each year the sales became larger and larger, and the last year that I remember, the profit from the sale of fireworks was in excess of \$30,000.

RM: For the fire department?

BF: For the fire department. And this was only for, say, a 3-week period.

RM: That's incredible. What year was that?

BF: 1976 was the large year I remember. And then I was no longer that [involved]. From the profits from the sale of fireworks we purchased a radio system. We got our first radio with a grant from the forest service, and with the monies that we had raised, we purchased the radio system which is in use today. There is a repeater, and then the pager and the base station, which is now on a 24-hour service in the sheriff's office. The firemen at that time had pagers only and the chief and 2 of his assistants had hand-held radios. It really helped, because when you have volunteers, one may be out in the field and one may be working in the gas station, and when the page goes off, it really cuts down the response time.

RM: What problems arise in running a volunteer fire department in a community as dispersed as this one is at present?

BF: Well, they have ended up . . . I'm still active in it, only I just provide water. I guess I don't like the smell of smoke anymore or something, but I drive the water truck. And I certainly still fight fires, but my main thing is, when there's a fire they have a number of volunteers and they respond, and then I bring the large tanker, which requires a Class One driver's license.

They now have 3 fire stations. There's one in the south end of the valley, and then the main station, which is centrally located at the community center, and then one out on Belle Vista in the north end of the valley. That cuts the response time down. Firemen who live in either end of the valley go to the closest fire station.

RM: Is there equipment in each building?

BF: Oh, yes; they have some fine equipment. In '86 and '87 they [bought] quick response attack trucks. They are one-ton trucks with 500 gallons of water on board and a pressure pump, of course, and then they have other equipment. They also respond with the ambulance when necessary for extrication and this sort of thing.

RM: Do you have any paid employees on the fire department?

BF: We have one full-time employee - his title is the commander. He's in charge of the stations and the fire and all that sort of thing.

RM: How does the ambulance service work?



BF: The ambulance service is completely separate now. It's more of a specialized field, even though fire-fighting is certainly specialized. To become an ambulance person, you have to be certified by the state of Nevada to become an emergency medical technician - an EMT - and then you have to be licensed by the state of Nevada. One requirement was that you couldn't have had a moving violation in the last 2 years on your driver's license. We got our [certification] through the Clark County Health District. And of course we had to meet all the requirements as if we were residents of Clark County.

RM: When a medical emergency occurs, what is the chain of action?

BF: Now we have some medical centers here. We have 2 - one especially - that works just like the emergency room in Las Vegas.

RM: Is it staffed all the time?

BF: It has been in the past. I think right now they've cut back, but prior to that there was a nurse on duty 24 hours a day. When you have an emergency of any type you call the 911 or you call the sheriff's office and they'll page out the ambulance service.

RM: And a volunteer, then, gets in the ambulance?

BF: They're volunteers, but they're paid, I think, \$10 a run or something like that.

RM: I see. So you've got someone on standby to drive the ambulance at all times?

BF: That's correct.

RM: What did you do about fire and ambulance prior to '72?

BF: The men all showed up and tried to save the surrounding buildings with the garden hose or buckets or a shovel or whatever.

RM: What about medical emergencies?

BF: You were just on your own.

RM: If somebody became violently ill or something, you hightailed it to town?

BF: For Las Vegas; yes.

RM: I guess it didn't present much anxiety to people, because they were used to it, weren't they?

BF: No, you were just healthy. Most people who came here were middle-aged or younger people and they were healthy.

RM: Could you discuss the evolution of recreation in the valley?

BF: Well [chuckles], in the beginning there wasn't a whole lot of recreation. Of course the people would try to get together on occasion, but there really wasn't much recreation. The kids, of course, went swimming and hunting and fishing and all this sort of thing. Then in the early '50s, when there were more ladies - and I speak for my mother - they developed the Pahrump Women's Club. I think they met once a week at one or another of the ladies' houses and they would do quilting, or if some girl was going to have a baby they'd have showers and this sort of thing and they had sort of a social life.

RM: How long was it active?

BF: I don't know. I suppose there are spin-offs today of it, going to the churches and so on. But after the Turners and the Wards moved here and had the grocery store, they would shove all the shelves and everything back and have dances once a month or so. They were quite a musical family, and it was just good, clean fun. And my father called square dances. We had square dancing later, especially for the kids. After they got the 2 barracks buildings for the school we had sort of a town hall, which provided a meeting place. At that time we would have square dances and fortunately there were always a couple of people who played musical instruments. We had some real good times.

Of course there was always a bar, and that was a whole different field. I started playing in a little western band in a bar when I was 15 years old, and that helped make spending money. There was a social life in the bar for some of the people. My family didn't associate there, but for some people that was recreation.

RM: Where did you learn to play?

BF: The fellow who married my sister was Dutch Turner's brother; his name was Ben Ward. He was real good at playing the guitar, and the first thing I did was make enough money to buy a guitar, and he taught me how to play.

RM: Where all did you play in your band?

BF: In the beginning we played locally, in what was Jim Cruse's bar. And then after the H & H Bar [opened] we played in there; this was in '56, '57. And then we played in the outlying areas, because we were the only band around. We played as far as Baker, California. I remember playing for a Halloween dance there and all the adults dressed in costumes. They would pay us \$50 apiece, and that was a lot.

RM: That was a lot of money; yes.

BF: I'd average about \$100 a month; that was good spending money.

RM: That was a lot of spending money. How many were in your band?

BF: From the beginning there were just the 2 of us. Then later there were 4 - we had 3 guitars and a drummer.

RM: Were they all local people?

BF: When we started playing in the outlying areas, a couple of the fellows were from the Shoshone or Tecopa area.

RM: What did you call yourselves?

BF: I don't think we had a name. I would like to say that the last time that I played . . . I had met the person who became my wife, and the last night that I played was on my 21st birthday. I quit and I have never played since, because I knew that getting married and playing in a western band wasn't my kind of life. And I have never played since. My 21st birthday - that was January 12, 1958.

RM: What other changes have you seen in recreation as the valley has grown in size?

