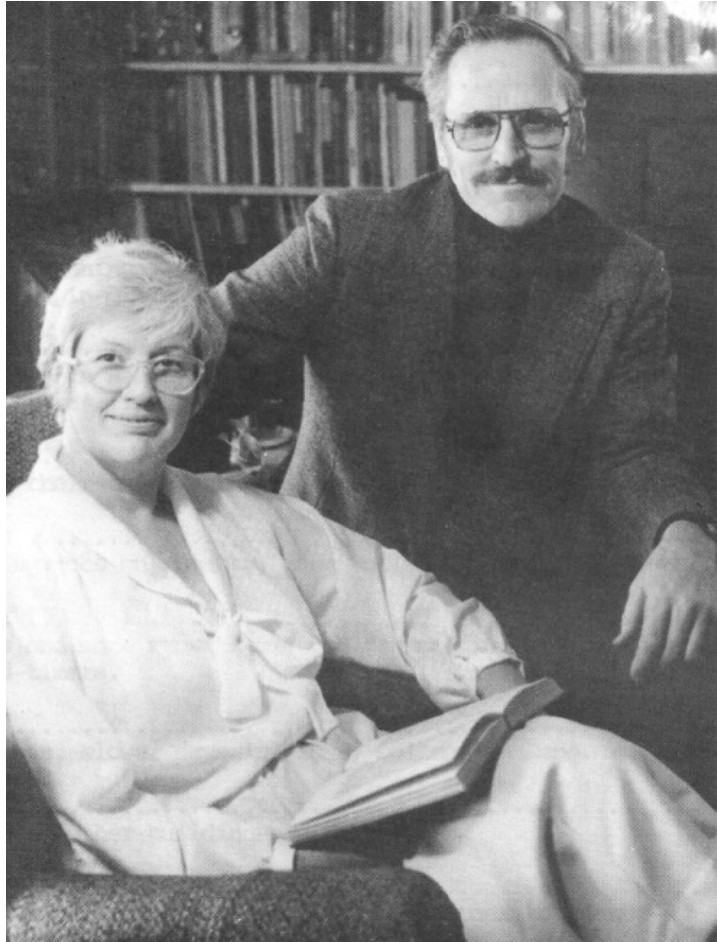


An Interview With
JACK & MAUD-KATHRIN
CROWELL

An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada
Tonopah
1987

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Nye County Commissioners
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Jack and Maud-Kathrin Crowell
1987

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PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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 Society contributed valuable support and criticism throughout the project, and Tam King at the Oral History Program of the University of Nevada at Reno served as a consulting oral historian. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

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--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

Collections in the James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique--some are large, others are small--yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the 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 D. McCracken interviewing Jack Crowell and his wife, Maud-Kathrin Crowell, at their home in Beatty, Nevada - April 9, 10, and 13, 1987

CHAPTER ONE

Robert D. McCracken: Jack, could you tell me your place and date of birth.

Jack Crowell: I was born in Los Angeles February 22, 1931, and my parents were J. Irving Crowell, Jr., and Dorothy Bates Crowell.

RM: And they were both born in Los Angeles, weren't they?

JC: Yes.

RM: Your father has deep roots in the local area, doesn't he? Could you just briefly describe what his roots are.

JC: Yes. He was born in 1900, and his father was, I guess the correct term is a mining promoter. He worked out in Chloride Cliff, he and some partners. Dates back, I'd say, about 1910 or 1912 when he first came here.

MC (wife, Maud-Kathrin Crowell): Actually, Jack, that couldn't be, because Rhyolite was gone then.

JC: The heyday of Rhyolite was 1906 to 1910, I think. But Dad can remember riding out on a pullman train clear to Rhyolite.

MC: When they did the centennial study, then they were going to do all the old families. The Crowell's didn't get in because grandfather Crowell came in 1902, and you had to be here by 1900 to get in the study. But, at that time, mother said that they came in 1902.

JC: But Dad dates back to those times, and then his father worked for a number of years out in Chloride Cliff in 1915, 1918, and 1920; and Dad was going to school and would come out here in the summers on the train from Los Angeles. Dad went to high school in Los Angeles, and then he worked a short time, I think, then went to Stanford. He would have graduated in 1924, I believe, but his father was in a railroad accident on the T&T. It must have been about 1923, because Dad always says that he was within 5 or 6 months of getting a degree in mining engineering at Stanford when the accident happened. And, of course, this created financial problems, and Dad had to drop out of college. He never did go back and finish. Stanford didn't have the greatest mining engineering program, but Stanford was still at that time a fine university.

And then they kind of dropped things out here until Dad came out, I believe, in 1927 and took over the fluorspar mines that the family had staked and claimed about 1919.

RM: That your grandfather had staked?

JC: My grandfather. The Daisy claim, where our present shaft and our main fluorspar deposit is, which he got through fellows he grubstaked. They would find something and bring it to him, and if he thought it was worthwhile he would play them so much, and then he would stake the claim. He staked that claim and a number of others and then bought a few adjoining ones. It finally totaled, I think, 9 claims.

RM: Could you describe the location of the fluorspar mine?

JC: It's just about 5 miles due east of 80. To get there you leave Beatty and go south on US 95 about a mile and a half and then turn east for 3-1/2 miles up a dirt road. It's in the Bare Mountains.

RM: Your mother and father both maintained a residence in Beatty at the time of your birth, didn't they?

JC: Yes. They were married in 1928, I believe, and came right here to live, and Dad was working to put the mine on a good footing, and it was kind of a bootstrap operation. He worked most of it himself, and then he'd hire one or 2 fellows, and that was kind of a close operation until about '37 or '38 when the workings of the Second World War started up, and the steel market improved. The steel market needed fluorspar, and thereby we just really came into a business then.

MC: Mother would go up to the mine with him and go underground and sit on a box and talk to him while he was working.

JC: I was born in '31. Mother went in to Los Angeles. We had family there and she waited for me to be born, and then some 2, 3, 4 weeks after I was born they came in and brought her back.

RM: How many children did your folks have?

JC: Two, total I have one brother, 3-1/2 years younger than I am.

MC: While Mother was in Los Angeles waiting for Jack to be born, Dad installed their first inside bathroom. They had had a showerhouse and an outhouse, so after that they had the modern plumbing.

RM: Would that have been the first indoor plumbing in Beatty?

MC: The Montgomery Hotel had one.

JC: I'm sure it wasn't. I can't truly remember, but I just would think that there were some others.

RM: OK, so shortly after your birth they returned, and you were basically raised in Beatty, weren't you?

JC: Yes, I sure was.

RM: Can you describe your earliest memories of the town in your life here?

JC: Well, we were discussing this a little bit before, and I think one of my earliest memories is watching them pave the road, US 95. It would be difficult to tell you exactly when. Roughly, I would guess it was around '34 or '35. But I can remember seeing the construction machinery. Very interesting to a young boy.

RM: And prior to that it was a dirt road, wasn't it?

JC: Yes. It sure was. My father has said that there were times that he had never thought there would be a paved road through here.

MC: And yet when he got the telegram that Jack was on his way, he and a friend made a dash for the coast. They got there in time, and it took something like 7 hours, and they changed how many flats? Twenty flats. But the time wasn't that different from what it takes to get there now.

RM: What are some other early recollections that you have of the town and your life here?

JC: Oh, gosh. It was a good place for a boy. I don't suppose it was quite that handy for a girl. But the gold mining was going pretty well around here, and there were a lot of small properties. Beatty was fairly well populated. Nothing like it is now, but it fluctuated up and down over the years; but I remember, oh boy, Friday and Saturday nights were big party times up town. Of course my parents wouldn't let us wander out at night when we were real small.

RM: Can you name some of the mining properties that might have been going in the '30s and briefly describe where they are and what kind of mine they were?

JC: The Mayflower was operating. Nearly all of these were gold mines that were close by here during the '30s. The Mayflower is tied into Pioneer, which most people know the whereabouts of. The Mayflower is something like 2 or 3 miles south or somewhat towards Beatty from Pioneer. There was a gold mine operating there. And Pioneer was operating, had a mill and had a shaft.

MC: And you could hear the whistle.

JC: There were occasions when we could hear the whistle from the Mayflower, on a cold still winter morning you could. There was stuff going on out at Rhyolite, not the big operations--the old Montgomery Shoshone was shut down--but there were a lot of places where there were little leasers and 2 or 3-man operations. Of course, gold lends itself to this kind of thing. And, gosh, there were people leasing and working around the Bullfrog and of course over in Panamint Valley little operations were going. In about '38 or '39 Carrara was a big concern too, because they put in a cement plant.

RM: And this would have been after Carrara was mined for its marble.

JC: That's correct. But they were actually making cement at Carrara.

RM: I wonder how many men they were working there?

JC: Well, of course I was only 7, 8, 9 years old, so I don't remember, but by our standards it was a pretty big thing. Probably they had diesel trucks and they were making blocks, concrete blocks with this stuff, and it was a Philippine man named Elizalde who put in the money.

RM: And they used the marble in the place of limestone, is that what they do?

JC: Well, they didn't use the marble, but of course allied to marble was the limestone that they were digging. This is my recollection of it. Oh, gosh, I think that probably you are looking at a 50, 60, 70-man operation, something like that. at Carrara?

MC: Yes.

RM: And at that time the T&T was still going, so they were doing the shipping on the T&T.

JC: A lot of money went in and a lot of equipment. I can remember all kinds of stuff when they closed down. They had a couple of diesel trucks that we were somewhat interested in buying. I remember going down with Dad and looking at them. But really it wasn't practical, and it was never really a going concern.

MC: They had no water.

JC: They piped the water from the narrows. You can probably still see to the left of the highway as you're driving south the scars from the old water line that went down there.

RM: What other mining properties that you can think of that were going in the area in the '30s?

MC: Chloride Cliff was still going.

JC: Yes, that's true. Chloride Cliff, which of course is about 15 miles west of Beatty, just on the rim of Death Valley, and of course my family had been involved in it in the early times and then-

-fluorspar was slow--again around '36 and '37. He had dump trucks, and he hauled ore into the railroad. There was a siding just down south of the narrows. And I can remember riding with him in the truck. And out there, again, it was mostly gold; however, there was a cinnabar operation, which is mercury, of course. And there was some copper, but I don't think they ever really got much.

RM: Chloride Cliff was a series of mines, a number of different mines?

JC: Yes.

RM: Was there any kind of a community there at Chloride Cliff?

JC: Not really a town. It was mostly kind of dugout buildings and work buildings and mess shacks kind of scattered around, but I remember them pretty clearly because, as I say, my father was involved with it.

MC: There also was a mine between our mine and Specie Springs. Didn't Dad have something to do with that too? He was looking after it for someone else.

JC: Yes. Of course to me a mine is something that produces something, and a lot of these were kind of speculative things. There was a fellow from California who put up the money and Dad managed it for him; however, they never found anything. They sank a shaft about 150 feet or something like that. That was about a year and a half operation, just west of our mine.

RM: What was the relationship of Beatty to these mines and other little communities? Was it kind of the economic hub of the area?

JC: Oh yes, sure. Of course, in the early times Rhyolite was the center and Beatty was just kind of a little oasis area, but in the times that I remember, of course, Rhyolite was even then a ghost town just like it is now.

RM: The buildings were gone at Rhyolite, pretty well?

JC: Yes, they were, but there was a little bit more left than I think there is now. There've been some movie companies that have altered a little bit of that in I guess the '60s and '70s. But Beatty was definitely the hub; no question about it.

MC: Beatty had water. You see Rhyolite never had a decent water supply, and they pumped in water from Beatty.

RM: Did Pioneer have water, and Chloride Cliff and those others?

JC: Chloride Cliffs? The only water they had was a small spring that was down in a canyon, very difficult to get water. The only way they could get it was to pack it on burros. But where most of

it came from was from Keane Spring, which is some 4 miles, just about in a line from Chloride Cliff towards Daylight Pass. As you go down into Death Valley now over Daylight Pass, there is a turnoff. They used to mark it. I don't think they mark it anymore, but the spring is only 2-3 miles off the highway to the south.

RM: And Chloride Cliff is south of Daylight Pass?

JC: Yes, correct.

RM: Did Pioneer have water?

JC: No, I'm quite sure it didn't, and I think they got it, some of it from Indian Springs. And of course Indian Springs was the main water source for Rhyolite also, but Pioneer was later than Rhyolite.

RM: Where is Indian Springs?

JC: Well, it's just about due west of Beatty. I'd say about a mile and a half, maybe 2 miles. I think Pioneer got some of their water from Springdale, too.

RM: Were the lines still functioning in the '30s, do you know?

JC: Well, they must have been because the mines were working. And they were up until the moratorium when the government shut all the gold mines down right when the war started. Until then, there were a lot of small gold properties operating around here. Really in every direction from Beatty.

RM: And presumably they were somewhat profitable.

MC: Well it was awfully cheap to live. I know that when my parents were married in 1931 my mother's food budget was \$5 a week for the 2 of them, and they ate well. So it didn't take a lot of gold.

JC: Of course I don't know my history well enough to know when gold was raised from \$20 an ounce to \$30 an ounce.

RM: I was asking my dad that just last night. It was not too long after Roosevelt took over. What were some of the things that the community of Beatty supplied to the outlying areas during this 30's period?

JC: Well, of course I was a pretty young boy, but, well, of course the groceries. There was a nice big grocery store; the Reverts ran this during these years. It's very close to where Bobby Revert's gas station is now, right on Main Street, between First and Beach, on the west side of Main Street, a big, round, corrugated steel building.

MC: Kind of like a quonset hut, but before the days of quonset huts.

JC: Yes, well, quonset but doesn't adequately describe it because it was quite a large building. And they had groceries, dry goods, clothes; really it was not just food; it was quite a large store, yes.

RM: What other things were in town that might have supplied the outlying areas'

JC: Well, they had bars.

RM: Could you name some of the bars?

JC: Well, there was the Gold Ace, which was down right where there is now a motel, right across the street from the Exchange Club. And it burnt down one 4th of July, a terrible huge fire but no one was burned in it. I would guess about 1940. There was a big bar there. Of course the Exchange Club was here, and there was a bar right about where, I think it's called Bobby's Pot Shop now. It was the St. Peter's Bar, they called it. The fellow, Glen St. Peters, had a crippled leg, and he ran a bar there.

MC: My mother was shocked when she came and found there was a bar named St. Peter's.

JC: It was just about where Bobby's Pot Shop is, on the west side of Main Street between Second and First. There was another bar just right next door to it to the north. In later years it was called the Oasis, and eventually it burned or was torn down.

MC: It kind of collapsed.

JC: But I can't think of the original name of it.

MC: Where's the Silver Diner? That was there in that same block, wasn't it?

JC: Yes, the Silver Diner was at about 3 different locations. It was a structure that resembled a railroad car; I'm sure it wasn't, but it was of those dimensions. So that it would lend itself to being moved. At one time it was over near where the Revert 76 station is now, between there and the river, and other time it was close to St. Peter's Bar, and another time it was right opposite, right across the intersection from the Exchange.

RM: They just moved the building? I wonder why they moved it.

JC: I don't know.

MC: Maybe they were squatting on somebody's land and they told them to get out of there.

JC: Well, this one thing that they moved around was basically a restaurant, as I remember.

RM: Did they serve food in the others?

JC: They served it in the Exchange.

MC: But it was next door in that low stone building next to it. There was a connection between them. The Exchange Club had an archway right there behind where the bar is now that went over into the store. There was a long counter, and they had a fountain.

RM: So the restaurant wasn't in the south portion.

JC: Yes, when my wife, Maud-Kathrin came here, her first memories are about 1948 or 1949, just before we went to college at UNR. At the time the Exchange Club restaurant was as she described it, just in that adjoining building, which later became the grocery store for a number of years.

MC: The first time I ever heard of Beatty was the summer of '49.

RM: Yes, what was that grocery store called? Did it ever have a name?

JC: Andre's Trading Post. In fact this Joe Andre had come here--oh boy, he goes back probably to the early '40s, I guess.

MC: Well, they lived in Tonopah before that.

JC: He at one time owned this famous restaurant that was moved around, and then I think he made a drugstore out of it.

MC: The post office was in that building, too.

JC: As long as I can remember it was there until they moved it up to where it is now for a very short time longer. The post office would be on Third and Main, and it would be on the east side of Main That's where it is now.

MC: Everybody was appalled when they moved it there because it was so handy to have it at the store. You could just run right in. We thought that, oh, the old people aren't going to be able to get over there. Now of course they are saying the very same thing about the new place. Plus, we're saying that the first time it floods the new post office is going to wash away.

RM: Were there any other bars that come to mind when you were a kid in town?

JC: It seems like there must have been, but I can't place them. The Exchange, the Gold Ace until it burned down, St. Peter's, and what was later the Oasis. I have a feeling it was called something different than that before.

MC: What about the building where the Sourdough is now? Wasn't that a bar too? Next to the Beatty Hotel.

JC: I don't think so, that early. But I'm not sure.

MC: But that's a stone building. What was it? It's been there a long time.

JC: I don't know. Of course we're talking about the recollections of a 6, 7, 8, 9, 10-year old, and bars didn't really loom very high, you know.

RM: Well, could you talk a little bit about what social life was like in the community from the perspective of a kid. How did people interact with each other, and what kind of groups existed in the community, and so on?

JC: Of course there was the school. However, I don't remember much of a PTA organization. Well, of course I started school at 6 years of age. It would have been 1937, and it was in a school building that was just a few years old, a very nice kind of stucco outside with tile, the rounded clay tile roof. You'd go in the front, and there was a hall. As you walked in the front, you would be looking west, walking west. A room occupied about the south half of it, and that was grades 1, 2, 3, and 4; and the other side of the building was grades 5, 6, 7, and 8. And, gosh, there were anywhere from 3 to 10 or 12 kids in a grade.