BF: Well, of course the churches came along, and with churches there's always a certain amount of recreation - good, clean fun for the kids. We were involved in what ended up the Pahrump Community Church. My wife worked with

a lady by the name of Mrs. Burson, who was in child evangelism. They worked with a little Sunday School, because my wife came from a church family. The Pahrump Community Church evolved from that. The Village Mission sent a missionary in here and from that we have the church. The Mormon Church was started by the Bowmans, and that was their own individual church on their ranch.

RM: At first they held their services in their home on the Bowman ranch, didn't they?

BF: Yes. Eventually the Bowmans had a building of their own; it was probably a converted house. They held church in there for a long time because their family probably consisted - children and all - of 30 people or so. And then they built the Mormon church, which is up on West Street.

RM: So the Mormons were the first church in the valley. What was the second one?

BF: Well, there was [often] a Sunday School, especially in the summertime. My mother worked with a Sunday School. Most ladies in those days had grown up with a Christian background, and they wanted their children to have the same. And a little Sunday School was started.

RM: So even in the '40s there was Sunday School?

BF: Yes. Not continually, but at times

RM: Was it always in somebody's house?

BF: Well, in the summertime it was in the schoolhouse - the little red schoolhouse. And then the Mormon church and the Community Church both used the schoolhouse that's existing up here now - what's now the grade school. After the community building was built, they both used the community building, switching back and forth hours; one would be in the afternoon and one in the morning. The community building and the Johnnie Road were both built in 1966.

RM: What was the first structure in the valley actually dedicated to a church?

BF: It would have had to have been the Mormon Church. Twenty years ago we were all meeting in the community building, so it would be a year or two after that; '69 or something.

RM: Then what was the next building dedicated exclusively to church use? BF: It would have to have been the Pahrump Community Church.

RM: Could you tell a little bit more about how that came about?

BF: The Village Missionary that they sent in here was a hardworking, dedicated New England farmer. His name was Paul Faris, and he came in 1968.

Mary Ford: Twenty years ago.

BF: Yes, they just celebrated the 20th anniversary.

RM: So that's when you got your first real . .

BF: Pastor; that's correct. The first one was named Dick Linum, but he was here probably for 3 or 4 months or so and then there was a revolving of pastors, and Paul Faris came in. And Paul stayed here . . .

Mary Ford: Thirteen years.

BF: Thirteen years. He was just a hard worker. He had a large family - his boys were going to college and they had friends, and the church just evolved over a period to what is now, [over] probably 6 or 7 years. We built the basement first and the church services were held there for a few years, and eventually the church acquired a loan and completed the building. I can't tell you when it was dedicated, but we just held the 20th anniversary of the Village Missions coming here and creating the Pahrump Community Church.

RM: How did the missionary happen to care here?

BF: You made a request . . . This little lady, Mrs. Burson, and my wife, sat down and wrote a letter to Village Missions and made a request for a missionary to come.

RM: He couldn't earn a living doing that, could he?

BF: The missionary subsidize their pastors. So if he makes \$500 a month and the church can only pay him \$200, they pick up the other \$300. And Paul was such a worker that he drove a school bus, he taught school, he did a little bit of everything to help supplement his income to make it work. He was just a dedicated individual

RM: And then he eventually left?

BF: Yes, he left and went up to Redding, on to another church, and other pastors have come in.

Probably the next church [in Pahrump] was the Church of Christ, which is down on the corner of Highway 372 and Lola Lane. It's built out of logs. And I just can't tell you [a date].

Since then we have a large Catholic church down on Game Bird and Pahrump Valley Boulevard.

RM: When was it constructed?

BF: I just can't tell you. We're probably talking - for everything about 8 to 10 years ago. And then there's a large Baptist church out in Allen Estates, and then now there's a large . . .

Mary Ford: Jehovah's Witness.

BF: Yes, there's a Jehovah Witness church - a new one that they've built down off of Homestead. And the Assemblies of God is a big, nice church down on Big Five. And you have a Seventh-Day Adventist church. So we probably have as many churches as we have bars, now. Which was some sort of a balance in the west, I think.

RM: [chuckles] Yes. Do a lot of Latinos attend the Catholic church? BF: I would say yes, never having been to the Catholic church to a service.

RM: How would you describe the evolution of the ethnic makeup of the valley?

BF: OK. In the beginning there were "white people" - I don't know exactly how you'd categorize white people; anything that isn't brown or black or yellow, I guess - and Indians That was it. When Walter Williams came here in about 1957 or '58, he was from Texas, and in Texas they used Mexican laborers, whether they were nationals or wetbacks He came in here and brought a bunch with him, and of course then there was a method of getting these through - legally.

RM: Yes. That was the braceros program at that time.

BF: They called them green cards; I don't know all the terminology. But from Walter Williams the other farmers

learned that, "Hey, we can get some cheap labor here." So at that time I would say it went 95 percent Mexican farm labor in Pahrump.

RM: Are the Mexicans who come into the valley as laborers seasonal, or do they live here full time?

BF: In the beginning, there were some real families that came in. It seemed as though Walter Williams, specially, liked families. Then when he needed more help - they had to chop the =coot and there was a lot of manual labor - they were seasonal. In Nevada I think you can only have them 9 months, and even the green cards had to bap& once a year to old Mexico. And then you had a certain amount of wetbacks. Occasionally the immigration service would come driving in and all of a sudden your Mexican population [chuckles] was cut in half. And it would take maybe a week to get than all back. They came back pretty quickly.

RM: Did some of them eventually become permanent members of the community?

BF: You bet. I don't know through what procedure, but somehow I guess they became citizens. Not through the citizenship program as we know it as Germans and Irish and so on. I don't think any of them ever took the test and that sort of thing, but I suppose there were other ways that they could become citizens of the United States. There are still some nice Mexican families that are permanent people here.

RM: Is there a lot of Mexican labor in the valley now? Seasonal or otherwise?

BF: Very little, because there's very little fanning. I suppose each farm has a family or two, but very few.

RM: So the days of requiring relatively large numbers of Mexican laborers are gone?

BF: Yes.

RM: Did that leave with the cotton?

BF: Yes; that's correct. And unfortunately, the Indian population has dwindled; there are very few Indians here now.

RM: What do you attribute that to?

BF: Girls, I guess. It seemed there were more Indian girls than there were Indian men, and they just didn't reproduce Indians Because most of the Indian fellows packed up and left and went somewhere else.