RM: In a grade? So that you would have anywhere from 12 to 20 or 30 to 40 kids in a room.

JC: Yes. Of course this fluctuated. Now when I started in '37, there were a surprising number of people here. The mines were going all around. There were probably on the order of 100 kids in school then. Virtually no high school. They later had a frame building as I progressed through the grades in which they would have 3, 4, 5 kids in high school.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: Tell us some more about the school.

JC: It was located on Fourth and Montgomery, and the building is still there.

RM: What's it currently used for?

MC: Just storage.

RM: Where did the building come from? It seems like I've heard it came from Rhyolite, didn't it?

JC: Perhaps so, but they must have done considerable work if they moved it from Rhyolite.

MC: From what Ralph told me, he said that they just disassembled it and reassembled it in Beatty. Flossie Palsgrove said her father did it.

JC: But it had nice wooden floors, I remember, and they were waxed or some kind of an oil put on them. I remember that smell. And each room had a marvelous old clock, old thing hanging on the bottom. Of course, with a kid in school he is always looking at the clock.

RM: Do you remember your teachers' names?

JC: I can remember some of them. Chloe Lisle taught me in I think the 2nd or 3rd grade. I finished the 1st and 2nd grade in one year.

MC: Your mother says you skipped the 2nd grade.

JC: Well, I think Chloe taught me about the 3rd year.

RM: Do you remember Ert Moore?

JC: Oh yes. We called him principal. I guess technically he wasn't the principal; but he was the head teacher and did what high school instructing was done, as I remember.

RM: Do you remember any of your other teachers in the early grades, 1 through 4?

JC: I think Mrs. Bailey, a very competent woman; I think she taught me about the 4th grade.

RM: Was she from the area?

JC: Not really, no. She moved in as school teachers do and then moved on in later years, but she taught for a number of years. And then there was an old gentleman, a German fellow named Fred Dees, who taught me the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th. He was a fantastic teacher.

RM: Was he in the upper grades when you were in the lower grades?

JC: Yes, he was there.

RM: Was he a local man or did he come in, too?

JC: No, I believe that he had taught at Elko, possibly at the detention home up there. As I think about it later on, he talked about teaching up there, and he was a pretty good disciplinarian, and I rather suspect that that's where it was. A marvelous old gentleman with a terrific grasp of mathematics, and I always felt pretty comfortable in mathematics, and I felt he had a lot to do with it. And great at English grammar. You know, 6th, 7th, and 8th, you just have to have it pounded into you, and it's such an important foundation for your later education. I thought he was terrific. In geography, you know, it was a real class then, and we studied all the states and everything.

RM: Now, where was the high school?

JC: It was a tiny little frame building; it would be just to the south, towards Death Valley from this one. Now, of course, the student body fluctuated. I would have graduated the 8th grade in 1944. The war had come along and shut down all the gold mines, the moratorium. And so there weren't too many people. So those are the times that I have the best recollections of and there were not very many kids in high school.

RM: When you were in the lower grades, particularly 1 through 4, do you have a recollection of many kids were in high school at time, because I think that's when Moore was there. He left about 1942 and went to Gabbs.

JC: Moore was there most of the time I was there, I think. I recall that he did go to Gabbs, and then Dees took over.

RM: What other characteristics of social life in Beatty do you recall? Were there churches in town, and how important were they in the lives of the people?

JC: Yes, there were churches. I remember going. We don't have very strong religious leanings, but my parents, particularly my mother, wanted us to get some grounding in it so we could make an intelligent decision as to what we wanted to do along those lines. I can remember being in school Christmas pageants and stuff. But I think there were some Episcopal sisters, I believe, who would come up here from Vegas and conduct some of this.

RM: So there wasn't a preacher or anybody living in town that you recall?

MC: How about Sister Morgan.

JC: Not that I recall. Now my wife refers to Sister Morgan. She came later, about the time I was in late grammar school, early high school. And she was a kind of a strange person.

MC: You could say that--eccentric.

RM: How many church buildings were there in town when you were a kid? Can you name the ones that you do recall?

JC: Well, the old Episcopal church. It's right across from where the post office is now, that would be on Main and Third Street, on the southwest corner. It's still there. It has an addition put on to it; it's much bigger now, but the same basic building is there. There has been some sort of a Catholic church for a number of years, but I don't think there was one then.

RM: Yes, they established a Catholic mission here in Beatty when Rhyolite was going, but where it was held, I don't know.

JC: Of course a lot of these things kind of fluctuated with the population.

MC: And the talents of the people who were there. If somebody comes along who's interested in something, suddenly you have it as long as they are here.

RM: Well, do you remember any other churches?

JC: No, I really don't.

MC: Sister Morgan had that church that then became the water office.

JC: Yes, but you see, Sister Morgan came along a little later. I think she was in the late '40s and probably early '50s.

You were asking about social. Of course the miners are always here. I'm in the mining business so I'm well acquainted with their habits and their shortcomings. Miners and drinking pretty much go hand in hand, so the bars did a famous business.

MC: I think the bars have been the social centers of all these old towns.

JC: Yes. As far as social life, the old 'Town Hall; that was it. That was right where the fire station is today, which is on Montgomery Street and Third, on that corner. Marvelous old building.

RM: Is it still there?

JC: No, it's all gone. It was a huge old frame building. It had some kind of a scroll on the front. I think it said 1906. Now of course this pre-dates me quite a bit so I'm just giving you hearsay here. It's a huge, old, sprawling thing and just one huge fire trap, and everyone in town just lived in mortal fear of that thing burning down some day, but it never did.

MC: It was the Miners' Union Hall in Rhyolite. Actually, I think it was 2 buildings, with that "L" an addition.

JC: Dances or sometimes even some weddings were held in there. The school functions such as Christmas pageants and Christmas, all these.

MC: Basketball games. Dad had showed movies there for years.

RM: Could you tell a little about the timbers in it and its construction?

JC: Well, we finally got a new community center in about the middle '60s, late '60s. It superseded this old Town Hall, and the county commissioners proceeded to get it out of there because we wanted to put a fire station in. By this time we were just getting the start of our good volunteer fire department. So Harry Johnson paid some small sum for the privilege of tearing it down, and he's a good friend of mine so I saw what he got. And he got some marvelous timber out of that, some of them 30 feet long, something that you'd pay a horrible price now because it would be difficult to haul on a truck. Of course all of that stuff was brought in on the railroad in the old days, into Rhyolite I suppose. Lovely, no knots in the timber.

MC: And it had a pressed tin ceiling.

JC: Yes. And Harry sold this to some fellow.

MC: He got considerably more for it than it cost him to tear down the building. Also, he used those floor timbers as the foundation of his own house when he built it, which is in the finest tradition of cannibalizing one thing to make another.

JC: Of course even to this day sometimes weddings and such are held in some of the bars, but most of the stuff, some of the weddings, all the school social functions, most of anything that went on in that line happened in the old Town Hall. And the beginnings of the Beatty library were in the old wing of the Hall in about 1960.

RM: When did you get your new one?

MC: When we tore down the Hall, the library moved to the old school building, and we had the library there for probably 6 or 7 years. Then they got a grant from the Fleischmann Foundation and put up the geodesic dome on the corner of Ward and Fourth Street.

JC: Maudie knows whereof she speaks, because she was on the library board in those earlier years and later too.

RM: So let's go through that again. It originally started in the wing of the Town Hall in about 1960, and prior to 1960 you didn't have a library.

MC: Yes. It started with donated books.

JC: Yes, we put a carpet in there; we put some flashing or something up on the walls, and fixed the windows and the doors.

RM: OK, then they had to move it out when they tore down the Town Hall. You moved it up to the school, and it was there until when?

MC: About 4-5 years I would say. It still serves as a school library, and a lot of its funding comes from the school district.

RM: OK. How would you describe family life from the perspective of a kid during the '30s?

JC: Well, of course, my family has always been very close, and we traveled quite a bit. For a boy, it was not a bad place to be. We had our bows and arrows that we'd make and our beebie guns, and we'd walk up the valley 3-4 miles shooting birds or rabbits. There's things that I hold against these kids right now, but gosh we ran around and kicked, probably wore out our shoes in incredible time, especially in the summer. Of course in the winter we were mainly involved in school and didn't have that much time left to mess around.

MC: Did you ride?

JC: Horses, no. Bicycles; we all had bicycles. We'd run them a lot.

RM: Women mainly stayed in the home in those days, obviously.

JC: Hardly any of them worked, really, I think.

MC: They worked all right. They just didn't get paid.

RM: Yes. [laughter] Did a lot of them bake bread, I wonder? And things like that.

JC: I can remember the mothers of some of my friends having some awful good cookies and stuff, and homemade pickles and fruit; they'd make jam and they were all pretty competent at it.

MC: Jack's mother told me of Jack coming home with eyes just as big as saucers because the father of a friend of his had struck his friend's mother and knocked her down. he just couldn't imagine such a thing. You were really shocked.

JC: It was a Saturday night, I think.

RM: Tell me some more about what the miners were like when you were a kid. What kind of people were they? Did they tend to be married or single?

JC: Well, there were both. Of course I can remember this quite well because my father was in the mining business, and I was always interested in it and went with him a lot. In fact the summer I was 12 years old I started working, not 8 hours a day, but 3-4 hours a day helping this other miner in our mine. So I became very close with a number of our miners, and in those days we employed more people. We had 12 on the payroll, and I thought they were pretty neat people really. They were basically honest, hard workers, the ones that amounted to anything and stuck with it. We had an old Serbian fellow who worked for us a number of years, Tam Levronovich, just a fascinating old boy, quite an education for a young boy, you know, to be in contact with these guys. Of course I learned to swear pretty early and get some pretty lurid descriptions of things from these guys, but I don't think in the long run that it hurt me that much, and I had a little better education in the ways of grownups than some of the other boys and kids Pretty rough around the edges. Of course most of them drank, and Monday mornings it'd smell like somebody sweeping out an old bar or something.

But these guys were basically honest, hard-working people, unafraid; they were willing to commit and do their job, and I thought they were pretty neat people. Oh we had some, there were some pretty rough eggs and some unpleasant characters, but for the most part I still am impressed with how nice a lot of them are to get along with. They know what a day's work is. I'm sure lot of people wouldn't agree with me, but I found that as long as you are willing to do a honest day's work and keep your mouth shut most of the time, they are pretty nice people to get along with.

RM: Did they tend to stay in the community, or did they come a while and be gone and never seen again?

JC: Well, most of them are pretty good drifters, and to this day miners call it "the circuit." They have a regular route that they travel. This may be idealized a little bit, but from Arizona clear up into Idaho, and they tend to make it seasonal, of course. They end up working in Arizona in the winter and in Idaho in the summer--not too darn dumb when you think of it. So a lot of these guys they'll come, and when they go to work they have absolutely no plans of working there a long time--maybe 6 months or 3 months, or maybe they'll go on a big drunk and change their mind, or decide just to go over the hill. Some would come and go. On the other hand, we had guys who worked for 10 or 12 years. So it's both. I think probably over the years that only a small majority were unmarried. There were a lot of them who were married and had kids, and as I say some of them stayed for years.

RM: Are there any other characteristics about the miners that stand out in your mind?

JC: Hard-drinking, hard-working.

MC: Proud of their work.

JC: Yes, of course, times have changed now, and it's becoming less of an art and less of a profession because there aren't very many underground mines left really. In this day and age a miner, he's a guy who can drive a tournapull or a rubber-tired loader, or this kind of stuff, or a great big 100-ton dump truck, a Euclid. Whereas in those days, by golly, nearly all the mining was underground, except for maybe the copper pit at Ruth and famous places like that, and it was a profession.

RM: You had to know how to do it all.

JC: Oh yes, you bet. You had to know how to timber, and you had to know how to drill, and you had to know how to blast, and had to be something of a carpenter and a little bit of a plumber, lay the pipe and stuff. Never very good at it but you had to know basically what you were doing. And in those days there were sets of tools, which there still are more or less, like the are and the pick and all these things. Something that always interested me; they are extremely jealous about their tools. For example, their axe always had to be very sharp. Some of them didn't care, but most of them took very good care of their tools and would absolutely not lend them. If you tried to pick one up, it was just like a declaration of war. You didn't mess with a guy's tools.

RM: What tools did they have?

JC: Well, a pick and an axe, and always a pipe wrench or 2, and usually something like a crescent wrench.

MC: Did they own their own, or did the mine provide them?

JC: No, the mine provided them.

RM: But once they provided him with a pick, that was his pick?

JC: That's right; nobody fiddled with it.

RM: Did he have his own shovel, too, his own round point?

JC: Oh yes, usually a shovel. Going back far enough, the summer that I first worked, when I was 12--that would be 1943--they still had the advent of the jackleg, which we use now, and it's an air feed leg, which greatly simplifies it.

RM: Which helped hold the machine up and drive it in.

JC: That's right. It pushed it into the wall. Before then you had a steel column, a vertical thing with kind of a twist screw jack, and you would set it vertically in your face, which is something on the order of 4 feet wide by 6 feet high or something near that. And when you mucked out, cleaned out, then you went in and you put this thing, you set it up vertically. It had a bar that you tightened up till it was really against the floor, tightened up very tight. That was called the

column, and then there was the bar, which was a horizontal piece that clamped on to this, and it was something like, say, 2 feet long. It projected out horizontally, and then your jack hammer set on a cradle sort of a thing that mounted on this cross piece. By manipulating bolts and moving around you could position your jack hammer where it was supposed to be. And then there was a screw feed with a crank on it, and you had your sets of steel. Like a 2-foot steel and a 4-foot steel and a 6-foot steel, and you'd put in the 2-foot steel and run it in and back off, methodically screwing this thing out. Then you'd go to 4. Then if you were going to shoot a 6-foot round, you ran in the 6-foot steel.

RM: What was this thing called?

JC: Well, column and bar, I would call them. But it was a very intricate way of doing it. You always blasted if possible at night so the gas could clear out. We only worked one 8-hour shift, and so we'd have 16 hours to air out. When you went back the next morning you had your broken round there, and you worked your lights around and picked down scale. You mucked all this up by hand into a car on rails, and you'd run the car off and dump into a skip or into a bin, or whatever, and methodically by going back and forth clean it out. Then you had to erect this column and bar and everything and drill, and you had to just go like billy-be-damned to get the thing shot that night. Call it a round-in, round-out, a cycle. And if you missed it, you might have to wait a whole nother day to shoot and get the gas out.

CHAPTER THREE

RM: Jack, is there anymore about the color and flavor of the mines and the miners and their skills that you could add? What about the equipment; like, hoist and things like that. How did you get the electricity and compressed air?

JC: Well of course our mine right now really is quite primitive, so we haven't progressed near as much as, I suppose, most mines. I do remember our first air compressor that we bought for our mine. Believe it or not, we operated for a long time with no compressed air It was just literally hand augers. Now this dates clear back to the '20s and '30s. Of course, as I say, I remember from the middle '30s on. But they were able to follow soft material. Our ore is quite soft, especially in the upper levels. And they had little hand-twist augers and hand picks and just used a small amount of blasting powder, really. Of course as the mine got a little larger, there came times when we had to go through rock, whether we wanted to or not, in order to connect up and to explore further.

RM: What kind of matrix or country rock is your mine?

JC: Limestones and dolomites, which compared to most rock is fairly soft, but you just don't drill it with a hand auger. Dad bought things from the old Gold Ace mine up in back of Carrara--it's another old gold mine. He bought an old, what you call a "hothead." It was a diesel, big flywheels and one big cylinder, oh probably 14 inches in diameter. One piston, used low grade diesel fuel. The reason they call it a hothead was that in order to start it--being diesel of course it had no sparkplug. But to this day you have glowplugs in the dc engine, and these had literally glowplugs, a kind of a hollow steel thing that reached into the head of the inside of the piston. You took a blowtorch, and you actually heated that. This is, I am sure, why they called them hotheads. You'd heat that thing up till it was just cherry red, and then if you were lucky you had compressed air, and you would blow compressed air in there to get the thing moving back and forth, and then once the fuel got in there and hit that hot plug it would start to ignite. Once it warmed up, of course, it ran as any diesel does. The compressor was of a similar configuration, two big fly wheels, one big cylinder. We got that about 1939 or 1940, I think. Big old things; gosh, to a small boy they looked huge. To this day it amazes me how we moved that stuff. You know, now you've got forklifts, chain hoist. What you did was laid timbers and then pieces of pipe, and you levered them around with bars and stuff and with a number of men, and then just moved them along, rolling on rollers. When one came out at the back--and this is the kind of thing a kid would do--he'd take the roller that came out from behind, run around and stick it on the front. Then when you ran out of timber, you'd grab the ones from behind and stick them in front of it. Maybe it took a to time, but it's amazing what they did.

Of course later into the late '40s and early '50s we got into International Harvester 6-cylinder, seemingly modern engines, and some of them are still running today. We just rebuild them. And our hoist, the hoist that they started with in the early '20s. We have a shaft that now extends about 600 feet deep, but when I first remember it, it bottomed at the second level, which was some 120 feet down, almost vertical. We had an old Fairbanks-Morse, again single cylinder. It was gasoline, not diesel. Much easier to start, really. It burned quite a bit of gas, but

it was easier to start and to run, and that ran the hoist. It had a drum right in there that would clutch into the flywheels. We didn't change that until 1951; we went to an electric hoist, which we still have to this day, a 25-horse, 3-phase.