RM: Did the girls leave too?

BF: I guess they died of old age or something; we just don't have that many around anymore.

RM: Has there been a gradual decline?

BF: I would say gradual, because a lot of them were older. Most of the ones I knew have all died off.

RM: Did the Indians tend to have small families?

BF: No, they probably had 2 to 5 [children], something like that.

RM: Why don't we review again the history of the schools. It started with the little red schoolhouse, and then you moved to the barracks . . .

BF: Then beside the barracks buildings they built 3 classrooms, built in '56 or '57 or '58.

Mary Ford: Part of it was built when we were married.

BF: Yes. And then they added a room on, and they kept adding on to it. But that provided the school - until such a time as they built the high school, which was in 1973-74.

RM: And that was a result of the monies that came from the Test Site?

BF: And the growth; especially the growth. Because they were busing the kids to high school in Shoshone, and this became a problem not only for California but for us. Because the buses were breaking down . . . and then of course with school activities it was darn hard for a kid to be bused over and stay for the ball games and that sort of thing. When the high school was developed here my daughter was one of the first students. In fact, the year before, as I said, she went to high school in the community center.

Even when my daughter was in grade school, the school was part of our social life. My wife and I worked with the PTA and with anything [involving] the school. We helped put



on the carnival at Halloween - we had a real active PTA. I remember I was the membership chairman, and I got a certificate for increasing membership.

## CHAPTER TEN

BF: We would put on a carnival to raise money for the school; for the kids to do whatever they needed to do. This was when my daughter was in grade school, which was in the '60s. The school was a very active place. The principal, Milo Dailey, and his wife, were quite musical. She played the piano and he was really talented in this field; they would have excellent singing groups. The Christmas program [was good]; there was always something going on within the school.

They started the sports program when my daughter was probably about 10 or 11 or 12 years old. And we hauled her every place. You'd always have to go somewhere; there was nobody to play in Pahrump. We would go to Las Vegas, Beatty, Indian Springs . . . fortunately we were able to take her wherever she needed to go to have a good, active school program.

And my wife and I, because we had a daughter, chaperoned the dances. Because I was with the fire department, I would sponsor a band out of Las Vegas - which would cost a couple of hundred bucks. These were good bands, although I didn't care for their music. I was an assistant chief, so I could pretty well make arrangements for anything. I remember one time I had made arrangements, and asked for, \$200 to sponsor a band. We only took in \$170 at the door, so good old dad, I picked up the \$30 fee out of my pocket because I agreed - if they'd give me \$200, I would get the money back. So we picked up the 30 bucks.

It was well worth it. The kids, even though they would get mad at us because we wouldn't let them turn all the lights out and we'd make them stay in the building . . . Those kids today, even though they're grown men and women with children, when they see us, they're friendly. They remember us. But the school, for many of us, was our social life. We lived our life with our one daughter.

RM: The school became a major focus for community social activity, then?

BF: That's correct. And then of course, when the high school came, we had a whole up-beat. And fortunately we did have some good teams, but when we first started, like, in grade school [chuckles], any girl's team could have beaten our boys. They would give the ball away, and fall over their feet and whatever. These kids were 9, 10, 11, 12 years old. But it was fun; it was good, clean fun. And everybody liked to play us, because we were easily beaten.

Of course, we always played Tonopah - there was always a conflict between the north and the south and those games would become quite lively.

But after my daughter got into high school it was a real upbeat. Then we had to go farther; clear into Mesquite, and Moapa Valley, and all over the place.

RM: Did you always make those trips with the team?

BF: Oh, yes. Fortunately I was in charge of the county roads so I could schedule my time to get off Friday a couple of hours early to head for the ball game. But we really enjoyed it; that was a very happy time of our life.

RM: Yes, I did the same thing in Tonopah, and it was really good.

Have we left out anything that you think should be mentioned about community life as it evolved?

BF: One thing that really evolved were the gymkhanas. It was people who had horses. Chuck and Etha Connely had moved here from Las Vegas and they raised horses - they were horse breeders and they were real active in this. It started out as a kid thing, and it has evolved today to be the Harvest Festival. I have photographs of the first gymkhana. We took some steel posts and some old woven wire, and we put up a circle corral and parked our cars right up against the fence to help steady it, and they put on a horse show. They ran the barrels and the flags and all this sort of thing.

RM: What year would this have been, do you think?

BF: September, 1964, was the first gymkhana, which has evolved into the Pahrump Harvest Festival. At that particular event we had the horse show, as it was called, and then that night we moved up to the grade school, and they had a pit barbecue. They dug a pit in the ground and cooked beans in the open pot, as they still do today, and we had barbecued beef. And they had music of some sort, and they danced on the old tennis court, which was a concrete slab with 2 baskets. That was the first of what is, today, the Harvest Festival.

RM: Could you say a little bit about the Harvest Festival and how it grew into the important event that it is?

BF: Well, each year it just got a little bigger. Las Vegas always had the Helldorado. When I was a young boy in 1948

or '49 or '50, this was a big event in Las Vegas. It was a small event to what it is today, but it was big for the town of Las Vegas. They had their rodeo and their carnival, and it was a family fun time. Well, Las Vegas had outgrown that; they tore down the old Helldorado Village on Fifth Street where they held the carnivals and then, of course, Cashman Field.

And people wanted to come out to a small place. They could sit under a tree and drink beer; you can't do that in Las Vegas - you'd get arrested for it. So the Harvest Festival was a place where people could come and bring their family and spend the day and eat a hot dog and not have to pay \$3.50 for it; it was just a good, fun time.

RM: So the Harvest Festival became an event that drew from the outside. It wasn't just for locals?

BF: That is correct. And we believe that it brought a lot of folks in here who ended up buying property and moving to Pahrump. At one time the Harvest Festival got so big that I think history has recorded that there were a couple of years there wasn't one. It just got so big that it took everybody in the valley to work at it. My wife would work in the concession stand and of course later I was on the ambulance - I'd stand by at the rodeos. Finally they built a good rodeo arena - the Gilliams out of Arizona built that for the town. Then the community building went up in 1966, and it just got larger, with the grass, and the trees, and it evolved to what it is today.

The fire department put on the Fourth of July. This was a grand event, because it also was strictly a family fun day. It would start out with games and a baseball game. We had that first and then activities for the kids - a sack race and prizes and so on and so forth. Then towards evening, about sundown, we'd have a pit barbecue. It grew into an [event for] 1000 or so people. Then of an evening . . . in fact, one year we had 2 dances - one dance with the music that the kids liked and a dance with music for the adults. Not only did we segregate the kids from the adults, we segregated the booze from the Coca-Cola. My wife and I were in charge of that one.

The Fourth of July was a grand thing. We put on water fights. You put a metal beer keg on a cable and string it up off of the ground probably 10 or 12 feet on, say, a 300-foot run. You have 2 teams, each with fire hoses, and you try to push the barrel on the other guy's side. We turned this into a family event; we'd have maybe 25 to 50 kids on each team, and they were all getting wet and screaming and hollering . . . Unfortunately, somebody got hurt last year,

and those are over. They're gone; they'll never be again. It's a sad thing, because it was a fun time. It's usually 100-plus degrees on the Fourth of July and, with water spraying all over the place . . . it was a grand thing.

RM: Are there any other social . . . ?

BF: Of course, you get back to the churches. They have their own social life, and the bars have theirs. The bars are a party every Friday or Saturday night. They have live music at the Saddle West. And then the bowling alley came in and that provided another real outlet. It opened before Bob Ruud passed away, and he passed away in '83, so it came in, in About '82 or '83. But this was quite a thing, because it was good, clean fun. Later they had live music and more activities for the adults. The Saddle West is 24 hours a day and provides gambling and a regular casino.

RM: What role did at first the Indians, and then later the Indians and the Mexicans, play in community social life?

BF: The Indians were real low-key. They didn't participate in anything although the school kids, especially the boys, were active in sports and whatever. When the Mexicans came in they provided some real athletes for the school; boys and girls. In fact, the girls volleyball team have won state many times in their league - AA.

RM: Is there anything that stands out in your mind about other aspects of their social life?

BF: One of the interesting things with the Indians was when somebody' would die When we first moved here, even though the Indian population here was probably no more than 50 and the white population was probably 25, when an Indian would die, even though it was in another area, a lot of times they were buried here. This would be a 2 or 3 day event for the Indians and it would go night and day. They would have the fire going all night long and their camp was just up above where we lived and we could hear whooping and hollering and shouting . . . it was a real event, at a funeral. We never did understand this, and they never told us. For a little kid . . . I was scared to death. We had to walk near it to go to school, and boy, they really had a grand time at a funeral. They put than away in real fashion.

RM: And then the deceased was buried here?

BF: That's correct; yes. And they'd always hand dig their own graves. And white people would attend these if you were real close and real friendly, but the only thing you would attend would be the graveside service. I never attended one, so I don't know what happened. I don't know whether they spoke over them, or . . . I have no idea how they handled it.

RM: Is there anything else regarding minorities in the community?

BF: For a while, during the cotton season . . . they had to have somebody chop the cotton. "Chopping the cotton" is chopping the weeds out of the cotton. Through the '50s they brought in some blacks, and this provided some excitement. These people would go to the bars on Saturday night and this was a wild group of folks. I'll have to say that nobody was sad when this group left.

RM: Were they black migrant farm workers'?

BF: Yes, it was a contract. They came out of Buckeye, Arizona. The fellow would come in here with a busload of them, and they would set up tents and whatever for camps, and . . . They did the same thing when they planted lettuce here just a few years ago. It was the Norton Company. They came in here and planted lettuce and brought in Mexican migrant workers by the busload.

RM: Were they wild, too?

BF: They were pretty wild, too; yes. The sheriff's department kept [chuckles] real busy. Well, they had nothing to lose and every one of them carried a knife.

RM: Speaking of the sheriff's department, could you talk about the evolution of law enforcement in the valley?

BF: That is an excellent subject. When we first moved here, in Nye County, - in Nye County - there was one lawman and that was the sheriff. His name was Bill Thomas. At the time he retired, Bill Thomas had held elected position for the longest time of any individual in the United States - 42 years. He received a plaque from President Eisenhower. They said that he won the sheriff's office, and then he lost once, and then he had been [in office] continuously for years. And he was a grand fellow.

Not only was he the sheriff, he was the county assessor. We lived in a large white house on the Raycraft

place and we had a screened front porch and there was always a bed out there. And that's where he would stay whenever he came down. Usually it was just a one-night thing, because it woke him up, and said, "They're killing my' brother," which was his other son.

Old Nick got up and he had a .45 automatic, and he went to the door in the dark, and he walked out. Well, here came somebody running, and he hollered, "Stop," and the guy didn't stop, and he shot him. Well, when he did, it was his own son. He'd come running back to tell dad to hurry. Anyway, he shot and killed him.

RM: Oh - killed his son.

BF: Killed his own son. Then the next shooting I remember [was when] there were 3 guys drinking beer one night, and they got in an argument. They were in the one fellow's house - they called him Shorty. Old Shorty told this guy, "I'll just go get my gun and kill you." He went in back and got his shotgun, and came back. In the meantime, the guy he was going to kill got up and went outside and one of the other guys sat down in his seat. Well, he walked in, and Shorty just blew the guy away.

RM: Oh, my God! I wonder what they did to the guy?

BF: Well, for Nick, who shot his son, they didn't do anything.

RM: Yes. But for the guy who shot . . .

BF: Shorty. He had to spend a few months in prison. And then there was a shooting one time right up above us, here. There had been a squabble out in the bar, and a guy had abused a woman and 2 guys just came up here and shot him. They didn't kill him, but they shot him. But that wasn't a killing, either. That wasn't murder, that was just doing their duty.

RM: So now you have a fully motorized police force?

BF: It's full-blown now. The radio system is good; we have 2 deputies on duty - I think - all the time.

RM: What else do you recall about Bill Thomas? I think he's one of the more interesting characters in the history of Nye County.

BF: I was just a small boy; all I can remember is that everybody thought he was a nice person. In Tonopah they had the Tonopah Police Department, so they had their own police department but in Nye County, all there was, was Sheriff Bill Thomas. And then of course later they split it up, and there was an assessor. The same [was true of] Eudora Murphy. She was the county clerk and treasurer for years, and then they split that up.