We made our own power. I think the first one was an old Model-A engine or something that Dad had belted up to a dc generator, something like a 7-1/2 kw dc generator. We had it to provide electric lights. Before that it was carbide lights. Acetylene, you know, you put carbide in it, and a little bronze lamp, heaters, the little fellows that you put on your hat. Or a bigger one that you strapped on your belt. That's all you could see by. Until we went to electricity, and which we have had ever since. Then later in the '40s we put diesels in and generators, and it's been that way ever since. In that sense we've been a rather modern mine, I think, because to this day most mines don't have electricity underground, except in the hoist rooms and such.

RM: Could you talk a little bit about the geology of your ore deposit?

JC: Well, it's in the Bare Mountains, and it's pretty much dolomites and limestones, all twisted around and faulted and lots of fissures. I'm a mining engineer and I took geology to become one, but I must say that I didn't retain a great deal of it, but I suppose it is replacement veins in the limestone. Fluorspar of course is calcium fluoride; they use it in making steel, which, most of our ore went to. Recently, in the last 15 or 20 years, we sell more to cement plants. Mostly the American steel companies are going out of business anyhow, so cement's what's left.

The thing that has been good about our fluorspar deposit is its purity. Fluorspar is not uncommon; it is found all over the U.S. But usually fluorspar has quite a bit of impurities with it, especially silica. For the use in steel plants they don't want the high silica because it eats up their furnace linings. Ours has been quite low in silica. Our ore usually runs, oh, 75-80 percent calcium fluoride and something on one to 4-5 percent silica, whereas the big mines in Kentucky and Illinois and such places usually runs 30-40 percent, and they had to mill it. At great expense. Of course in recent years when costs have gone up, they've just shut down, but we have been able because of the grade of our fluorspar to mine it, mine the better grades, and hand sort it. It's a sort of primitive way to do it. It's not that good a thing to do anymore, but it's still worth doing.

MC: We're still in business.

RM: Is it considered a large deposit by fluorspar standards?

JC: Well, it's just a very small mine. We've mined somewhere over 200,000 tons over the history of the mine, so I wouldn't call it a large deposit, but it's fairly significant, I think. The 200,000 tons of course when you are talking about Carlin and the gold mines isn't much. Good lord, they move that in days practically, or a month or so. But for fluorspar it usually doesn't come in quite that big a deposit, I think.

RM: Well, your mine must be one of the most successful mines in the whole Death Valley, Beatty, Amargosa Valley region.

MC: In longevity certainly.

JC: It's been up and down. It's kind of a tough market. Mexico produces excellent fluorspar at obviously a pretty low price, so as prices go up, we have to keep our price down or we don't sell anything. And we're having enough trouble selling it as it is.

RM: There is no other mine in the area that has your continuous or semi-continuous production.

JC: Oh yes. What I was going to say was that we actually shut down for a while about 3 years ago. Until that time, just about everyone told us that we were the longest continuous underground mine in the state.

MC: But even while they weren't mining, they were selling fluorspar, so it wasn't exactly shut.

JC: In a sense perhaps we weren't shut down. It depends on your definition. But we've been there a long time--3 generations.

RM: From Lingenfelter, Richard Lingenfelter's book on the history of Death Valley and the Amargosa, I don't remember him talking about a mine that produced that much tonnage.

MC: He didn't talk about ours either.

RM: No, I don't think it mentions it.

MC: He talks about Chloride Cliff and the Crowells there, but it doesn't talk about this.

RM: My point is that I don't think there's another mine in the area that's produced 200,000 tons, whether it be gold ore, or silver or lead or copper or whatever. Is there?

JC: Well, very possibly not. It's an unusual situation because in most mines, and particularly gold mines, you move an awful lot of waste in order to get a ton of gold ore. So that you have these seemingly-huge dumps. When you look into it, they really didn't produce very many tons of ore. In that sense, if you look at our dumps up there, good lord you wouldn't think the place had been there more than 5 years. But the fact is we don't move anymore than we have to, and of course in the latter years of the mine we had some pretty good openings that we just backfilled what waste we did have. But, far and away the most stuff we mine is ore. If you want to find it, you go down and look at the old Kaiser steel plant in Fontana and look at their slag dumps. Or in Geneva Steel over in Provo, Columbia Steel in L.A. or in San Francisco. Most of it's gone. My mother professed to never care as much for this area as she did L.A., and I can remember as a kid she'd always say, "Let's go back to L.A. for awhile," and Dad said, "Well, we're moving the mine down there just as fast as can."

RM: Going back to the '30s and when you were a young kid before the war, how did most of the people in Beatty earn their living? Wasn't it through mining?

JC: Before the war there were a lot of small mines, even considering the Carrara venture, which hired quite a lot of people around here for very few years. I don't think there's any doubt that it was the big thing. People didn't travel as much as they do now, so the tourism thing wasn't really a big item.

MC: There were a few ranches.

RM: That was my next question. What role did ranching play? You know you drive north up the Oasis Valley, and you see this pasture there. How much of the economy in Beatty is traditionally, especially focusing on the '30s, ranching?

JC: Guys ran cattle, and here again a young boy just didn't think very much about these things. But I'm sure that some of the beef here came from these ranches, and they sold beef, and there were a couple of them that raised pigs, I think. And some of them had chickens.

RM: Was there ever anybody growing corn or wheat or anything like that?

JC: No, I don't think so. You see, this alkali is quite a problem here. Of course it was pretty tough to have a well in those days because there wasn't any Valley Electric, you know, to run an electric pump. You either had a 2-bit little old windmill that pumped barely enough for a few cows to drink, or else you were by a spring. If you didn't have that, you didn't have water, and if you didn't have water, you just weren't anything around here.

RM: Well, were the cattle mainly in the valley or did people also run cattle in the hills, particularly in the west and out toward the Amargosa?

JC: Yes, they ran cattle. I can remember we had a friend, a fellow named Bid Porter, that bought the property down--oh, it's across the river from where the Burro is now. There's an old ranch there right now. Right straight towards Beatty Mountain from there, just across the river there's still some pans and stuff. And he, this fellow named, oh, Borra--no, no; I can't think of his name. The old boy with the dog that used to fight Dad's. It was a German fellow.

MC: The scholarship.

JC: Yes. Delfs, John Delfs. When I was a small boy, he owned that property, and I guess he ran a few cattle but not many. But then he sold out to this fellow named Bid Porter in about 1946 or so, and Porter brought in some cattle and ran them. He had some horses, and he ran them mainly in the hills to the west of town. There are springs out around, clear over to Hooligan Springs, which is over against the Grapevine Mountains And then there are some if you go north just beyond Springdale and then turn west, over in the flats between the highway and the Grapevines there's a series raised pigs, I think. And some of them had chickens.

MC: Are you acquainted with the term "10-30 country"?

RM: No.

MC: Well when people say that this is 10-30 country it means that it takes a cow with a mouth 10 feet wide and able to run 30 miles an hour to get enough to stay alive.

RM: There was an Indian community in Beatty during the '30s, wasn't there?

JC: Quite a number of Indians Oh, I had a lot of classmates who were Indians.

RM: Could you discuss the Indian community, and what role they played in town?

JC: Of course at that time Beatty didn't extend in any direction nearly as far as it does now, and the Indian community was over on both sides of the river. There's some willow trees over there. They were pretty primitive. They were, oh, just lean-tos of galvanized iron really.

RM: They were on the other side of the LV&T tracks, weren't they? Could you describe their dwellings?

JC: Well, as I was saying, they were just kind of just shacks with galvanized iron on them. That's kind of the way I remember.

MC: Were you ever invited in?

JC: No, I don't think so, but I was pretty good friends of some of the Indian boys.

RM: Where did they get the iron, I wonder?

JC: Probably off some old mill buildings or mines. I'm guessing. You know that stuff. It's so dry it may rust a little, but it'll last for years and years. Somebody's always using it. Maybe the wind blew it along or something, but that's what they used. Pretty primitive.

RM: How many dwellings would you say were there?

JC: Oh gosh, 8 or 10 or something like that.

MC: And there was a lot of coming and going. Florence Palsgrove was talking not too long ago about when she first came, and this was in the early '30s, and she was about a 6th grader and she showed up to go to school on the opening day, and there were about 3 children. She was from Los Angeles, and she thought that was pretty puny. She asked the teacher, "Is this all?" And she said, "Oh, no, wait until the Indian kids come." After the pine nuts, you see. They were harvesting pine nuts, and then they would come to school. And there were probably about 20 children.

RM: What proportion of the classes would you say the Indian children made up?

JC: I think there were times when, maybe, on the order of a third, something like that. That's just a guess, but I think it's something on that order. A lot of them were quite gifted athletically. Of course in my earliest days of school there were virtually no organized sports. You just didn't travel, and of course you'd have a basketball hoop and you'd play at recess. Or you'd play softball or something, but the Indian boys and some of the Indian girls were quite good athletes--nothing organized, as I say. And then later on when Beatty first started having basketball teams, the Indian boys would usually do quite well.

RM: How were they as students?

JC: For the most part, not too great really. I don't know if it was through communication problems. I can recall some of the Indian girls, in particular, being very quiet. They'd just sit there, and they just wouldn't say anything. I don't know why.

RM: Did they speak pretty good English?

JC: Yes, they spoke pretty good English, most of them did, yes.

RM: But you never went into their homes or anything so you wouldn't be able to describe them.

JC: No, but I buddied around with a couple of the Indian boys quite a lot. There again they were pretty adept at making bows and arrows out of the reeds that grow out here that make pretty good arrows. They were much better than I was or most of the other boys, and some of them sometimes if we were buddies they'd make us one or else we'd pay them something you know. And then slingshots; we'd shoot birds and stuff with that. I knew a lot of them real well.

RM: What kind of a role did the Indians play in town? Did they tend to keep to themselves or would you be apt to find them doing the same things the Anglos were doing in town?

JC: Well, some of both, I think. Some of them kind of kept pretty much to themselves, but a lot of the fellows worked in the mines and some of them were laborers around to do some of the help with the carpentry work. Some of them quite good at it too.

RM: I've been told that some of the Indians were involved in WA. Do you remember that?

JC: No, I don't remember that. I do remember the CCCs out here working in Death Valley. Now this is back in the late '30s. I whether any of the Indians were involved with that, I just don't know. I think most of the CCC were not Beatty people. I think they had a camp over in the Valley, and they did a lot of the early work in improving the conditions, the roads I guess, in the valley.

RM: Were the Indians primarily Shoshoni?

JC: Shoshoni or Paiutes. I think the Shoshoni are part of the Paiutes.

MC: The Paiutes speak the Shoshoni language.

RM: I think they are related linguistically. I've been told there were mainly Shoshoni in here. I just wanted to see if you had a feel for that.

MC: Wasn't Mr. Strozzi's wife Paiute, though?

JC: I don't know. In fact, funny I can't really picture her. There was this family, this fellow was Swiss, Caesar Strozzi; in fact he worked for my father.

MC: Dolores Gillette?

RM: Yes, Dolly. Yes, I interviewed her.

JC: She was one of the daughters of Mr. Strozzi and this Indian woman. They had about, gosh, 5 or 6 kids I think.

RM: Twelve, I think.

JC: But the Strozzi's had one of them who died in the war. Nice kids, nice people.

RM: I guess he had a homestead out in the Grapevine.

JC: In the Grapevines. They called it the ranch. And in fact Dolly, the one that you talked to, her first husband worked for us. This would be when I was working summers. I went away to school and I would always come back and work in the mine in summer to save a little money for high school or college or whatever. He was just about my age so we were good friends. He'd always tell about going to the ranch, and then they'd get a deer once in a while out there. Things were a little more lax in those days. And pine nuts, a big deal.

MC: They had a little orchard too.

JC: Yes, they had apples. It was quite a nice little ranch out there.

RM: But Dolly said that they didn't live in the Indian community. They lived on the other side.

JC: Yes, that's right.

MC: Well, Mr. Strozzi was an educated man, wasn't he? Educated in Europe. High school and elementary education in Europe.

JC: Dad liked him a lot when he worked for him.

RM: Is there anything else that sticks out in your mind regarding the Indians and their role in the community?

JC: No, I don't think so. Of course there were a number of these mixed marriages.

RM: Was it usually an Anglo male and an Indian woman?

JC: I think more often it was, yes. I can think of 2 or 3 in each case. As I say, I was pretty good buddies with some of these fellows.

MC: What happened when you went to high school? Was that the end of your friendship?

JC: No. I'd be here, as it turned out I went one year, the 9th grade, into L.A. I was gone and stayed with my aunt. Tenth, 11th and 12th I went to high school in Las Vegas at the only high school that was there, Las `Vegas High School. I graduated in 1948, but even then I would come back home on the weekends. Our ore truck was always traveling to Vegas, so I would ride back and forth. I would be back on the weekends, so I kept up my friendship. Of course I was something of an outcast, I suppose, because I went to school someplace else, but I had a lot of friends and I kept up with them.

RM: What was it, the 9th grade that you said you went to school in L.A.? Basically your folks didn't feel that the high school here was that good.

JC: Well, it was just understood that my brother and I would go to college. There were things like chemistry that they just couldn't teach here, and I was interested in engineering, as my brother was, so that was it. My folks just felt that I had to go someplace else.

RM: Was that pretty typical with the other kids? Did a lot of the other kids go away?

JC: No. Of course there weren't that many people here then, because the war shut the mines down, and a lot of the men had to go away to the war. Beatty was pretty small in those days, as I recall.

RM: Well, tell me about the first time when you went away to go to school. L.A. That must have been...

MC: Culture shock.

JC: Well, of course it wasn't totally new because we'd always had close ties to L.A. Born there, as were my parents before me, and we had relatives, numerous relatives on both sides living down there. And Dad's business contacts were down there, so we were there a number of times each Year.

CHAPTER FOUR

JC (continued): Although I knew where I was going, it was quite a change. I always kind of got a kick out of it, as did my parents. My aunt was a school teacher down there, and she was always looking square down her nose at Nevada education and at these little back, jerkwater schools. I guess that is probably what she thought of them, and so she had dire worries that I'd be put back a grade or something. Of course the fact was that Nevada schools taught things a little sooner than the California schools.

MC: California had begun the progressive education, and so they were deeply involved with that.

RM: So you didn't find yourself behind at all?

JC: No, I sure didn't. And of course, here again I would go back to this old Mr. Dees, my teacher for 4 years who just gave a rock solid foundation in math and English grammar and that kind of stuff. I liked school. I listened and got good grades, so, boy, I went down there, and I didn't have any trouble at all. I almost made the honor roll, the 4th card, the last card when I was there. I got a "B" in P.E., and that's the only thing that kept me off a straight "A." There weren't very many in the school so it was really a shocker to my aunt. I'm not trying to blow my horn so much as to say there was a super education to be gotten in this little old, 2-room school. The teachers were there, and I was just lucky I'm sure. It just totally depended on the teachers who were there when you were there. I think I just came at a good time, particularly when this Mr. Dees was there because he was just a super old teacher. He was elderly to me. Of course I was a high school kid. I suppose he was in his late 40's, maybe early 50's. I'm getting another look on that now. But just then he was old to me.

RM: What school did you go to in California?

JC: Le Conte Junior High School. It's in Hollywood on Bronson between Santa Monica and Sunset, right close to the old Sunset Bowling Lane. My aunt and her husband lived in the hills right near the Hollywoodland sign.

RM: Did you get homesick or anything?

JC: Oh, I did. I got terribly homesick, and it bothered my aunt, and I am sure she felt there were things that she wasn't providing. It wasn't that at all. When you are away from your parents and your home, you are homesick. However, I must say, I certainly survived it, and then I felt that later on when I was older and went to college, when some of my compatriots were pretty homesick, it didn't bother me a bit. I was ready to go, and out in the big world.

RM: Do you have any salient memories of school there that might give us some indication of the boy going from Beatty to the big city or your own view of the world, or anything?

JC: No, not particularly. It was really enlightening to be able to take things like Spanish and science and things that perhaps I might not have been able to get here. And of course in the 10th, 11th and 12th I went to Vegas High School. There I was able to take things like chemistry and these kind of things. That was a marvelous time to be in Las Vegas. It was so incredibly much smaller than it is now. It was the only high school, and there were I think 164 in the graduating class. That's the whole city of Las Vegas.

RM: What made you decide to go there as opposed to going back to L.A.?

JC: Well, I think I was prepared to go back to L.A., but I think it kind of bothered my parents. It's pretty young, you know; I was 13 or something like that. I'm sure they had no compunctions about my being with my aunt because they trusted her implicitly and, good lord, she and her husband did the finest job of giving me a home. Nevertheless, it's 300 miles away, and I didn't see them for months at a time and I was homesick. I truly was. So they had these friends in Las Vegas, and I was able to stay there, and they paid them board. I came home every weekend, which was a disadvantage in that I wasn't able to get into any sports. I wanted to play football but if I did of course I wouldn't have been home on the weekend, and it would have worked a hardship on the family I stayed with to have meals later. But, whatever, I went there and made a lot of friends. As I say, Vegas was a pretty nice place in those days, and it is now, but it's just so huge and sprawling.

RM: Who was the family that you stayed with?

JC: McAllister. They were old friends of mother and dad's, and they had met them when they had lived in Lathrop Wells. They worked for the state. I guess they actually lived in Carrara for a short time, and then lived in Lathrop Wells where he was a highway maintenance man, and then he went on down to Vegas and worked in highway maintenance, and then eventually for the city of Las Vegas.

RM: Do you have any things that stand out in your mind about the Beatty boy living in Vegas?

JC: No. Of course it wasn't that huge an adventure after I had lived 300 miles away in Los Angeles. It was really quite close to home, and of course Vegas has always been the shopping center for Beatty. Gosh, even in those days, we went almost once a week. We bought most of our groceries down there.

RM: When you were a kid, did you used to go with your dad very often to Vegas?

JC: Oh, you bet. I didn't know many people; we knew some of the people in the stores, but kids make friends in a hurry. Gosh, there were an awful lot of nice people in Vegas and in the high school, people I still know from those days.

RM: What year did you start there?

JC: It would have been September 1945.

RM: Was the BMI closed down by then?

JC: I think so.

MC: No, Manganese Ore was, but I think BMI was still going.

RM: Actually, I think they closed BMI down in '44. And the air base was kind of on hold at that time so Vegas really wasn't in a boom phase then, was it?

JC: No, but it was a well-founded tiny little city because there must have been about 1,000 kids in high school.

RM: One of the things I forgot to ask you about Beatty in the '30s is what did people do for recreation?

JC: The radio loomed large.

RM: Did most people have radios?

JC: Oh absolutely. We had our favorite radio programs that we listened to. And there were lots of them. There was, Sunday night I think, about 2 or 3 hours, just a ritual. I've forgotten which ones they were.

MC: Charlie McCarthy was on.

JC: Jack Benny, yes. We always heard George and Gracie Allen, and there were a whole bunch of them.

RM: Where did your stations come from?

JC: Mostly Los Angeles, I think. KNX and KFI. I think that was just about all of it that we heard.

RM: I was talking to somebody the other day and they were saying about XLEO, remember that? Chihauhua.

MC: Clint, Texas; Rosarito Beach. We bootlegged those at night, you know.

JC: You asked about what we did. In the summer sometimes my parents and friends of theirs, and we went along, would go down to the inn in Death Valley and swim on some summer evenings, because gosh it was--of course it was the same climate we have now. And really there wasn't very much air conditioning. I can remember that there wasn't any, I believe, and certainly not in cars. And I think I can remember before we had it even on the house.

MC: You know, that's something you haven't talked about, and you might want to. When the telephone and electricity came to Beatty.

JC: Telephones came during the war. They put a line in, and incidentally just about a year ago pulled that line out.

RM: That was the line where they took down the poles between here and Vegas.

JC: That's right. Bell Telephone; it was a war thing. I suppose it probably was about '42 or '43 or something, a crew came through. Dad's phone of course was very important to the business, and fluorspar was absolutely necessary for the steel. It had a AA1 priority. We had a 1945 Ford pickup; hardly any were built, but we were able to get one because he had that priority. And also by having that priority and such he was able to get a phone—Beatty #4. It was a crank phone.

RM: Was there a switchboard here in town?

JC: An operator was in Tonopah. And at that time I think there were only about 4 phones in Beatty. When they first put it in, I think he had to get some of his steel customers to go to bat for him.

RM: He did. He was telling me about it. I think it was somebody in San Francisco.

MC: And the reason we had to have a phone was that they had taken out the telegraph with the railroad.

JC: Which before that had served a similar purpose. But those were the first phones. In fact when we came back in 1957, weren't we Beatty #20. That's 1957.

MC: There were 30 phones then, and they were still magneto. In fact the very first time I had ever visited the Crowells—I was invited to spend the Labor Day weekend (1950). And of course the phone rang constantly. It was always somebody's ring.

JC: She thought that the person who had one ring sure did get a lot of calls. Mother said, "That's the operator." When you called the operator, you rang "1". And then there were funny stories about people listening in on the party line.

MC: Jack and I used to talk on the phone, and one time we were gabbing away, and a chiming clock struck. I said, "Your clock's fast. It just struck 8 and it's not 8 yet." And he said, "We don't have a chiming clock." Click! [laughter]

RM: Well, what about electric lights? Did you have them when you were a kid?

JC: I can remember before we had them, when we had the old kerosene, kind of the glass bottom thing with the kerosene. And then a fellow came here, I would say about 1937, a fellow named Mardis, and he put in a little generator. I've forgotten what kind of engine he had to start with. He started generating powder and selling it around town. He had it for a number of years, and then Reverts bought it, and then they modernized it.

RM: They put in a 4-diesel unit.

JC: That's right.

MC: What did they pay?

JC: It was 12 cents a kilowatt or something like that. It was pretty exorbitant compared to most places, particularly when you compared it to Las Vegas, which got Boulder Dam power, which you know has been pretty cheap. People really screamed and moaned about what they had to pay for power here.

RM: How about the water supply in town during the '30s?

JC: Well it was from the old Revert ranch, well the Beatty ranch that eventually passed through other ownerships. I think a fellow named Palmer owned it at one time, but the Reverts got it, I think, when they bought the store. I'm guessing. It might have come along part and parcel with that..They got the water, and then there used to be all kinds of famous stories about some of the horrible network of old rusted out pipe. To this day, to somebody in Beatty that's been here a while, if you say a Revert patch, it means something. Usually if they saw water--they had so much water they didn't care--they just let it leak. But when it really got bad, they'd dig them up and wrap them with innertubes, with baling wire around it. And it worked you know.

MC: As I understand it, when the Tonopah air base shut down, they got a -million miles of pipe, and you'd have your household service running across the top of the ground. We never heated our water in the summer.

JC: This is when we lived out where Bill Sullivan lives now. There was one house there, and to supply that one house there was an 8-inch pipe that ran - across the river and over there. We had this friend of ours when we came back from the Navy who went to work in Fallbrook, California, for the water department. They came out to visit us the first time, and I said something about our water line and made some mention about 8-inch pipe, and he said, *Oh you don't have an 8-inch water line." And I said, "Oh yes I do."

MC: He said that 8 inches would serve all of Beatty.

JC: And I said, "I don't care; we've got an 8-inch." He just about called me a liar. It was at night I think, and I took the flashlight and we ,walked out there and I showed him. And he said, "I'll be damned. I wouldn't have believed it."

RM: When did they put the original pipes in?

JC: Well, Reverts came here I think in '31, something like that.

MC: People had their own wells.

JC: There were a lot of people that had their windmills.

RM: There was a municipal system too, wasn't there? Reverts bought the system in '31 or so; I wonder when that system was originally put in.

JC: I don't know. Too bad Kels [Henry Kelsey Hall] isn't around; he could tell you.

RM: Another thing was air conditioning.

JC: You mean refrigeration?

RM: Yes, the coils. But you had swampers.

JC: Oh sure, to this day that's all we have. That's all that's necessary. Here it's so dry.

RM: Did you use swamp coolers in the '30s?

JC: No, I don't think so.

MC: Jack's dad talks about Eichbaum down at Stovepipe and how in the early days he had this rig where he had dripping water and a sheet or a burlap, I guess, and then a fan.

JC: That was down at Death Valley ranch I think.

MC: Oh, but he said that there right in front of me was the whole principle of swamp coolers. I know in Las Vegas people were wetting sheets and hanging them inside the window.

JC: I think it must have been the late '30s and early '40s before we even had swamp coolers. And a cooler, in those days when you said cooler it meant something to keep food in. I can remember on our back porch Dad had built a little wooden framework and covered it with baling wire and burlap. Of course burlap sacks were from a lot of things, potatoes and everything. So you covered this thing with burlap and had a pipe come out and just drip to keep this wet, like a desert waterbag, same idea. To this day there's nothing that keeps butter at the proper temperature like one of those. don't know what the temperature was, probably 45.

RM: We had one out at Reveille; that's how we kept our food the first couple of years out there.

JC: They worked great, and even when you had a refrigerator you still kept it. Like cantaloupes, for example. You'd keep them in there because it would be cool and not cold.

RM: Do you remember when you got your first Servo? Your gas refrigerator?

JC: Yes. I can remember them.

MC: We had the last one in about 1960.

JC: Yes, but not by necessity. We thought it was cheaper than buying an electric box in those days. I'm sure they didn't have a refrigerator when I was born, but when they got it I can't tell you.

RM: It seems that one of the big demarcations in Beatty's history was the war.

MC: That's our age, you realize, because we belong to a generation where that was the war.

RM: I think it really affected the Beatty economy and social system, don't you?

JC: Yes. Well, of course mining was important to me, and I relate it back to that. I guess strictly speaking there was something here even before Rhyolite. It's mainly the Beatty ranch, old man Beatty. The Indian colony here was even before Rhyolite, but Beatty was always kind of off on the edge of things, a little satellite really, until Rhyolite died down, and then Beatty just gradually grew.

JC: I guess in the early days a lot of Rhyolite's water came from Beatty as well as Indian Springs.

RM: But they didn't get enough from there.

JC: No, there's much more water here. It's really quite a lot of waterflow. The Reverts and some other people who later tried to file on the water rights are still fighting over the ownership of the water rights here.

MC: Of course the water doesn't meet the standards.

JC: Because of the fluoride, yes. Interestingly enough, it's involved with fluorspar, the same element.

MC: All the children that are raised in Beatty are instantly discernible because they have the mottled teeth.

RM: But you don't have them.

JC: Caps, I have plastic caps.

MC: And so do all our children. But the war brought, for example, rationing, which had an impact on everyone. Jack's dad was on the ration board.

JC: Well, I think, the big thing to me is that Rhyolite brought the mining, a real economic force into the area. Even though the big boom faded out, nevertheless, all through the teens and the '20s and the '30s there was gold mining around here. It was really the thing that kept people here. But, here, along comes World War II, and, bango, the government says, "Thou shalt not mine gold." All of these things came to a crashing halt. Of course a lot of the young fellows were drafted or joined. It certainly was a big time, a big changeover. I guess when the fellows came drifting back from the war, some of them had their eyes opened and maybe didn't want to live here anymore, or whatever. But it was pretty slow then.

MC: When I first started coming here, I know it said in the Atlas that there were 349 people here. Dad looked kind of thoughtful when I mentioned this, he was Mt. Crowell then, and he said, "Yes, I think that counts dogs."

JC: Of course the war didn't slow down our mine; it speeded it up. That amounted to something of an economic force because we hired about 15 guys, and a lot of them were married and had kids, so that adds a lot of people.

RM: How many employees did you have prior to the war?

JC: Well, it was very difficult to sell the stuff up until about '38 or '39. England was in the war in '39, but I'm sure our steel industry knew what was coming up, and thereby needed more fluorspar for their steel. We made markets then that we kept for a long time after the war.

RM: You mentioned the rationing board.

MC: Well you couldn't get a tire that was fit to drive on, and with the kind of roads we had and the distance to Vegas that was difficult.

JC: It was too hot and that synthetic rubber just wasn't very well perfected. Those tires just wouldn't last here.

RM: Well, what other kinds of problems existed because of the war?

JC: Well, gas rationing.

MC: Yes, and the ration was tiny. I think A. cards got something like 3 gallons a week. Well of course cars didn't guzzle so much gas in those days either, and you didn't drive very fast, but I think if you had a cause you could get a better ration, people who had a war job.

JC: And of course during the war there was the airfield at Tonopah, and there was the one at Indian Springs, and of course Nellis and Vegas, so there were a lot of army air force in the area, drifting through. Sate of them would be here on weekends, I think. I can't remember seeing very many of them, but you'd seeing them on the road bumming rides when you would go to Vegas and this kind of stuff.

MC: Did any local girls marry them?

JC: Well there must have been, but I can't really place them.

RM: In the '30s, what about hotels and motels for all these airmen and everybody coming through?

JC: The first motel, I'm quite certain of this, is the El Portal and it was built by a fellow named Staley. I knew him quite well because his son was a classmate of mine in grammar school here; real nice fellow. He came through here about a year ago. Let's see, I graduated from grammar school in '44, and Jimmy was with me for about 3 or 4 years prior to that, so his father came here about 1940 and built a motel. El Portal

MC: And it was like those old tourist courts, with a room and a garage and a room and a garage. Then later they made those garages into rooms. Harry Johnson's was made that way because he had to remodel those, and I guess they were murder.

RM: And the Montgomery was gone?

JC: Yes, I never remember that.

RM: What about the Beatty Hotel down on the corner of First and Main? Is that what you call it?

JC: Yes, it was here.

MC: I think they used to rent rooms upstairs in the Exchange Club too.

JC: I think they did. And the old Gold Ace; I think they had a few rooms, mainly for workers probably. That was probably all there was for accommodations.

MC: But since there wasn't any tourism, it didn't make any difference.

RM: I guess the airmen had to provide their own accommodations if they were having maneuvers or anything in the area.

MC: People would put them up. Well, I don't know about that, but people were very open in those days.

RM: Especially to servicemen, yes.

JC: I can remember a fellow, a real nice guy, he was a pilot in Tonopah, and they were going somewhere and their car broke down, and they ended up, he and his wife and one or 2 kids stayed a couple of days with us. Real nice guy. He later brought me or sent me an old practice bomb, about 3-4 feet long, and I had that, and oh, man, that would a big item to a kid in the war. Man that was a big deal.

MC: They later lived in Reno.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Maud, before we started you were telling a really interesting story about Dad Fairbanks, an old-time restaurant owner.

MC: Yes this is a story that Jack's father, Irving Crowell, tells. He and his father, also Irving Crowell, were coming on the train from Los Angeles to Rhyolite and ultimately Chloride Cliff, I suppose. Anyway, they stopped and had breakfast at a restaurant that Dad Fairbanks had, and I don't know whether it was in Shoshone or in Baker, but they ate breakfast. When Grandfather was going to pay, it happened that there was another tourist there, a man from the train, who was also paying. He was charged 50 cents, let's say; I don't really know the amount. And when Grandfather Crowell's turn came, he was charged 25 cents, which made the man horribly indignant, and he turned on Dad Fairbanks and said, "Why do I have to pay 50 cents, and this man is paying 25 cents?" And Dad Fairbanks said, "We'll never see you again. He comes in all the time."

RM: Jack, you were also telling a story about when you, as a child, saw Albert Johnson.

JC: Oh, yes, that's Scotty's benefactor. The only time I recall seeing him was soon after they built a highway over the Darwin grade in '38 or '39. That was a way to go from here over through Panamint Valley to Olancho and down what's now 395 into Los Angeles. It was a pretty good route, and my parents and my brother and I went into L.A. quite often that way.

At any rate, we were coming back and we stopped in Olancho for lunch. As we were eating, this huge black car pulled up outside and two people came in. I don't remember whether there was a chauffeur or not. At any rate, this nicely dressed fellow, obviously an Easterner, dark suit and all, and his wife rather formally dressed, came in and sat down to eat. And Dad pointed him out and said, "That is Johnson." Albert Johnson. He was the man who really supplied the money for a lot of Scotty's whims. The man sat down, and he recognized my father and came over and talked for a little while. It always made quite an impression on me, though I remember seeing Scotty and was not very impressed with him. But at any rate, Johnson was reputed to be a millionaire, an eastern fellow. He seemed like an awfully nice guy; I was quite impressed with him at the time.

RM: Tell us about what your experiences and views of Scotty were.

JC: Well, really, none personal, I guess. I think his reputation was as a drunk around here. He'd come and hang around Beatty for a few days.

RM: Is that right! Drinking in the bars?

JC: Yes, that's my memory.

MC: And not paying except with his fabulous \$100 bills, which no one could break.

JC: So my-memories of him aren't very impressive, and I always kind of snicker when I think of Scotty's castle and all this, whereas really a lot of the credit should go to people like Johnson, who supplied the money for the castle. Of course it's all in your point of view, I guess. The guy was kind of a flim-flam artist and a real bull shooter and talked people into all this stuff, and I didn't think much of him.

MC: On the other hand, he brought Death Valley to people's attention and that was something.

JC: Yes, I suppose, if it were not for him there would probably be no Scotty's castle.

RM: Well, was he famous for his \$100 bill routine?

MC: According to what Jack's parents have told us, that was a routine with him, or perhaps some other large bill he felt sure would not be breakable.

JC: I think he was always engaging in these flamboyant things. I'm quite a railroad buff, and of course there's the famous time when he commandeered, or chartered really, a Santa Fe train and set a speed record, I think it was, from Los Angeles to Chicago. Typical kind of thing. Of course on the other hand it was pretty interesting.

RM: Yes, in a way he was a PR genius. He took nothing, you know. Well, Jack, or Maud, do you have other anecdotes or other stories that might add a little flavor to the times here?

JC: Of course it's a little awkward, I guess, because maybe you think you're desecrating the memory of some of these people. I am thinking of George Ishmael in this particular instance, who really was a pretty good friend and his sons have been excellent friends. Old George was a pretty interesting old boy, and he just had a little trouble identifying ownership of things. Gosh, he took us to a number of deer-hunting places up in central Nevada, and we knew him real well, but I must say my father has always been pretty straightforward, and he and George just had a running joke about George stealing stuff and Dad would come in and say, "Nail everything down; George is here." And George would just laugh like that was the biggest joke, but this was all based on experience. Of course, there's the famous one about George--I think it was in Leadfield when the town was kind of a stock scam that didn't last that long. But there were houses built over there, and I think that's where it was supposed to have happened. Where he went over and was actually going to steal a house. He had jacked the thing up and put the timbers under it, and he was—the story says—actually pulling away when the guy who's still in the house opened the doors and starts shouting at him.

I can't attest to it, but I do know that George got into it with Dad one time out at Chloride Cliff where Dad was involved with his father and some mining interests out there. They were pumping water from Keane Springs some 4 miles up to Chloride Cliff. This involves a whole bunch of, I think, 2-inch pipe. Well, by golly, I don't know what time of year or whatever, but all of a sudden the water wasn't arriving, and by the time they got down there, some thousands of feet of 2-inch pipe was gone. And Dad, knowing the lay of the land, said he knew who had it right off. So he found George Ishmael and said, "Bring my pipe back and hook it up,

and I want my water going." And George said he didn't know a thing about it, and Dad said, it happened it was in California just over the state line,"--and Dad's brother-in-law was a lawyer there. He said "All right, I'm going right after it," and he gave him a week to have the pipe back. Well, George took him at his word and the pipe mysteriously reappeared, and the water started flowing. It was a huge joke.