RM: Yes. One thing I wanted to ask you about is the Bob Ruud Speedway. When and how did it come about?

BF: The Bob Ruud Memorial? It would have to have come after he passed away, but I was never involved in it.

RM: Is racing popular in the valley?

BF: It appears to be. Again, I'm not involved in it, so I have no idea. I think it started because there were a lot of racing enthusiasts here, and they would have to go to Vegas or Tonopah or somewhere, so they built their own racetrack.

RM: The next topic I'd like you to talk about is the role of women in Pahrump and how, or if, it has changed from the way your mother and her friends lived to the way women today live.

BF: Well, my mother was from the Wisconsin dairy land; she was raised there and that's all she knew - hard work - all of her life. In later years they got rid of the dairy because you could no longer do that anymore, so she was able to become more of a housewife, and she did a lot of sewing and cooking and that sort of thing. The women in those days made a lot of their girls' clothes. My mother had a little Singer treadle sewing machine.

Fortunately for my wife, we've lived in the same house and everything has pretty well been the same. She has worked; she's taught preschool and helped some of the ladies clean their house not as a necessity, just something she wanted to do. But fortunately, she hasn't had to work, and she's been a housewife. There are lots of women here who . . . in fact, I think the survey showed a large number of one-parent families in Pahrump. I would say more than 50 percent of the women in the valley today work somewhere - either at the Test Site or in Las Vegas or somewhere. It takes a 2-people working family nowadays to support the car and the mobile home and so forth.



My daughter has the good fortune that her husband has a good job, and she doesn't have to work. She is a mother and she cooks and sews and has a lot of hobbies. In this valley you can get into a lot of hobbies. The ladies can learn to sew and knit . . . you can learn to do about anything. Now my daughter's gotten into leaded glass. In fact that's one of the things that she has just made.

RM: Yes, that's pretty.

BF: There are 2 ways of making it, and that's the first method. Here in the valley [having all these hobbies] is kind of strange, and I think it evolved because of the snowbirds.

RM: Why don't you say who the snowbirds are, for future readers.

BF: Snowbirds are the people who come in here to spend the winters - to get away from Oregon and Colorado and Michigan and wherever it's cold. This has developed quite a bit over the last 3 or 4 years, so you have these people who are retired and live in their motor home or their RV. They have nothing to do so they have to buy yarn and all this sort of thing and there are a number of shops here in this town that sell that.

RM: Shops that specialize in crafts type things. And this is largely attributable to the snowbirds?

BF: I would say so; wouldn't you? It certainly adds to it. The snowbirds are a good thing for this valley because they don't require anything - they don't require schools, they don't require a sheriff, they pay their own way and buy gasoline and groceries and you can't beat that.

RM: Yes. Could we talk a little bit about how government in the community has evolved from your first days here?

BF: We have always been so far from the county seat. And when you didn't have a telephone you just . . . I remember that we had a 9-year contract on this place, and when we paid it off, the first thing we wanted to do was have the deed recorded. We climbed in our car and drove to Tonopah for the big event.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

BF: We have always been so far from Tonopah that any time you had any business to do you would have to get in your car, and it was an all-day job to drive to Tonopah, do your business, and drive back.

The community building was sort of the vehicle [for Pahrump's] becoming an unincorporated town. (I could, again, stand to be corrected, because time slips by.) We wanted to have a community center; we wanted a community building.

The first thing we had to have was a site, and there was a bit of conflict in the valley - the population was just about as much on the south end, which was the Bowman ranches and the Hafen ranch, as it was on this end. Two of the large ranchers - Elmer Bowman and Walter Williams - agreed to donate a piece of property to build a park and a community building, because every community needs a community center. After some very spirited debate, there was a vote - everything was a vote of the people - and they voted to accept the property that Walter Williams would donate on Basin Road and 160 on the northwest corner - where the park is today.

Now we had a piece of property, and you had to have some way to raise some funds to build a nice building. Somewhere along the line we chose to become an unincorporated town. Now, by becoming an unincorporated town, you could bond your community and borrow money. Tim Hafen was a great spokesman for this, and then of course there was Frank Warner and Walt Williams and . . . My father would still come, but by this time he didn't like to get into politics much. But he would vote when we needed him. And of course I was young and was always there.

Anyway, again through a vote of the majority of the community, we voted to bond for \$50,000. And for that much money we built the community building - the original building. It was 40 x 100 feet, which was a very, very large building. It was built out of concrete block on a good gravelly foundation in a part of the valley that was good and stable. It was a very good choice, and a good location - history will record it's now located. From that evolved the community park. They had, prior to this, drilled a well and planted some grass and the ball diamonds came and then behind that was built the sheriff's office and the jail. The sheriff's office was a small building - probably 20 feet square - and the jail was 12 feet on the back - it had 2 holding cells. Today that has been converted into the library.

When you have an unincorporated town you have an advisory council - a town board which consisted of 3 people. And in those days we had real good support; you always went to your town board meeting to see what was happening. And out of this came the brothel ordinance that I was referring to last night. That was prior to the community building because it was in the old [school] building.

RM: So you got your town board before the community building? It grew out of the action, not before.

BF: The community building grew out of the unincorporated town, but it was the vehicle for it. As I remember, our spirited meetings were in the old grade school, and I can remember well the night we were there. Tim Hafen got up and made a very good plea and we voted and that was the end of it.

RM: Prior to the unincorporated status, was there any way for the community to express itself politically to the Nye County Commissioners?

BF: I would say not. The Pahrump-Amargosa Association tried to join the communities of Ash Meadows, Amargosa and Pahrump. I remember there was some kind of a party involved with that held at the Ash Meadows Lodge. It put on by the Pahrump-Amargosa Association and I was only a teenager at the time. Tim Hafen, I think, was the president or vice-president, and then somebody from Ash Meadows and so forth. I don't know politically how it was, because when you're a teenager, you couldn't care less [laughter]. Unfortunately, you couldn't care less about a lot of things. Now, there was always the school board. My father served on the school board - he was the president of the school board along with Elmer Bowman and Ted Blosser.