MC: Dad told him in no uncertain terms that he not only wanted the pipe back, he wanted water.

JC: George took it very good naturedly. He just picked the wrong guy to try to steal pipe from. So it was a loss, and he went on. On the other hand George was a super guy, and my father said he was the only guy he ever saw who could walk up and see a huge stack of thousands of board feet of mixed kinds of lumber, 2 by 4s, 2 by 12s, 1 by whatever, and just stand there and look at it and tell you what board feet were involved. A sir guy, as a salvage expert, you could call him.

RM: As a salvage...midnight salvage. [laughter]

JC: As I say, he had a problem with the ownership of the stuff.

RM: What was his background? Do you know what nationality was he?

JC: Well, that's a good question. You know I know particularly his oldest son who worked for us for a number of years.

MC: His daughter lives here in Beatty. Phyllis Bell.

JC: Those earlier years, as I think about them, when I was from 8 to 15 and maybe 20, were the years when we had contact with George. Amazingly enough he had been married a number of times, and then finally he married this woman who totally converted him to a religious life.

MC: She was herself a minister, I think.

JC: Something like that. At any rate, he really became religious. He died just some 2 or 3 years ago, and I went to his funeral right here in Beatty. I saw a number of his sons, daughters and whatever.

RM: Yes, Art Revert pointed out his grave to me today in the cemetery.

JC: I guess people like to look down on someone if they can find any excuse, but I liked the old boy, and I thought he was a pretty marvelous person, immensely strong.

MC: They called him Porky.

JC: Yes, I think maybe in later years he was somewhat fat, but he really was a fellow that was just barrel-chested. I think something on the order of about 6 feet tall, probably weighed about—maybe I'm over-estimating this because I was younger when I knew him--but I would say 230 or 240 pounds, not much of it fat in his young days. There were people who claimed that he could stand and lift a barrel of gasoline, hand over hand by rope, up on to a truck. He had two sons. Lynn, whom we knew very well, was about 6'2" and about 230 or 240, and his younger son Dewey is something like 6'6" or 6'7" and about the same weight. So they were big people and very strong, and of course he was well equipped to move things well. As to nationality, I haven't the foggiest. No accent. For example, I wouldn't say he was Irish, I wouldn't say he was Serbian, or anything like that, nothing identifiable.

RM: Did you know Seldom-Seen Slim?

JC: No. I've heard of him and I've seen the pictures, and of course the name just fractures me. I've seen pictures of him. There was a fellow here who is dead now, W. H. Brown, who knew him. I have seen pictures of the two of them together, and I knew Brownie quite well. But not Seldom-Seen Slim.

MC: Did he used to live over in Ballarat?

JC: I think he lived over in that area. Yes, he ran by himself, but I know virtually nothing about him.

RM: Do you know any Death Valley Scotty stories or anymore Dad Fairbanks stories? Any of the kind of legendary characters that came out of this part of the country?

JC: I can't think of any offhand. We've had some marvelous personalities work in the mine, of course, but they weren't people who many other people would recognize. We had an old Slav fellow, Tom Levronovich was his name.

MC: Oh, he's legendary in the family. His sayings are quoted by our children.

JC: He spoke rather broken English. He was just a marvelous old boy, a good worker and he was "dusted" as they say. He got miner's consumption (silicosis). Most of those old miners did, because gosh they were refugees of that mining soon after the turn of the century, I think, when they drilled dry, with all that dust Any silica of course the body couldn't throw off, and it just gradually filled up their lungs. This old boy worked for us back around 1945, and I don't think he was over 50. As I recall it seems to me that he should have been 60 or 65, the way he looked. He was quite strong, but had very shallow breathing all the time. Of course he didn't have much lung volume so he just had to breathe a lot more than others, but that didn't hold him back. He did a fine day's work. Super sense of humor in his broken English. He was a marvelous old boy.

MC: One of the stories they tell about him was that there was some kind of fender bender or a near miss perhaps. The person who was riding in the car began to upbraid him, "Why don't you watch what you are doing." And finally he could endure it no longer and he said, "Who driving this car, you or I'm."

JC: That was his kind of syntax.

MC: And that's a classic thing in our house. When someone doesn't refrain from what he keeps instructing you to do, it's "Who driving this car, you or I'm."

JC: I am sure that when he was in his '20s or early '30s that he was slope shouldered and all, but I am sure that he could have handled himself very very well with his fists or whatever it took. It always kind of surprised me in our mine here. A lot of the young fellows, oh, they kind of thought it was clever to get smart with these old fellows. And it always seemed to me very poor judgment. I saw this guy on at least a couple of occasions. These guys would make some obscene gesture to him or tell him to do something, or what he could do, and.... Here's an old boy that had always taken care of himself and always been challenged when he was younger, and he always did it with his fist. And when he's too old for that he knows he can't handle this kid who's 20 or 30 years younger, so he reaches around and he grabs the nearest thing--whether it's a pick or an axe or a starter steel or whatever, and he takes after him. I saw him do that, and I always thought afterwards what a foolish thing--to challenge some fellow like this, because if he gets you with a pick or with an axe, you're liable not to walk away. It's not going just to be a broken nose or something.

RM: That's something that I've always heard--being chased down the drift or out of a stope by somebody with his starter steel.

JC: Somebody came in one day and commented that was they seemed surprised that he'd accomplished so much. That he's driven his drifts so far. So he said, "What you think; I'm dancing this drift." He had a super sense of humor, and I knew he knew that everybody was laughing either with him or at him, but it didn't bother him. He had a good sense of humor. He always enjoyed it.

MC: And he kind of liked to tease Jack's father. And once in a while he went a little too far, and Dad would get mad at him, and then he'd say, "I forget look him eye."

RM: Any other town characters or characters at the mines?

JC: There must have been. People like Panamint Annie. Of course these were latter years, really, in the '50s and '60s.

MC: What about Screaming Patty.

JC: Yes. I guess it's because of our location. It takes independent and real self sinkers, independent people to come and live in this kind of country and to work in the mines, because it is hard work. In the summer it's hot, and in the winter it's cold, and it's windy, and people don't care about that. They do what they want to do, and the last thing they are afraid of is a hard day's work. These people are real solid citizens. They fall down in a lot of ways, but you have to admire them for what they've done. Just go around and look at the holes dug in this country-- and it wasn't done with compressed air either. It was done with hand steels and a shovel and this kind of stuff. But this Screaming Patty and--was it Gasoline Bill?

MC: No, Gasoline Bill lived over at Rhyolite. It was a Bill, though.

JC: Bill...Franey was his name. He was this little Finnish miner, and he had this wife, Patty Franey. But her name around here was Screaming Patty. She usually cooked, I think, at a boarding house at some of the mines, usually over in the Panamints, and this was in the late '50s or early '60s. They would come to town, not necessarily every weekend.

MC: After payday probably.

JC: Undoubted it was a payday, and they'd come rolling into town and naturally pour into the nearest bar with a bunch of the other miners bent in the same direction. Of course how the people handled the liquor was where the difference was, because most of the guys were reasonably peaceful. There were fist fights and jails were peopled with them often on Sunday mornings, but anyhow this pair were something else. Franey was an excellent miner, little guy just tough as nails. Did a super job, but he'd get to drinking and he'd get kind of maudlin and real good natured. His wife was just the other way around, and got raucous and loud. We had this friend of ours from California who described this scene on a Saturday afternoon or something. He was coming out of the grocery store on Main Street, and he happened to look across the street at what's now the Sourdough. It was called South Seas before that, but I'm not sure what the name was then. He happened to see the screen door pushed open and this guy kind of crawl out, and he starts actually almost tiptoeing down the sidewalk. Obviously trying to elude someone, and he gets about a half a block down the sidewalk, and the screen door slams open and this gal comes out, looks up one way, down the other way. And here she spies him. I'm not going to say the words as I recall then, but, "Hey you, you dirty S.O.B..." And I mean she's screeching; you can hear her for blocks, and hence the name Screaming Patty. And this thing was repeated weekend after weekend I guess. But it just blew this guy away, our friend from California, and of course we were meeting over a drink at the bar or somewhere and we all had a good laugh over that so many times.

But that's typical of a lot of the characters. They did what they wanted to and they didn't really care what anybody thought. Boy, there were a lot of others, but none of them come to mind right now.

RM: Is there anything else that you thought of today since we talked, either of you?

JC: One small item that came to my mind, and I talked to Maudie and I think you guys actually touched on it when I was gone for a short time last night I was recalling our routine in going to Vegas, and how different as Vegas was then. We have always bought a great deal of our mining supplies in Las Vegas. For the mine we'd have to buy electrical equipment, plumbing pipe, and all this, and for those many years from the time that the T&T railroad was pulled out in 1938 until about some 6 or 7 years ago, we had a truck. Usually it was a diesel truck hauling our ore to Vegas virtually every day depending on our volume of business. So it was no problem to buy pipe or timber or whatever, and to bring it back on the empty truck.

RM: Where did you usually buy your supplies? What company in Vegas?

JC: Oh, we've always bought our electrical and plumbing stuff at Standard wholesale. This goes clear back into the late '30s or '40s. We bought a Lot of stuff from Clark Co. Wholesale, automotive parts and stuff. We usually were running International Harvester trucks and engines and stuff, so that we could buy those things from them. And we dealt with various lumber companies over the years. Way, way back, Woiteshek Lumber Company, a long, long time ago. Von Tobel, and in more recent years we just deal with the people up around Redding in northern California, and they haul them down, a truck or a trailer or both of timber. Of course now we have Lisle Hardware, we buy it right here, but for all those years we bought those kind of things at Von Tobel Hardware.

But, amazingly enough, clear back in the '40s it didn't take much longer to get to Las Vegas than it does now. I can guarantee we weren't driving 55 miles a hour, of course we aren't now, but we weren't then either. We drive 65 and 70 and we get there now in 2 hours or a little less. We'd leave here at 8:00, my mother and father and my brother and I, and often we'd get out of school because there was something to do down there with dentists or whatever. We'd go down there and get there at 10:00 or so, and Vegas was so incredibly small when you compare it to present day Las Vegas. You can drive 50 miles just driving around Las Vegas in a day's shopping.

In those days, when Sears built their store at Sixth and Fremont, it was on the edge of town as far as shopping was concerned, and there were about 4 or 5 blocks on Fremont that really comprised the town. Standard wholesale was just a few blocks south on Main Street. We'd shop in the morning a bit, and we'd leave a grocery list at Sewell's or later the Market Spot, or whatever the store was, and we'd get a lot done by noon. We'd eat lunch at Smith's, I think, over by Third and two streets north of Fremont, Stewart.

MC: There by the post office.

JC: We'd have a hamburger and a milkshake, and then amazingly enough we'd have most of our stuff done, and we'd go to the movie. There were two movies, the El Portal and the Palace, some 2 or 3 blocks from each other.

MC: And they were air conditioned.

JC: And we'd go to the movie at, say, 1:00; we'd get out at 3:00 or 4:00. In the summer if you can imagine walking out of that air conditioned thing right into that sun, and boy it got hot, as it does now. And no air conditioning in the cars.

CHAPTER SIX

JC (continued): And sometimes we'd left shoes to be repaired or something, so we would pick them up, and it was virtually a walking job from the center of town to accomplish this stuff. If you can imagine that of Las Vegas now.

MC: Now you spend your time at the intersection. of Sahara and Maryland Parkway waiting for the light to change.

RM: Can you believe those lights in Vegas? The worst I've ever seen.

JC: And then we'd pick up our groceries about 5:00, and we'd eat dinner at the Silver Cafe or something like that, and drive home. And it was just as simple as that in the '30s and '40s.

RM: When you were in high school.

JC: Yes, it was growing a bit by the time I was attending high school.

MC: But the business stuff was all downtown.

JC: And the years have changed things. We had an excellent grocery store here in Beatty when Maudie and I came back from the Navy in the summer of '57. You could get anything you wanted.

RM: Did we give enough treatment to your high school years in Vegas? Anything there that helped shape the way you view the world or helped shape the life in Beatty?

JC: Of course I can't really say I lived in Las Vegas since I was there from Sunday night to Friday, so in a sense I wasn't a full-time resident, but it was a pretty darn nice place to be. There were a lot of nice people in Vegas, and a lot of those people are still there.

MC: What about your teachers and the people you met in high school?

JC: Oh. yes. Just marvelous teachers; there was a math teacher, a lady named Miss Newton, just a marvelous math teacher. I truly enjoyed the school, and I felt that I learned a lot, and a made a lot of friends, and people I still see occasionally in Las Vegas. And some of them we saw later in Reno, in attending the University of Nevada.

MC: And you met someone from every community in the state--and still know them. They've gone back to their original homes, and you visit them or you write.

JC: A lot of them went back into their own families' businesses and such, and they are still there.

RM: So you graduated from Las Vegas High, and then went to the University of Nevada.

JC: I stayed out a year because when I graduated I had just been 17 for 4 months, so I was just 4 months over 16 years old, because I jumped a year in grammar school. I knew that I wanted to go to the School of Mines in Reno, but I was young, and it seemed advisable to wait a year. I worked the 15 months in the mine here, and got some more mining experience and was able to save some money. I must say that I was kind of worried that I would lose track. Of course a lot of my classmates from Vegas were a year ahead of me when I went up to Reno. On the other hand, there was an advantage really because I knew them, and it gave me entry into a fraternity, for example, when I did go to Reno, and I found that staying out a year I didn't forget the math and stuff.

RM: Did you work as a miner in the mine?

JC: Yes, I worked underground.

MC: Drove the truck too. That's how I met him.

JC: Yes, I drove our truck to Vegas some of the time, and I had a close friend from high school, a fellow named Martin Granstrom who had contacts around Searchlight, and his family lived in Boulder City. He knew Maudie and he introduced me to her. I went down there Labor Day just a couple of weeks before heading off to college in 1949. I hauled a load in with the truck that day, and I made contact with him somewhere. He said, "Let's go on a date. There's someone I want you to meet." It turned out to be my wife.

RM: And what was your maiden name then?

MC: Carl. In fact, when our daughter Andrea went to University she went to talk to her history professor [Russell Eliot] about a paper she was supposed to do. He wanted to discuss the subject, and so she commented that her mother had been a student of his. He said, "Oh, what's your name?" She said Crowell. He said, "Is that the Carson City Crowells," and she said, "No, it's the Beatty Crowells." Then she said about her mother, and he said, "What was her name?" She said, "Maud-Kathrin Carl," and he said, "Oh, is that the Boulder City Carls?" Absolutely a characteristic Nevada conversation.

RM: It's still a small enough state.

MK: So then you met her on this trip to Vegas through your friend after she had just graduated from high school. But you didn't know each other in high school.

MC: No, we were freshmen together at UNR in 1949. I had skipped a grade also, and so I was 16 until April of the year I graduated from high school, but I wasn't about to stay home. I was eager to go to college. School in those days started a little later, after Labor Day, about 2 weeks

after. But there was freshman orientation; it was about a week after I met Jack that I went up to Reno.

RM: Do you still have family in Boulder City?

MC: No, mother sold out and she lives in Santa Barbara now. My father died in '51.

RM: While you were still in college?

MC: Right. I stayed out the year that he died; I never graduated. The year that he died I spent at home and I worked at the Bureau of Reclamation in Boulder City. My brother was in college then, and I have a younger sister, who was 15 then. Jack and I were married in 1953, the week he graduated, and that's when we took off for Colorado.

RM: So you moved up to Reno as a freshman.

MC: I think Jack and one other were the only non-veterans in his freshman class.

JC: At that time they thought that it was the last year that the World War II veterans could start college under the G.I. Bill, although I think later they extended it. A lot of them went into the School of Mines. Mining engineering, metallurgical engineering and geological engineering, that's what they called it then. They have kind of rearranged it now. There were 25 or 30 freshman in those classes, and nearly all of them were vets. So here I was, 18 years old, and these guys were 22 and 23 and kind of men of the world really. Some married, some of them with kids.

MC: We felt they had an enormous advantage. When we were writing themes and things in freshman English, they had things to really talk about.

RM: But you had the advantage too of actually being a real miner.

JC: Yes, that's true. That was an advantage. It's just unbelievable, here they were committing themselves to a least 4 years of college and a whole lifetime of mining engineering, and some of them had never been in a mine.

MC: How did they know that they didn't have claustrophobia?

JC: I don't know. UNR we have always felt very close to because both Maudie and I loved the time we spent in Reno. Of course it's a great time in your life. Lord, if you can't be happy when you are 18, 19, 20, 21, you'll never be happy, I would say. And I don't know what it was like before then, but Reno was still pretty small, like Vegas was. The diversity of Nevada, was pretty small too. There were, I think, some 1,300. You'd walk down the campus, and after you were there a couple of years you could nod to more than half the people. I got involved with a fraternity, ATO, and I just loved every minute of it. I became deeply involved all 4 years, and I

was president when I was a senior. To this day I look back at that as my greatest accomplishment. Here's a group of fellows, about 80 guys, who chose you to lead their group. I just felt so pleased about it, and it meant more than a lot of things I've done before or since. Whether they were very great or not.

Maudie's family had financial problems, and she would go 2 or 3 semesters and then drop out for a semester or so. I was more fortunate. The mine was going pretty good in those days, and the family essentially put me through. They have a catalog of course that delineates all the Wises that you take as a first semester freshman, second, and right on through, and I took every one. I was probably the only one there who had passed them all and finished in 4 years. In later years our kids, especially our youngest son Richard, who just graduated less than 2 years ago took some 5 years to go in chemical engineering, and he kept saying, "Nobody graduates in 4 years." By George, they did then; I don't see why they can't now.

MC: Not so many did then either. There were not that many who finished in 4 years.

JC: But I had a leg up with mining experience. But you know, coming back to Reno and the University, it was just a marvelous place to be in those days, in the early '50s. It was so small compared to what it is now, and when I say the University was small and so many people knew each other, the same thing was true of Reno, too. Harrah's Club was there, and Harold's Club was there.

MC: Harold's Club in those days gave \$1,000 a year to a graduate of every high school in the state.

RM: I didn't know that. You could almost go to school a year on that.

JC: You certainly could, because I sure did. It cost \$85 a month for room and board, and by working I could make that much. There wasn't any tuition, and you paid a matriculation fee one time; it was \$5 or \$10. You had to buy your books, but they were much cheaper. However, things like Jack's books were more expensive. I was an English major; we even had paperbacks then and you could economize, or you could buy secondhand books. You could pay the expenses of going to the University on \$1,000 a year, but you had to be careful. It was a full ride, if you were the least bit cautious.

JC: If these people kept up their grades and minded their p's and q's.

RM: Did it go to the valedictorian?

MC: Almost always. I think you had to show need, so there were a lot of Harold scholars. The one requirement was that you were not to darken their door. You couldn't go into the gambling place.

RM Of course that was when they had signs all over "Harold's Club or bust," wasn't it.

JC: They had them all over the world.

MC: And all over the whole United States on the major highways. Old Harold Smith, or "they," since it was really a family, did a lot of good. While you were at college, did you come back to Beatty in the summers and work in the mine?

JC: Yes. Saved some money, and kind of touched base, I guess.

RM: Well, can you tell us what the town was like by 1950?

JC: You know we talked at length about Beatty last night, and I was thinking that Beatty has just grown a lot. Of course it's still very small compared to most places, but I don't think Beatty grew very much from the late '30s and early '40s. I don't think it had even grown very much in the early '50s.

RM: Until the testing had come in '51.

JC: Yes, and it didn't have the benefit of that, and few of the gold mines that had been shut down during the war ever started up again.

RM: Could we name those again now and talk about the ones that didn't open? By '50, what was happening to these places?

JC: None of them were even turning a wheel.

RM: OK, the Gold Ace was down. Pioneer. Was there any activity, do you remember?

JC: No, a ghost town really.

MK: How about Rhyolite? Or Bullfrog? Was there any mining activity there?

JC: No, I don't think there was any mining activity, as I remember. Our mine was going. I'm not sure the Vanderbilt clay and silicate interests were started yet. They operate now and have for the last 20 or 30 years.

RM: Do you know much about these mines?

JC: Not very much. Jerry lease of course is the manager of them. There's one called Sidehill just down near the narrows here, and they have a property just a little west of where Tenneco Mill is. Seems like there's One up around Lida somewhere. I really am not very well versed in this, but my understanding is that they have some 3, 4, 5 properties where they mine clays of varying quality and characteristics, and they jump around and mine at these different places as the demand comes up or down. I think they were originally private; the Vanderbilt interests bought them a number of years ago, and Vanderbilt still owns them.

MC: It says so on their trucks.

RM: I was told that the one down in the Amargosa, right at the base of the Funerals, was where they mine clay that they grind up and use as face powder.

MC: Well, masks.

JC: Is that what that is? It's quite valuable too. It's very fussy on grade; they have to mine it very carefully and be very careful that impurities don't get in it, but it's rather valuable.

RM: Yes. Somebody quoted a figure of \$2 a pound, once it's ground up. But I think it's neat that here the women of the world are wearing a little of the Amargosa on their faces. [laughter]
Now, what about Chloride Cliff?

MC : There was somebody who had a cinnabar property. I don't think they ever made any money.

JC: There was a cinnabar occurrence over in the hills back of our mine. There have been a number of people who tried to operate it, but they could never really make money with that. There was a time there when the price of cinnabar, mercury that is, was pretty high, and people were really scurrying around to get after any kind of occurrence, but I don't think people even made money on it then. I graduated in '53, and it was just a little after that, about the mid '50s, when mercury got so high.

RM: Yes, I remember in the mid '50s when we were mining there was a lot of interest in it.

JC: The nice thing about cinnabar is that it's a small outfit. One or 2 guys can make a go of it because it's so simple to process. All you need is to retort and burn it off, and so it is very amenable to small operations.

But as I think back, when I was in college the hot mineral was tungsten; that was the big deal. There really is no tungsten around here that I can think of, but in northern Nevada there's a lot of it. I know a lot of my classmates were doing research in tungsten beneficiation or going to companies that were dealing with it.

RM: I remember Timpahute was going then. I think it was Ralph Lisle who was telling me that at the beginning of World War II, he had a tungsten mine for a little while up Surprise Canyon out of Panamint until they got washed out there. I wonder if there was any activity in that mine in these early days?

JC: I don't know. Of course we are close enough that some of those people drift over here and then we got some of the people to work in our mine in the years past, but it's far enough that we really don't know that much about it.

RM: Where do they orient toward economically, I wonder, out of the Panamints. Do they go more over into the Owens Valley?

JC: I suspect the Owens Valley. Olancho and Lone Pine, probably. They are in California of course so politically they have to look west, not east

RM: So it sounds like there really was hardly a mine going, was there? Aside from yours.

JC: That's about the truth. The gold was just flat in those days; the price had been pegged at \$35 an ounce, and of course it wasn't inflation like we had in the '60s and '70s, but nevertheless things were getting more expensive.

MC: You know they held down the prices all during the war, and when they released those things shot up.

JC: But gold still sold for the same \$35 a ounce.

RM: And silver was pegged, wasn't it?

JC: Yes, I think so. It was pretty quiet around here in the early '50s.

RM: Well if you could I'd like you to walk us through the town again. Were the same bars there as in 1940 when we took our last walk through?

JC: I think largely so.

RM: Did you see any buildings or any changes in terms of the infrastructure of the town? Was there change in lights or the sewer system?

MC: What sewer system?

JC: I really don't think so.

RM: Phones had come in, hadn't they?

JC: Phones had come in during the war, and we went on the dial system. We didn't come back to live here until 1957, when they still had the crank phones. We rented a house from the Welch's north of town, where Gus Sullivan lives now. We were Beatty #20; that was our phone number, still on the old party line. There were 3 lines of 10 parties each.

RM: This was in '57. But in '50 there was still the same system that they put in during World War II.

JC: That's right. I suppose comparing 1951 to 1957, things were starting to pick up, because there was a good grocery store here then. More people were coming, and I think there was more activity in town.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: When I listened to the tape from last night there was a little ambiguity in my mind. Before they built the El Portal motel, there wasn't a motel, was there?

JC: I'm quite sure there wasn't.

RM: And the only thing would have been the little hotel right on Main Street.

JC: The Beatty Hotel.

RM: Is that what it is called? Art called it by an owner.

JC: Cragg Hotel. Bill Cragg has been dead for a long time, so I think it really was the Beatty. It's really not a hotel anymore; I don't think they rent rooms on a nightly basis. They have permanents.

RM: But at that time was it a hotel? Up until 1950?

JC: I think so. I can't pin it down, but I should note that right across Main Street there was another building of a very similar shape, called, later on, the Cobb Apartments, named after a family, the Cobbs, who were here clear back into the '30s. I don't recall when they came.

MC: Some of their family still live here.

JC: Some of their descendants. But it was a hotel, very similar; it was a two-story structure, big old frame. I was on the fire department here for 17 years, and that's one of the buildings that we always looked at and just cringed, because you just knew that some day it was going to catch fire, and sure enough it did. It was a winter night and the wind was blowing about 25 miles and hour, and we put it out, but it was sad because it destroyed so much of it that you might as well have let the rest of it burn. They had to destroy it and haul it out.

RM: Was it here when you were a kid?

JC: Yes.

RM: So it burned and had to be torn down. Well, then there was really no place if people were passing through town to stay.

JC: That's correct. There really wasn't. Of course it's interesting to see your attitude and what you are asking because it is hard to feature at this stage of the game when you see the traffic on US 95. But in those days, there wasn't that much traffic on US 95. There were people who lived in Tonopah; I guess they went to Reno or Vegas or something, but they didn't spend the night, and you didn't have many people traveling from Portland to somewhere--I guess maybe

there were, but they didn't stay at Beatty. Not only that, people camped out. For one thing it was safe. They didn't have trailers, but they used a bedroll or something...

RM: Yes, we used to do it.

JC: But I think the El Portal motel was built by Staley, as we were talking last night, and I guessed about 1940. However, we looked at that school picture and it was '38 or '39, and there is Jimmy Staley. They were here then, and they came here, his father, to build that motel. So it may be as early as '37.

RM: Do you know what motivated him to build the motel?

JC: Perhaps it was the formation of the national monument at Death Valley.

JC: He had relatives. I think somebody Goodman was the superintendent, and he was some relative of his. That's a good insight; it might be true.

RM: Yes, because that was in the '30s, if I remember right. Where was your grocery store then in 1950? Revert's store was gone.

MC: The building was there, but the store was not in operation.

JC: Revert's store was gone, I would say, around about the middle or late '40s.

RM: I think Art told me that then he started the market next to the Exchange. Is that right?

JC: I think Joe Andre started that; maybe somebody else did.

RM: But there was another store. I was over at Rhyolite today and talking to Thompson, and he's got a picture of the Beatty store, of the building on the outside and presumably two pictures of it inside.

MC: Was it frame?

RM: Yes, white frame building. And Scotty is standing on the front porch.

JC: Boy, I can't say. I just can't remember

RM:- Was the post office at that time in the market?

JC: Well, what was later the market; I don't know if it was a market then. It was that old building, part of what is now the Exchange, and what was then the Exchange too. They had some big old rocks, stones, I think it was, that were the facade of that. Remember that? And I

can remember there was a lizard. Do you remember ever seeing that? Somebody had kind of chiseled it in there?

MC: Oh, yes. I remember that. It was painted kind of dark green.

JC: It was right in the stone of the facade of that building, the Exchange Club and the post office all joined.

MC: And there was a metal awning. They took all those down in 1952 when they fancied up the highway, made the 4 lanes through town, and it was the nicest thing because it made shade. Later they had to paint the windows and put up blinds to keep the western sun out, and then there were trees, cottonwood trees, that lined the street. It was really attractive, and it made it nice in the summer.

JC: Between the sidewalk and the street, there was a big timber, something like a 12 by 12 cross-section that ran all down through there, and people sat on it.

MC: People parked at an angle into the curb instead of parallel as they do now.

RM: So that it was just a 2-lane street going down there lined with cottonwoods.

JC: I don't recall the cottonwoods right at the main intersection.

MC: Not on the Main Street side, but on the Second Street side. Not at the Exchange.

JC: I think you're right, not at the Exchange. At one time there were; you can see old pictures of it.

MC: But later it was further down.

RM: So then you went away, you graduated in the summer of '53.

JC: We saw some of the early atmospheric tests incidentally.

RM: You did? Tell me about that, and tell me about people's reactions.

MC: It was kind of a tourist event; everybody got up early so they could see it.

JC: I don't know; I guess we didn't know enough to be worried. Perhaps as it turns out we needn't have been, but I guess had we been more cognizant of what was going on, maybe we'd have been more upset. But I remember that they set them off very early in the morning, before daybreak. I can recall one particular instance, I think this was 1951, and I took pictures of it too. I didn't take pictures of the first one. There were people here who, right from the start, worked over at the Test Site, so we were aware of what was going on.

They seemed to set them off very early in the morning, at dawn. It was still dark in some times of the year, because I can remember one in particular--the first one that we ever saw. I was in college then, and I was home for Easter. We drove south down to what is now the road over to the Sterling mine, to the Saga gold mine, down just a little south of Nuclear Engineering, a matter of a mile or 2 south.

RM: Nuclear Engineering; where are they?

MC: U.S. Ecology.

JC: And the road is still there. It's a good road now that goes over to the gold mine, but it was a mile or 2 south of U.S. Ecology. Turn to the left, which would be east or northeast, and headed out on that dirt road, and just up over that saddle, and you could look right straight over to the Test Site. And it's not very far. These were Yucca Flats; that's where they were setting these fellows off. It was probably a maximum of 30 miles. And it was pretty thrilling really.

MC: One thing, in those days, it was ours. Nobody else had it.

JC: There were just a few streaks of dawn coming, almost totally dark, and we had been warned not to look at it because it was very bright. And it was very bright. But we were looking the other way, and it was something like 5 or 5:30. They were dropping them from planes at that time, as I recall. And here we are looking at the ground, and it was just incredible. One second, everything was fine and black, the next second it's like an arc welding light--just kind of a blue-white light. Everywhere. And we waited a moment and then turned around and looked back, and everything was just this pure white light, and then it just faded back down, almost to nothing. And then you could see this orange fireball start to come building up, and then the colors would fade back down into purples and stuff. And then eventually the famous mushroom cloud. And amazingly enough we had been told by friends that you probably wouldn't even hear it. Here we were only some 30 miles away, and here's this huge explosion to create all this light. We did hear this one, but just a faint, faint rumbling like a little bit of thunder way off. It was a pretty impressive show, it really was. And then we later saw a few others.

MC: But people become jaded, you know. I saw the last one. We went up toward the mine and turned north, and went up and you could look down into Yucca or Frenchman.

JC: Yes, you are looking really at Yucca Mountain.

RM: Were you looking across Yucca Mountain from where you were?

JC: Yes, it would have had to have been.

MC: But in this instance it was closer to Beatty where we observed it. And I was pregnant with Julie so it must have been '58; that was the last above-ground test, Mount Hood I think it was called. Everything was exactly the same, except in those days they set it off from towers. And

when we drove back, I've always thought of this because a book I love is Tolkien's "The Trilogy of the Ring," and there where he describes the collapse of the terrible power of evil, this cloud comes up and it turns into kind of a question mark. And that's exactly what the cloud looked like. As we were driving home--of course you saw the regular mushroom cloud. But as we were driving home by then the sun was out and it was full daylight, there was this gray cloud. You could still see it; it was just in the shape of a question mark.

RM: Wow!

MC: I wonder if Tolkien had read that and used it in his book.

JC: Of course from Vegas it wouldn't have looked like that because the winds work it at different elevations.

RM: Did you have to wear film badges here?

JC: Not then, no. We have worn them since at times for short periods of time. Of course, we're in kind of a unique situation where our mine is because we are really straight toward the Test Site from Beatty some 5 miles. Still even though they don't set them off at Yucca Flat, where they have moved has not really been away from our mine or from Beatty. It has been kind of parallel. We're still only 30 miles or so over there.

RM: Do they alert you before each shot nowadays so you won't have anybody in the mine when they go off?

JC: That's right. For years. And I am quite sure that we were the ones who instigated that, because we just felt that we weren't convinced that they knew precisely how powerful each one of those would be, although we never really experienced any tremors underground.

RM: You've never felt them in the mines.

JC: Not underground, no. We had never really consciously noticed them. We just got to worrying about it, and asked through the mine inspector that this be done, and they have been very cooperative.

RM: Do they tell you even about unannounced shots?

JC: They don't tell us about small ones. Someone decides I guess whether there is any possibility of true ground motion where we are, and I guess that's how they determine it.

RM: Can you see Yucca Flats from your mine?

JC: No. We can see some of the very northernmost parts of Rainier Mesa; we can see that.

RM: Oh, you can. Where the tunnels are in Rainier Mesa?

JC: I don't think we can see that, because there are mountains intervening. But looking almost north-northeast, we can look clear across and see the mesa up there. I recall that there was one shot some 10 or 12 years ago where they were drilling and setting them off. It was going to be a very large one, and it turned out from the notion that it was a big one. We watched, and you could see just literally see dust rise from the whole mesa.

RM: Have you ever had any radiation accidentally come your way, especially in the early days?

JC: Not that we were aware of.

MC: Not when we lived here, but they used to stop traffic when they set those above-ground tests, and then sometimes they'd hold people up and make them wait apparently until the winds moved differently. But Beatty is pretty much upwind.

RM: Yes, I think they are a lot more careful about the winds now than they were in the early days.

MC: Well, they're careful if it's blowing toward Las Vegas, but of course look what's happened to St. George and Alamo and those communities downwind.

RM: I think they were less careful when those happened.

MC: Not only that, everybody knows that nobody lives there. [laughter]

JC: Of course the prevailing winds are some form of westerlies, west, north west or southwest, and we are definitely to the west of the Test Site so it takes a pretty weird wind circulation pattern to get us. There was one time. I didn't see it for myself because we were going to school. But they set one of the atmospheric ones off, and I guess the winds were so threatening that they had busses lined up down by the narrows ready to evacuate Beatty. Mind you, I didn't see those, but I've been told, and it sounded pretty authentic.

RM: What were your personal feelings then about possibility of radiation exposure, and what do you think other people thought?

JC: Well, people didn't know much about it, and we were largely trusting, I guess. Of course, as I say, we are pretty well vindicated in our thoughts. Of course some of the people over to the east maybe aren't so. It didn't turn out so well. I guess we just trusted the government and felt that they knew what was going on. I'm a lot less naive now; as it turned out I don't think there was any real harm to the Beatty area.

MC: In '54 while Jack was in OCS they had Camp Desert Rock and those operations. I worked in Las Vegas for Silas Mason, who at that time was the architect-engineer at the Test Site, the

position that Reeco has now. And it was a much smaller thing. They had the testing on Kwajalein [in the Pacific] and some of the people who worked in our office would go out then. There was a hiatus in the testing at the Test Site during the months that I worked there, so I never had any exposure to it. But everybody was pretty cool about it, you know.