RM: You had the school board here for many years, didn't you?

BF: It was here before we came.

RM: And when did it lose its status?

BF: I have all the records of the Rose School District - it would be another whole project though. .

RM: Was it incorporated into Nye County?

BF: Into the Nye County School District. This was about the time we were married - 1958. The Rose School was incorporated with the Nye County School District when they bonded the whole county and built our new grade school.

But there was some political activity here. I remember there was my father, Stanley Ford, and Elmer Bowman and Ted Blosser. They were probably the last of the Pahrump-ruled school board.

RM: Does the town still have the unincorporated status of the town board advising the county commissioners?

BF: No, they have changed. It's a legal thing that I could not explain, but there is a way of changing from an advisory town board to a town council form of government. The town council form of government has their own budget. Prior to that they had their own budget but it was under the auspices of Nye County. Even though Nye County still writes the checks and still has the money, the town council can now spend it anyway they want. They can take it all and . . . in fact, they have the authority to auction off the community building.

State bill 463 gave them the power to do their own planning.

RM: When was that passed?

BF: It probably was 3 years ago, because it's already gone through one session of the legislature.

RM: Why don't you briefly describe that?

BF: Originally - and I was one of the first members - we had an advisory planning board. The planning board would advise the Nye County Planning Department, and then the county commissioners, as to the needs of Pahrump Valley. Well, it seems as though there was a question of the legality of it, so at that time there became sort of a dispute, and Senator Ken Redelsperger worked a bill through the legislature giving the unincorporated town council of Pahrump the authority to do their own planning and zoning and this type of thing. At this time it's been challenged in court and our district court ruled it unconstitutional, and now it's been appealed to the Nevada Supreme Court. No one knows what will happen at this time.

I would like to say that this was sort of unfortunate, even though I was always sort of an outsider when I served on the planning board, because I didn't agree with some of the things that were going on in the subdividing of

property. Many times I would vote no, and some of the other members would vote yes. Because that was their prerogative - and they agreed with it. But it was a good thing, because even though we were just an advisory group, they listened to us. If we came up with something and we thought it was good, it had to go through us first - for instance, a subdivision. If you own property and you were subdividing 100 lots, we would review it and we would say, "No, we think there ought to be another road come in here." Or, "the drainage isn't correct," and so on. And it was a good thing. And although I work for the county and support the county, I can understand why the planning board became upset over losing this power that actually wasn't power, because it was only in an advisory capacity.

RM: And they wanted to do it themselves?

BF: They wanted to do it themselves. And since then, history has recorded that they really haven't done that much. I worked with the planning department in the last few months prior to the town taking over. We would do 20 or 30 maps per month, and they have only reviewed and approved something like 30 or 35 maps in the 3 years that they've had the power. So even though they have power, they haven't jumped out and run with it.

RM: I'd like to backtrack. Last night we were talking about the evolution of businesses in the community, and I think we were up to 2 bars in town. I wonder if you could pick it up from there.

BF: I suppose the next business was when Ronnie Floyd moved here. When the electricity arrived Pahrump started converting their irrigation pumps to electricity. You just don't stick an electric motor on, because of the speed the pump turned; each pump has to be engineered to the well. You can't take a pump that pumps 1000 gallons a minute and put it in a well that only produces 500 and turn it on, you see.

So there was a lot of work, and a man by the name of Ronnie Floyd, who was Bob Ruud's brother-in-law - they were married to sisters - came from the San Joaquin Valley, up around Fresno. He opened up the Ron Floyd Pump Company, which evolved into the Ron Floyd Well-Drilling and Pump Company. There was no place to buy a pipe fitting or a bolt or a nut in Pahrump, so he put in Ronnie Floyd's Hardware Store and it was really a blessing for Pahrump. It was located on West Street 2 or 3 blocks from Highway 372. That was probably the next significant business. And then Saddle

West was opened up by the Parsons and it was a bar and a restaurant.

RM: When would Floyd have started the hardware store, do you think?

BF: Whenever the power came in - '62 or '63. And then I'd say Saddle West was the next business that opened up. And the Parsons originally had a restaurant where the Cotton Pickin' Saloon is today, which was a grocery store that had gone out of business. When the grocery store went out of business . . . I think they had a soda fountain in there for the kids for a while and then the Parsons opened up a restaurant; Tom Parsons was the cook. And they had quite a business. Then they bought property up on Highway 160, which was Highway 16 at the time, and they built the Saddle West. The Saddle West had a bar and a restaurant and I think there was a little gambling; maybe a few slot machines.

RM: They didn't have the motel with it then?

BF: Oh, no. That's only been built in the last year. The next business, I would have to say, was when Preferred Equities came and bought the Pahrump Ranch and built their complex.

RM: That was in '70?

BF: Somewhere along in there. Again, I would have to look all this up before I could say for sure. And they had a real nice, modern grocery store - it was Spanish style - it was a beautiful place. And then for their own need they had a restaurant and a dining room and of course they had a bar and a few slot machines. That was the next real business that came in.

Somewhere along the line Valley Bank came in. It opened up in . Cal-Vada added on to their complex down there and gave them a couple of roams, and that's when the bank came in. That was a significant boost to this community - to be able to bank in Pahrump. I mean, you'd have to stand in line, because the outlying communities . . . Shoshone brought their money in, and . . . They were there for - oh, I'd hate to guesstimate - before they built their new building on the corner of 372 and 160.

RM: When did the motels up on 160 come in?

BF: Ronnie Floyd built the first one, the Charlotta Inn. He built it before Cal-Vada came, because Cal-Vada leased a large portion of it; that's where their sales offices were when they first came to Pahrump. Ronnie moved a big old building in, and then he built the wing on to it. Then Hankins moved his gas station up there because he had a lease where the bank is located today and the lease expired.

RM: And that was originally the Revert station?

BF: Correct. Then Mankins bought property and moved to the location he's got now.

RM: Is the intersection there where the bank is now - 160 and Shoshone Road - known as Mankin's Corner?

BF: It was for a number of years. In fact the name of their business was Mankin's Corner; that was the heading on all of their invoices.

Then they added the other gas station . . . what's the fellow's name that's Terrible Herbst?

Mary Ford: Bieganski.

BF: Bieganski came in and built the plaza. It was quite a thing, although Archies is the only real productive business that remains; they've sort of come and gone. They're there a while and gone a while. But it was an attractive structure that wasn't going to blow down. There were other little businesses that sprouted up off of the main road a ways. I remember a man by the name of Morales who came in and built a hardware store down on Mesquite and it just sort of dried up. And then Jim Laute had a lumber company down on Mesquite and it dried up.

RM: From lack of business?

BF: Well, from distance. I mean, you couldn't drive 12 or 14 miles to get a board. And then Roger Charbonneau built a hardware store down on Manse and Hafen Ranch Road. And that dried up.

RM: So businesses that are located in the outlying areas tend to fail? BF: That's correct. Then when Clark's Lumber Company came in, that was nice - you could buy all the lumber you needed. They ran a real good business - anything you wanted, whether it was windows or nails or whatever, anything to build a house, they would get. The only thing

we're short right now is a department store. If you want to go in and buy yourself a T-shirt and a pair of shoes, you just have to go to Las Vegas.

RM: This is really off the subject, but what do you know about Hidden Hills?

BF: When we came here it was owned by a man by the name of Roland Wiley and today it is still owned by the same man. He was a Las Vegas attorney; I think he had been an assemblyman at one time - all attorneys have been something in politics - and it has really never ever been anything. Today there's Cathedral Canyon down there, and if you haven't been there you certainly ought to go - especially in the early evening. But I really don't know of anything ever being done with that property.

RM: Is there an airstrip down there?

BF: Yes. I don't know whether Roland Wiley had an airplane or whether he had friends. There are a couple of buildings and some old trees - there probably was a spring or a well - but as I say, I don't know of it ever being anything except just sort of a hideaway.

RM: You talked about the very first real estate development, which was out on the west side. Could you talk about the sequence of real estate development through time?

BF: As I said, there was a group of lawyers in Los Angeles who immediately recognized that there were no restrictions in Nye County, and probably very few in Nevada. They came in here and bought large parcels of property on the west side, and they subdivided it on paper and they filed maps with the county. And the county, I suppose, was surprised - maybe they **were, maybe they weren't**. Because by this time you have maybe a dozen good, workable ranches. And so they recorded these maps. You could go up and say "I'm the king of Nye County," and have it recorded.

But they recorded these maps and the property was basically sold through the Stars And Stripes magazine to men in the service. I've talked to fellows who were stationed in Japan and they would buy. I think it was \$50 down and \$50 a month or something like that, and it was \$495 an acre.

They sold hundreds of lots. This would've been about '59 or '60. One of them was named the Charleston Park Ranchos, and there was the Cal-Vegas Ranchos, and there was Units 1 through 6 and so on. There were hundreds probably



thousands - of acres. If you use Barney Road as a centerline, they're on both sides.

At this same time there were a couple of brothers - Warren and Eddie Lewis. Warren Lewis was in movie production; he was a movie writer and a member of the screen actors' guild. And they did the same thing. The name of theirs, I think, was Golden Springs Ranches.

RM: That was on the west side, too?

BF: It was all on the west side.

RM: Did they buy the land on the west side because it was cheapest?

BF: It was cheap; I suppose somebody promoted it to them. Anyway, they bought this property and the Golden Spring Ranches have never sold a lot. They still own them and there's never been one lot sold; they probably have 6 subdivisions. Some of them are 160 acres, some of them are 40 or 80.

They sold a lot of Cal-Vegas and Charleston Park Ranchos, only nobody moved on them. I'd say in the first 5 years you may have had 5 people living in the whole area.

There was a fellow by the name of Jim Lawrence who owned probably 160 acres on Leslie; it would run from Betty Street to Irene Street. He divided it up in 5 acre [lots] - it seems as though 5 acres was better. I don't know what he sold those for, but I'm guessing around \$500 an acre.

And then my father had property on Charleston Park. He owned from David to what is now Woodchips (it was Fremont and they've changed the name to Woodchips). He owned 160 acres there that he had traded well drilling for, and he decided, 'Well, I gave \$15 an acre for this, and I've had it, probably, for 15 years . So he sold some. In those days you just had a surveyor come in and he put the corners in, and he sold it by what they call meets and bounds. It's the "southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of the south . . ." that way. You just gave a legal description. He sold 8 lots and that was quite a sale, in those days. He sold them for \$100 down and \$25 a month and 5 percent interest. His lots were probably the first ones that people moved right in and lived on. That started a little community out there, and they were all Mercury workers - people who worked at the Test Site and had horses. They would drive to the Test Site every day.

Again, we're all on the west side. So then, I would say, probably Hafen and Bolling [were next]. They had some subdivisions on the west side, down off Belle Vista. And

then there was Al Bell's - he was in partners with a doctor. I don't know the man's name; I never met him. They had a large number of acres, and they had what turned into the Belle Vista Estates or Belle Vista Ranchos. This was all on the west side because all the upper part was good farmland.

RM: What was wrong with the west side land?

BF: Well, it wasn't good farm land. Artesian water was the name of the game and there was no artesian water there and the wells did not produce. Adequate soil and water - that's what you need to farm - that covers it. It's a clay-type soil. Later on my father, for instance, fanned some out there, but on a small scale. But most of your subdivisions and land sales were out in the poorer land in the valley because all the good land was being farmed.

Then Tim Hafen subdivided some of his property down on the south end of the valley - he owned sate down off Kellogg. The word subdivided isn't the correct term, because we use the term parceling as 4 lots or less, and subdividing as more than 4. That's the legal term. If you divide your property into 4, you have parceled; if you divide it into 5 or more, you have subdivided. When I say they subdivided, that isn't really a correct term, although it's a correct legal term, because they actually parceled into 5-acre parcels.