RM: What was the name of the company?

MC: Silas Mason. They had an office down where the Opportunity Village is now, on Coolidge and Main

JC: Presumably the prime contractor, which is what Reynolds is now.

MC: Yes, they were the prime contractor. And I was the secretary to the office engineer. There were very few engineers. I don't think there were 10 engineers in the whole operation.

RM: I wonder how they lost the contract?

MC: Yes, that would be interesting to know. I left them in June of '54 when Jack had expected to go to sea. He had orders to a destroyer, but he had an opportunity to spend a year in Monterey at post-graduate school studying meteorology. The Navy needed meteorologists, so he took that and we moved to Monterey. The one time we ever lived in a city.

RM: In the '50s did they have a uranium "boom"?

JC: Yes. I don't think there ever was any basis for it, but of course it was so blown out of proportion and everybody has running around with Geiger counters, even around here. Staking claims like crazy.

MC: How about up, there by Tonopah? You, could see all those glory holes, where all it was fallout from the testing.

RM: That's what I was going to say.

JC: All you needed to be a miner was a D.A. cap and a bunch of 4 by 4 claim posts.

MC: That's all it's ever taken, my dear.

JC: That's true, that hasn't changed, but people thought it had all of a sudden. They didn't really understand how to use the Geiger counter, I suppose.

RM: Yes, out where we were in Reveille Valley, the sagebrush was a little bit hot, and it would give a reading and all these guys came out there with their Geiger counters and say, "Man we're close to something big!" And it didn't occur to them--it didn't occur to us either--that this was fallout.

MC: Well, my dad, when Manganese Ore closed down, had recruiters from the Manhattan Project who came out and talked to the engineers. They were hot after my father because he specialized in inorganic chemistry.

JC: He had a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland.

MC: So they were interested in him, and he said, "What are you doing?" Of course they wouldn't tell him, and he said, "If you won't tell me, I won't go." And they wouldn't, and he didn't. He was afraid it was poison gas or something like that since he was in inorganic.

JC: He had been in World War I on the German side.

MC: He was in the Navy, but still he had known enough people who were involved. I can remember vividly when they dropped the first bomb on Hiroshima, and Daddy said, "That's what they were doing. Thank God I had nothing to do with it."

RM: What was your father's occupation in Boulder City?

MC: Well, he did whatever came to hand. Things were tough. He drove a truck, a big old Euclid.

RM: Oh that's right; he was working at the Three Kid mine. But he wasn't a metallurgist, or anything?

MC: No, he was chemist, but he made big bucks driving that Euclid--, more than he ever made as a chemist.

JC: He was a Ph.D. in chemistry. Driving a truck.

RM: During the war.

MC: Yes. Our family still lived in Phoenix.

MC: It was a waste, but a job is a job. They were constructing the fabrications plant at that time, so when the plant was done of course he went into the lab.

RM: At BMI? At Three Kids?

MC: No at Manganese Ore.

RM: He never worked at BMI?

MC: Well, he did not during the war. Then the war ended, and he got a job with War Assets.

RM: Which was when they sold off?

JC: They were disbursing all that stuff, and not a weeks Dent by that he didn't come home with something, you know. Down sleeping bags--well, they were feathers; they weren't really down. Hospital cots, and all for pennies, you know.

JC: A fascinating man.

MC: He was, but he was so thankful that he had nothing to do with that. And a lot of colleagues had gone. They did go to Knoxville and to Hanford.

RM: He was always in the lab there at Three Kids?

MC: Yes. People there were put out of work when the plant closed.

RM: This would have been when?

JC: Right at the end of the war. I would say end of '44, more likely the beginning of '45.

RM: Did he die prematurely?

MC: He died of uremia; he was 57, so, yes, I would say so. However, in his lifetime he had done so much and had had so many interesting experiences I think people could live twice as long and never have done as much. It was a loss, but at least he had fun while he was alive.

RM: So then, you graduated and joined the Navy.

MC: He didn't exactly join. [laughs]

JC: Graduated and got drafted. It was June '53, and Maudie and I had gone together for about 3-1/2 years in college. But I think it was just a week after I graduated that we were married in Boulder City, and then I got this job with a mining company in Telluride, Colorado.

CHAPTER EIGHT

RM: Your job was with Newmont.

JC: Yes, it was with a mining company that was owned partly by Newmont. It was a consortium of 2 or 3 big mining companies. I wanted to learn more about mining, because I had grown up in a mine, but always in the same mine, and I knew there were a lot of other techniques and things I should know of mining. I loved mining, and that was obviously going to be my business. I certainly thought--that is, we, by this time it was we--would come back here and work and operate this mine, as we have in fact done. But this mine was in Colorado, as it turned out, a marvelous mine, really active, working-in some old deposits. The deposits they worked in were mined for gold in the upper levels way back at about 1880 and 1890 in this Telluride area in western Colorado, the San Juan Mountains. The mine when I got there was just joining with a mine across the mountain, some 4 miles. They mined lead, zinc, copper, gold and silver; they got 5 metals out of this ore. I went to work as a junior engineer for \$400 a month, fresh out of college. Fascinating work. Underground most of the time, surveying, measuring contracts for the miners, and general engineering work. I am sure that we would have stayed there at least 2 or 3 years. I think Maudie probably agrees with me. I had a marvelous boss, a guy who was just something else. But here it was June '53 when we went back there. The Korean conflict was in full bloom.

MC: Actually, they started to negotiate that summer. I remember I dashed home with the paper. You were out there in the coal shed doing something and I was holding it up in the window so that you could see that they had sat down to the conference table.

JC: But, whatever, the draft was still on; and, being a college student making reasonable grades, there was no problem. But now I was open season I guess. Somehow I felt that being married and working in a mine I wouldn't have to worry about it, but it wasn't the case. The draft board here notified me that I needed to take my physical. Of course Tonopah was the draft board that I dealt with, but I was able to go to Denver rather than back here. Here I was, some 22-1/2 years old, and all the fellows I rode the bus with were about 18. I went through this physical at the Army office there in Denver, and it was obvious that I was going to pass, both physically and mentally, and it just hit me full force--hey, I'm going to get drafted. And even though it's only for 2 years, here we were just married a month or 2 and I thought, this isn't what I want.

I must confess I don't think I even called her. I just marched right over and picked up a phone book. My feelings for the service had always been with the Navy, so I took the phone book and found out where the Navy place was, the recruiting office, and I went there. I talked to them, and I was a pretty saleable commodity. Fresh out of college with an engineering degree, B.S. The recruiting guy there, the lieutenant, he seized the bull by the horns and said, "Well are you really interested?" Well I really wasn't that interested in going into the service, but if I've got to go I would rather go for 4 years in the Navy and do something of what I want than be drafted for 2 years into the Army. That appeared to be the choice I had. So he gave me, gosh, about 2 hours worth of tests, and I guess I did pretty well because he sure picked up his ears. He wanted me in'the Navy right then. By then I called my wife back in Telluride, and she

had always supported me in my decisions, and she said, "Well, if that's what we're going to do, that's fine and dandy." So I really set the things in motion right then. That was, I think, November or December of '53. By January 26, 1954, some month or so later I was in the Navy. I wanted to be in the Seabees, actually, because it's civil engineering and surveying, and I had had all kinds of that stuff in school. I had pretty good eyes and qualified quite well physically, and I think what the Seabees wanted was some fellows with eye problems or this kind of thing. I think that they wanted a guy to be a line officer if he could qualify physically. But what he said was, "We can get you into the Seabees, but it'll take a little bit of time." He said that we can't put a hold on the draft. So he said that if I was really worried about the draft, I should go in, go to OCS, get my commission, and then go into the part of the Navy that you I wanted. And that's what I did.

By the 4th of February I was flying back to Newport, Rhode Island. Four months in OCS and then commissioned. About a month before we were commissioned we could request duty, and I was gung ho. I wanted to be on a ship. They pumped all this stuff into me back there, and in spite of my marriage I wanted to be on a ship. But then they offered something else. In typical service fashion they decided right at the last minute that they needed 50 additional meteorologists. This entailed 13 months of school at the Navy post-graduate school in Monterey, California. This kind of brought me back to my senses, and I thought, "Hey, this is what I want because they were so hard up that they would even take people with arts and sciences backgrounds for this. I don't mean to be disparaging to arts and science, but really it's science and math, physics and thermodynamics; they wanted engineers if they could get them. So I thought that this was too good to pass up, and Maudie agreed instantly when I called her on the phone. So it ended up I got it. I graduated and was commissioned in June '54, and by late July or early August we were over in Monterey for 13 months, and then we went to Alaska for 2 years, where I served as a meteorologist. Got out of the Navy about the 1st of June, 1957, and came back here, and we've been Beattyites ever since.

RM: You came back here in June of '57. Maud, what did you do during these 4 years? Did you come back here?

MC: Oh no, except for the 4 months that he was in OCS. I went back to Boulder City and lived with my mother and sister until he was graduated and worked for Silas Mason in Las Vegas and commuted every day. I had worked in college as secretary to the civil engineering department so I had fairly good qualifications for working for engineers.

RM: How big was Kodiak?

MC: About 1,000 I think. It wasn't much.

RM: Was there a civilian community?

JC: A fishing village.

MC: We lived in town, but of course the base was about 7 miles from town, and there were quarters and things but we weren't eligible. We lived in rented quarters in the town, and it was a very interesting place, but I found the weather hard to bear. It was very gloomy and sad, much like Puget Sound. Not so cold; you think of lots of snow, and we did have a lot of snow, and it rained and rained.

JC: We had these fierce winds. Actually not too cold.

RM: The Japanese current?

JC: That's correct. People think of Alaska as frigid, but it was really very similar to Puget Sound. As it happened the first winter we were there, they had record cold. I think it did get to 1 degree above.

MC: They had record snow, too.

RM: Well, that's probably a good place to break in terms of the chronology of the town, but now I have some questions. First, did they have a program here in the area with the X15?

JC: Well, the X15 of course was that speed plane that came out of Edwards, but they tracked it quite thoroughly with radar, and there was a radar site on a hill north of here. You can still see it if you drive from Beatty towards Tonopah. About 3 or 4 miles north of Springdale, look to your left, and there's kind of a round-topped hill there with a road leading right up on top. There was a crew of around 15 people, I think. And these weren't just lackeys; these fellows were pretty sharp. It was farmed out to Ben ix Aviation. This was about '58 or '59. After we got back. For a number of years--'58 through '61--it brought an infusion of fellows of between 25 to 40 years old, real sharp people. As Maudie mentioned last night, these weren't just people who came to live and get the job done and get out. Most of them were married, some had kids and put them in school, and they were people who just got in and helped. I think some of them were on the council--if we had a town council then.

MC: But they really participated. They joined the PTA and all. You probably remember that the X15 couldn't go back to Edwards. It landed on some dry lake so tracking it was of extreme importance, to know exactly where it was. It landed out on Mud Lake.

RM: It landed at Mud Lake. Is that right! You also mentioned the Lions Club, and Art Revert told me today that there were a lot of fraternal groups here in town.

JC: I can speak quite well on the Lions Club; I was deeply involved with it right from the start. I think strictly speaking there was an old Lions Club here for a short time way back, in the '30s or something like that. I don't think it lasted very long, but we chartered a new Lions Club here on May 23, 1959. And the Tonopah Lions Club sponsored us. Joe Friel and Roy Wolfe and some of these fellows came down and worked with us. And it was, as we look back on it, kind of a magic

time in Beatty because we had these X15 people. There were other new people, some of them working out at the Test Site as engineers as so on.

MC: People who were determined they weren't going to live in Las Vegas, so that they were more the pioneering types.

JC: But we chartered with somewhere 24-25 members, and it was just something that was right for the time. It was a really good organization. We met once a week on Monday nights. It was a dinner thing right from the start. I was the first president so I have pretty clear memories of it; and we had a fellow named Frank Brockman, who had been in Lions before, who ran a motel, the Desert Inn Motel, down across the street from the Burro and just slightly towards town, just in back of where the ARCO station is. Rather inactive now. They sold it later and left.

MC: They live at Bishop now.

JC: It was a small motel, some 6 rooms. Frank was the secretary and he put a great deal of effort in. We just all just dived right in the middle of it, and it was just a super thing.

You were asking me before about social things. Well, of course we had the best parties ever thrown in Beatty, I think. It was just marvelous. It spawned the burro race, and I guess the annual burro race almost ran the club in later years. There were 12 burro races, started in '61; I think '72 or '73 was the last one. And the Lions Club didn't live much longer than that.

RM: Why do you think it kind of died?

MC: A lot of people resented the burro races, the townspeople. They got totally out of hand.

JC: It started out to be a community Program that raises money, and it essentially lost money almost every year we did it. But it turned out that we kind of copied the idea after a group in Big Bear who had races every year.

In a sense it's a misnomer because when you say burro race people can picture a fellow riding a burro. It wasn't that at all. The man had to walk or run and lead the burro. The burro had to have a pack saddle on it and, depending on which of the 12 races, something resembling a prospector's pack on. We didn't handicap them, but they were handicapped enough as it was. It was advertised as a wild burro race, and it was as close to that as it could be because these were burros who were captured and turned out on the range around here, and some of them right out of Death Valley. Even then they were having a problem with the burros down there.

But there was a fellow, G.L. Coffey, he owns a ranch up north of town. He was the one that we contracted with all 12 years to buy the burros. They were advertised as wild burros, and they were pretty much wild burros.

RM: So you put a halter on them.

JC: That's right. And guys got kicked and....

MC: Sometimes you were escaping from a wild burro.

JC: Kicked and bitten.

MC: Actually the best athletes also were able to control the burros because they could run fast enough to strangle. The burro had to pay attention to keep up.

JC: A marvelous show; it really was.

MC: And the people who ran in the races were neat. They were really neat people, and the people who were really interested in the races also. But we began to get these people who had gotten the idea that Beatty was a wide-open town, and anything went, and it was just a ferocious drunk.

JC: A 3-day drunk.

MC: And people couldn't be stirred out of the Exchange Club to watch the race. And they just got raunchier and raunchier. You couldn't let your children go downtown, and that caused a lot of resentment. If you couldn't in your own town let your children go without supervision, something was wrong.

JC: It was a element from Vegas and from California that were coming to them, and it got to the point where we had to have too many extra deputies The Lions Club I don't think ever had to pay for the extra deputies, but it was coming right to that point.

MC: The town budget was being strained.

JC: It cost extra, and it got out of hand. I was deeply involved with every one of them. I was a timer and everything. It was a clever idea; it really was, and it really captured people's imagination. Picture about 40 guys lined up. Some of the time, races were a 3-day event, but in the later years it was a 2-day event. Here lined up in downtown Beatty were between 30 and 40 burros, each attached by this halter rope to this poor, unfortunate wrangler, and the county sheriff fires off his gun. The damndest kicking and braying ever. Photographers' heyday. And here they go, kicking and scratching out of town. A typical route would be down south, paralleling the highway down along the river, and they'd have river crossings with water flying. And down to where Fluorspar Canyon is, just about opposite the sewer ponds, head clear up about 4 to 4-1/2 miles up that canyon, over a pass, back down Perlite Canyon, coming out opposite Fran's ranch up here, paralleling the highway back to Beatty. You're looking at something like 13 or 14 miles--that's one day! And then the next day, they would start out and go in a similar direction down south, except they'd circle clear around by the airport, coming around and up into Rhyolite.

Approximately half way each day there would be a rest stop, where each guy was required to rest precisely one hour. He would be timed in, and exactly one hour later he'd be started out again. But on the second day Rhyolite was the rest stop. Picture taking, thronged

with tourists, and off they go from Rhyolite. Go over and travel some back roads up by Indian Springs out to the west of Beatty, and down the canyon where the TV antennas are, and back in to Beatty for the grand finish. It was a super program. It really was.

MC: Morel and more work for fewer and fewer people, too.

JC: Yes. I think technically one year we made a little bit, but it lost. The first race was in 1961; there were 12 races, 1961 through 1972 inclusive.

RM: And you basically dropped them because, one, it wasn't making that much money; and, two, it was just getting to be too rough?

JC: Yes, and there was always a considerable amount of opposition in town too, and this mounted as the years went by. Literally, families left town because they just didn't want their kids around for this rowdy bunch of people.

MC: And the drug scene kind of crept into it too. First it was just drunks.

JC: Yes, in the later years.

MC: Marijuana and the dopers came; it was ugly. We keep up with people who ran in the race and everything.

JC: Generally speaking 2/3s of the runners would be the same from year to year. These fellows who ran here and had run in the Big Bear race, and the first prize was usually \$1,000. It wasn't peanuts.

RM: It was a real athletic event.

JC: You bet it was. Now that first year we had it on Armistice Day and timed it to coincide with the '49er celebration in Death Valley. In fact, that year we ran it down to Death Valley and ended up at Stovepipe Wells. That was a 3-day thing. We would always sell a sponsorship for...\$1,000 I think.

MC: \$125?

JC: It wasn't a \$1,000, was it? I don't remember what the amount was, but at any rate this was the procedure. For example, some motel in town would buy a sponsorship and on the pack saddle would be a canvas sign saying "El Portal Motel" or whatever. And then there was a paper put out; advertisements were in there and all that. So we needed to get that burro carrying the advertisement the whole length of the race. A lot of the guys would drop out. Their feet would get blisters. They just came out here and thought they could deal with it and they couldn't. Either the burros or the running, or both. So some of us filled in; that's what I'm leading up to.