I'm getting ahead of myself a little bit. A man by the name of Jim Raycraft had some property that was rough land and not farmable. It ran from West Street to E Street, and Center Street went through the middle, Wilson was on the north, and there was no highway at the time, but there was a gravel road where the highway is today. That was the south border. He probably had 80 acres in there. I guess you could call that a subdivision, although he didn't put in any streets or anything. He subdivided those into one-acre lots minus the road. That was actually the first time you could buy into what is now the uptown area. We bought one and we paid \$250 for it in 1961. This was ridiculous, because you could pay \$60 an acre and buy all you wanted, but you had to buy at least 40 acres. We invested in one of those and we still own it, although we've traded around; we've had different locations. That was the only place you could buy. You could either buy in the old Raycraft subdivision or you could buy in the west side or some down south. That was basically the subdividing in this valley until Preferred Equities purchased 10,000 acres of the Pahump Ranch. Then they made a massive subdivision. They built streets and marketed the property themselves through

sales offices as far away as Hawaii and all over the country. They sold them everywhere.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

BF: There weren't a whole lot of people who moved right in on the Cal-Vada development because some of their building area required sewer and water, and the streets weren't in; they had 7 years to put the streets in. Now, they did build a little housing tract of 5 nice, large homes down in the area of the high school. And the high school, then, went in there pretty soon. So the Cal-Vada property, even though it was the large development, didn't have many people living there. And then Comstock Park . . . but they had restrictions. There were just certain areas where you could put mobile homes. A mobile home became the way to live in Pahrump Valley because it was something fast, and it was cheap. You could buy a mobile home, probably, for less than \$10,000 and if you built a home it would cost you \$25,000 or \$30,000 or more. So the mobile home became the dwelling in Pahrump. Also, you could have horses and pigs and chickens and ducks and kids and whatever you wanted.

So still the west side was what continued to grow. Then some of the homesteads and Desert Land entries down in the south end of the valley subdivided and that became a place to live. People liked the mesquites they would pay extra money to live in the mesquites. Unfortunately, the mesquites are where the flood water runs. So if you buy a nice place in the mesquites and put in your nice home, 9 chances out of 10, the first rain, you're going to have water running through your yard. But this is something they didn't know, and a lot of them have beautiful homes in the mesquites. So that's basically how they started subdividing.

And now everybody has jumped on the bandwagon because we recognize that you can no longer make money in farming. We also recognize that there was getting to be so much development in this valley that you'd better develop your property real quick, because next year you might not be able to. It has almost reached that point right now. The cost to subdivide - because of the extra requirements now - is astronomical. And you have to have agricultural water rights before you can subdivide your property up on the fan. Most of the lower valley has already been subdivided.

RM: So the only non-subdivided land is up on the fan?

BF: Most of what's still being farmed; yes. Or, has been farmed. That's where most of the agricultural water rights are. The farming now . . . Holly Harris owns, still, a large parcel of land that's a farm and Al Bell still owns a large

parcel. Some of them, like Ted Blosser, subdivided their property but remained fanning it. And that was good because the day it's prohibitive to farm they can just start selling lots. They have to put in their streets, but . . .

So now the farmland is down to very little. You have some on the Bowman's end - the Hafen ranches - and you still have Jacque Ruud's ranch, and then there's a large - the Peckstein ranch would make a good subdivision. And it'll all be gone. There's talk - it's in the wind that the new people who bought Cal-Vada are going to buy some of these large parcels and put in a Sun City type development.

I think that'll be great; I think it will go, if properly advertised. I know in Las Vegas the new Del Webb Sun City that they have just started constructing . . . a good friend of mine who I went to school with has the contract to build the golf course; he's out of Phoenix. They already had 1200 applications for homes the day they put the first shovel in the ground; they already had 1200 reservations for homes! I think that sort of thing would go. And you know, it's so restricted. There are no children probably no dogs - allowed.

That's basically where we're at today. A lot of people jumped on the bandwagon. Now, unfortunately, and of course this is my personal opinion, there was a lot of property available up on the fan and there were land promoters who bought this property cheap and sold it and the unfortunate part is, to get power to the property is prohibitive because of the cost there's an extension charge over 750 feet. And to drill a well for water, you just look at the floor of the valley - water is 30 to 50 feet down here. And then add the alluvial fan onto that, and that tells you how deep you have to go for water.

RM: How deep would it be up there?

BF: Oh, it ranges from 300 to 600 feet, and the farther up you get, it may be 1000; I think, at Johnnie, you're down 700 or 800 feet.

RM: What are the drilling costs now per foot?

BF: Unfortunately, although I am a licensed well driller, I haven't been involved in it lately. I would guess around \$12 or \$13 a foot; I could be off a couple of dollars - probably low.

RM: Have I overlooked anything that bears mentioning?

BF: When we first arrived in Pahrump in 1944, the most spectacular thing was the water and the large trees. There were large, large trees cottonwoods and Lombardy poplars - the tall, slim ones. You could see them for miles and miles and miles before you got here. There were large trees at the Pahrump Ranch. They would plant them on the irrigation ditches every 1/4 mile or so; anywhere there was an irrigation ditch they'd plant trees. And then up right on the ranch there were large trees, and also down at the Bowman ranch. They had large cottonwood trees out in the field.

RM: Is that where those big stumps are, when you drive into Cal-Vada today?

BF: That's correct. That was one of the things that stood out. Another thing was how you would come into the valley and see no lights. I remember the first light. When George Brooks built the Pahrump Trading Post in about 1946, he put a pole in the air, that couldn't have been more than 20 feet, because you couldn't find a pole longer than 20 feet in Pahrump. He put one light bulb on top of that. He only ran his light plant up until midnight, or whenever the bar closed, but you could see that one light for miles and miles and miles, because it was the only light.

And for instance, when my father would go to town to get supplies or whatever . . . there was a slaughterhouse in town, and when he needed some extra money, he would load a steer in and haul it into Las Vegas - just pull in - and they'd give you your check and you'd pull out. We could watch the Johnnie road from where we lived, and you could see his light. It would take, it seemed, an hour from the time you could see the light before he got home.

And I also remember, as time went by and Las Vegas grew, how on a cloudy night you could see the lights of Las Vegas and how surprised we were at where Las Vegas was located.

RM: Oh - where is it located?

BF: Just to the right of the peak. If you would get out your large government map, you would see that Gamebird Road is Charleston Boulevard. You see, Gamebird is a township line and if you take the township line straight over the mountain, you're on Charleston Boulevard. Old Frank Buol told us that, and in later years, in my job, I deal with maps. But that pretty well covers it. You could talk all night on details.

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