That first year the last day was just a short jaunt, just from the sand dunes in Death Valley over to Stovepipe, maybe some 5 or 6 miles. And I was about 30 years old in 1961, so I volunteered a ticket. I'd never been a fast man or a track man, but I was a good walker. We'd hunt about 10-12 miles a day, but those damn burros! I can walk twice as fast as a burro can, but I can't run as fast and keep up with a burro when he's trotting. And the burros were in good shape. It's hard to make the time

CHAPTER NINE

RM: Was there anymore that you wanted to say on the Lions Club and its life cycle in Beatty?

JC: Well, I think we should say that it involved a lot more than the burro race. If you talk to people around town, you'll find some who were quite strongly in favor of it and quite a few who were quite strongly against it. In the end I know it was partially responsible for us losing our Lions Club.

RM: Did the opposition center on the rowdy crowd, or were there other reasons?

MC: It was an awful lot of work. It was a tremendous burden on the people who were running the race.

JC: It finally evolved that it was about 8 or 9 of us, and I can say "us" because I was just intimately involved in every one of the 12 races. Well, for some of us there wasn't too much to be done until about a week or so before the race, but I'd hate to say how many family rows we had over this. Take my job, for example, as a timer. I had one or 2 guys helping me. The crazy thing would kick off at something like 8 in the morning. You are just totally immersed; here you are trying to record the precise times of some 30 or 40 fellows over this course, and listening to complaints, and there was occasionally a little bit of cheating involved, and all the running of the race. So I would practically disappear from my home. It was years before Maudie and I just sat down and essentially divorced ourselves from each other for those couple of days. And it saved a lot of arguments.

We've probably talked enough about the burro race, but it was a marvelous idea. It was a great show. A number of magazines did feature articles on it. Argosy did. Sports Illustrated did. Who else?

MC: Bill Burrud had a whole thing for television coverage.

JC: And you can occasionally see that on TV stations around California.

RM: You don't by chance have a copy of any those articles, do you?

MC: We've got a copy of the 16 mm film the Lions Club commissioned. That was not a television program.

JC: But it was a pretty remarkable thing. If we had figured a little better way to handle it, it might still be going, but it ended up that it was a hell of a lot of work for 8 or 10 guys.

MC: The trouble was that the people who were most eager to have it were people like Exchange Club, but they were much too busy to help.

JC: Business people would promote it, but they weren't there. There was a lot of resentment about this, and I can understand that. Whereas some of the businesses profited rather handsomely, quite obviously, the club couldn't make much money.

But I think we've probably run the burro race into the ground. The last club was a super organization. The sad part about it was that the people who caused the ruckus really had virtually nothing to do with the race. They couldn't have cared less--you could have had a tiddleywink contest here, and they'd have been here also to drink and raise hell. A lot of the Nevada towns about this time were experiencing similar problems of rowdy people coming to their towns. You know, Gabbs had a nice celebration every year, and they fed all these people, theorizing I suppose that anybody who made the effort to come to Gabbs deserved a reward. They pit on barbeques, and it was free; anybody could come. And for years it was the nicest thing, and then these people started coming and they had to stop. It was just too much.

JC: But getting back to the Lions Club it was really a fraternal organization and a dinner club.

RM: Where were the dinners held?

JC: Downstairs in the Exchange. At the very start, the old Atomic Club, which is now the Burro Inn; it was a smaller edition of what's there now. It had just been built. The club chartered in '59, so I suspect a year or 2 before that it had been built. But at first, the owners of both the Exchange and the Club Atomic were charter Lions Club members, so we'd go one place 6 months and the other place 6. But the Club Atomic didn't last very long. We gravitated up to the Exchange Club and stayed there throughout the history of the Lions Club.

RM: Is it the same building now that the Burro was in?

MC: Yes, I think so, but they've added on.

JC: But the Lions Club espoused the same principles of all the Lions Clubs all over the world. We worked towards helping blind people raise money for eye operations and we looked into any eye problem in the local area and saw that people got glasses who didn't have them. Eye care, cataracts; there were several times that we were able to pay for guys to go get cataract operations. Gosh, I've kind of forgotten a lot of the stuff.

MC: They served as kind of a chamber of commerce.

JC: That's right.

RM: Which Beatty has never had?

JC: It has for a few years now, a very active one, very successful one. But for all those years we even answered letters of people asking for information on Beatty; it was a part of the club. So it accomplished that, and it was a marvelous social thing. We had parties, and I don't think we've ever had as good ones before or since.

RM: It probably was a unifying thing within the town.

JC: It truly was. Well, take me for example, I worked in our mine, and it was a pretty dog-gone full-time thing. And then I drove our truck a lot to Vegas, so I didn't really have the opportunity to get out and meet many other people. There weren't any other clubs really that I can recall. There was no PTA; there was no fire department even then.

MC: Actually, there was a PTA, but it was thought to be a ladies organization.

JC: Yes, but as new people came to town they would meet somebody, and the guy would bring them down, and the first thing you knew they were in the Lions Club. Great for them; they got to meet a lot of people.

RM: Yes, they got integrated into the community.

JC: That's right. Gosh, we had good programs, and of course we met and worked with the Tonopah Lions Club and some of those in Vegas. Since then, the fire department has become almost a similar organization, although they are more work-oriented. They are for a task, fire training and ambulance service too. But there was none of that then, and this was all there was, and it was very well accepted. A lot of the fellows, for example, who would move to Beatty to work at the Test Site I would never have known had I not met them in the Lions Club.

It was just a marvelous thing, but it finally just ran out of gas. People built up a set of grievances, I guess. You know how it is. They kind of run their course, and I guess that's what happened to the Lions Club. Too bad, too! I often wonder why a service club doesn't spring up again, not necessarily Lions.

MC: I think it's because the fire department fills that.

JC: That may very well be.

MC: The fire department has a social side as well as a work side. I think between the two of them they really do fill it.

JC: Yes, I suppose you are right; however, there were a lot of older fellows in the Lions Club who would not be in the fire department. I was in the fire department for some 17 years, but I finally got out; it wasn't that easy to get rolled out at 2:00 a.m. and roar off to go to a fire or something. When you are 25 or 30 or 35, that's one thing; but when you are 55 or so, it's not quite that easy.

RM: What other groups were there?

MC: There were Masons.

JC: I have never been a Mason.

MC: Their lodge was in Goldfield, and it was the Masons who fixed up that "L" in the town hall that served as our first library, the wing that came out. It had had windows, and they boarded those up and built bookshelves where the window frames had been and lined it. It had been in just horrible condition, and they painted and put in a sink, and put in a rug. It was a nice thing for us. They also used that for meetings. There have been a number of active people.

RM: Did they have a pretty strong membership here?

JC: I don't know how many. All through the years there has been quite a group.

MC: The Goldfield lodge is, I think, quite old.

JC: The Montezuma. A lot of the times their president, or whatever term they use, has been from Beatty. A lot of the guys that I know of have been from there.

RM: And then there's an Eastern Star. Do you know anything about that?

MC: No. Limited to wives and female relatives of Masons.

RM: What other groups were there, fraternal-type groups?

MC: It doesn't fit in quite the same category, but the PTA. was very active and strong for many years.

RM: Does it go way back?

MC: I couldn't say. I think I joined about '60, and there were plenty of old guard; so it had certainly gone 8 or 10 years before that, and quite possibly longer.

JC: I think in the latter '70s the school Booster Club became pretty important here.

MC: The PTA got a bit stretched, and they couldn't quite support the athletic programs. The school district is famous for their niggardly ways. A lot of the things that Beatty has have been done by the community. For example, the football field, which by the way is named Jack Crowell Field. People just call it "the football field," but it has a plaque down there with Jack's name. Jack and others certainly worked hard to bring it. Actually if they were going to name something for Jack they should have named the swimming pool because--says his wife, who of course is totally unbiased--that if it hadn't been for Jack they wouldn't have a swimming pool. That's not true of the football field, but Jack went to Carson City and talked to the State Park Board and pled for the money, which is federal money.

RM: So this is part of your involvement in the parks and recreation. Let's move through the other fraternal-type groups first. What other groups are there?

JC: PTA, Masons, Lions. The fire department looms very large in my mind.

RM: I imagine the fire department goes way back.

JC: It does. I'm not terribly accurate back in the '30s and '40s, but as I grew up when a house caught fire it wasn't whether they put it out or not it was how much stuff they'd save. In this old dry climate--and like as not the wind was blowing--that old wood was just tinder dry. Stuff just flat burned to the ground. People would roar over there and come dragging beds and everything else out if they could still get into it. The sad part of it was that just about all this time, we did have a "fire truck." We still have it; I think it was a '24 Graham.

MC: They use it for parades and things.

JC: It's the same as happens so many other places. They just had a big fire down in Warm Springs ranch, and a lot of the volunteer fire stuff didn't work. We'd had this old truck, and naturally nobody had the time, so the damn thing wouldn't work. The tires were always flat. The battery was always run down, so it wouldn't start. So, if you could look at the humorous side to some of these houses burning down, here'd be about 8 or 10 guys trying to push this damned old broken down thing, and pulling out hoses, hoses that didn't fit to each other, and just running around like crazy. And of course after it was over you'd stand and wring your hands, but the same thing would happen again the next fire.

RM: This was '40s or '30s?

JC: The '40s.

MC: Even into the '50s, because when we first came back I can remember the night the Beatty ranch burned. Of course no one lived there so it wasn't a matter of being afraid for people's lives.

RM: The Beatty ranch. was old man Beatty's, which was owned by the Reverts.

MC: Yes, that stone house still was a livable building.

JC: We lived across the highway from it so we saw it. There was a huge old barn there too.

MC: I don't think I ever saw the barn, but when the stone house burned Jack wasn't in the fire department, and we were in bed. It was probably 1:00 in the morning. And I must confess that we lay there in bed and laughed. We had our bed out on the porch. Here was this truck, just like a jack rabbit, jerkily trying to get to the fire. Of course when it got there, there were no hydrants. It was pathetic really.

RM: It sounds like a Keystone Cops.

JC: Well it was. If you were able to look at a humorous side of it. Of course a lot of them were tragic; people'd lose their house.

MC: And their lives.

JC: Yes, when the old Gold Ace bar burned down, back about 1939 or '40, a guy burned up in there. It was right across the street from the Exchange where the Wagonwheel hotel is now. It was a big bar. It was a single story, but a large building. It had a big dance floor and a bar. But there was a fellow--I guess a drunk--in one of the back rooms, and he burned up. All this happened year after year, but nothing crystallized. Maybe the right people weren't here.

RM: When did it burn?

JC: I'm guessing about '39.

MC: It was the 4th of July.

JC: But all through these years as I boy I could remember seeing all these things. Well, when did Gilbert Landis's house burn?

MC: It was the early '60s.

JC: I think we actually had a fire chief by then, but still the guys just weren't that serious I guess.

MC: Well, they didn't know how. And they didn't have the equipment either.

JC: But then, by golly, in the very early part of the '60s, a group of young fellows just really got serious about it.

MC: It was after Gilbert Landis's house burned.

JC: Yes, there were one or 2 fires there that galvanized us into action. There were a number of fellows who just started working on the fire truck, and we got a bell.

RM: Were you involved in that?

JC: No. Soon after, but not then. These guys had gotten the ball rolling, Marvin Walker, Mo Bellville, and Jim Backus; he was a highway patrolman here. It was just a nucleus of 4 or 5 fellows who really got it started. I joined I think in '62 or '63, about a year or 2 after that.

MC: They built that fire house that's now on the corner of Montgomery and Third Streets. They built the fire house before the old hall was pulled down.

RM: That's where the old Town Hall was?

MC: Yes; it was right next to it, between where the fire house is now on Montgomery Street and the Sheriff's office. There was a huge step-up of construction I think at the Test Site, and Nevada Cement had lots of trucks that came through hauling cement to the Test Site.

JC: They would fuel at a gas station down here, and this fellow was in the fire department.

MC: Well, somebody got them to dump out the dregs from their tanks, and that was the mortar and the foundation of the fire house.

JC: I think the truck drivers were pretty sympathetic and probably didn't quite empty them as thoroughly as they should. Just incredible luck or whatever.

MC: Scrounged from the Test Site.

JC: It was a little after that that I joined.

MC: I have an absolutely deathless memory of when they put up the roof joists of that building. Up on the top was Mo Bellville's wife, and she was pregnant, and she was a little, round, short person sitting up there hammering on the roof joist.

JC: These guys laid the concrete blocks to build that building. There were 2 or 3 of the guys who had been in departments before, and they knew enough. Marvin Walker was one of the earliest fire chiefs, and boy we trained once a week.

RM: And what year was it that you built the fire house now?

JC: Probably '62 or '63. I remember working on some of it, but I was just brand new in it. Of course there was a big battle to get decent equipment. There wasn't any money.

MC: You know that until we won that Test Site tax suit Nye County was really poor. All the money that Nye County claimed from the contractors on the Test Site was put into a protest fund that was all gathering interest as long as the thing was in litigation. When the decision was made in Nye County's favor, we not only got the money, we got all that lovely interest.

RM: So it was out of that that you bought the fire engine?

JC: Yes, but it didn't happen that magically either. These old Ford tankers and stuff. One of these fellows was a welder who worked on the Test Site. These guys were all pretty good

artisans and good with their hands, good plumbers, electricians and stuff. We'd take some old truck. I say "we"; I helped, but most of these other fellows were the masterminds.

RM: You mean you'd fix up an old fire truck?

JC: Yes, or even just any old truck, and we'd build a tank on it. It's kind of a snowballing thing. More members and more work, and always leaning all over the commissioners to get more stuff. A lot of this stuff we raised money for right here in town.

MC: Had auctions and dances and raffles.

JC: They've got some marvelous equipment now. The money has come; the Fleischmann Foundation helped with some of this stuff. Early on it was fire service and later it incorporated the ambulance service, and Fleischmann again bought us ambulances. In the fire service there were just a lot of dedicated guys. Bill Sullivan is the chief now; he's been chief for 10 or 12 years. I think they have about 30 people now. All are on an insurance thing so you just can't march down there and be a fireman. You usually have to wait in line until there's an opening, because I think it's 30 that the County will pay insurance on.

MC: They're on NIC too, I think.

RM: But it is all volunteer, right?

JC: Absolutely. There is one paid position, and it's a maintenance man who keeps all the equipment up, and it turns out he runs on a lot of ambulance calls. The 2 are intertwined, the fire department and the ambulance.

MC: You know, a lot of people don't realize that the EMTs get absolutely nothing, the emergency medical technicians. Some have 40 hours and some have 80 hours of training. They are always on call for wrecks and everything, and there's always somebody to pick up off the highway. A friend of ours once commented years ago, and there was this old lady in town, and she was lonesome and she was not well-nourished, and she was always having to be taken to the hospital. She loved the attention. Harry said, You know the heroes aren't the ones who run out and pick up somebody from the highway and rush them to the hospital. It's the ones that take Mom Vincent to the hospital, week after week after week." There is real heroism there.

JC: I don't think the fire department is ever thanked enough for what they do. If there is one characteristic to pin on Beatty, I think it's the volunteer work. Over the years there is so much that is done that is not paid one bloody cent. Those firemen told me that the other night when the Exchange caught fire, it was 5:10 in the morning; it was cold when that thing started. Big fire. And they saved that building.

CHAPTER TEN

RM: Could you talk a little more about the concept of volunteerism in town and your pride in it?

JC: We have both been involved in town and county committees. I think probably all of Nye County is pretty good at this. Of course I suppose each person thinks he lives in the best place. I stay here because my business is here, so I can't necessarily say that I stay because I think it is the greatest place. But it is nice to be pleased with where you are and with the people you are with, and I am involved deeply in park and recreation, both with the county and the town. There's a lot of volunteer work done all over the county, but I am just convinced that we have a better situation in Beatty than in other areas.

For example, our volunteer fire department. These guys put in countless hours of work and commit themselves--and their families really. Every hour that they spend with the fire department takes the time away from their family. You can say, "OK, that's no big deal, because maybe we have one fire every month or one fire every 2 months." But I was on the fire department for 17 years, and those aren't the difficult minutes and hours. When that old fire siren rings, whether it's 2:00 in the morning or 4:00 in the afternoon, you know somebody's in trouble, and it's no problem to get out and roll, and try to help. But what is hard is when it's January and the wind is blowing, and you have to go down there to practice. You spend 2 or 3 hours, and of course in the winter when the weather is bad you tend to watch films and stay in, but nevertheless there is outside stuff that has to be done. And that isn't so easy. Nor is it easy when you have your sons or some family here or something, but you have your commitments to it. I did it for 17 years, and these guys are doing it all the time.

They are offering better and better service, and to do it they have to spend more time. I think it is so impressive. Most of the fellows here in Beatty--and there is one gal too--on our ambulance services serve on the fire department and in addition do all this stuff for the volunteer ambulance service. They take 81-hour courses. I have been working on a ball field down here about 6 weeks, and every Saturday and Sunday I look up at the community center, and these people are up there just about all day taking these classes. I think sometimes they get their meals paid if they roll on an ambulance call to Vegas. But they're not getting paid for their time or to practice.

MC: There are a lot of disadvantages, after all, to living so far from the mainstream, but to be involved with people who feel this way makes up for an awful lot. The PTA I've been involved in and the Town Board; it takes a lot of time. It's true the Town Board is paid gas money to go to Tonopah. There was an old guy and his son that used to come about dinner time a couple of times a week and sit here and tell me all about it, and I wanted to eat. But that's part of it. It's real important to the spirit of the place to have that kind of attitude. And of course it isn't everybody, but as long as there is somebody that is willing to take on those responsibilities it makes a place nice to live.

RM: Jack, could you talk about how the ambulance service grew out of the fire department.

JC: It's difficult to pin down. The fire department really became organized in the very early '60s. It was so tragic; we'd have fires and guys would be running trying to stick the wrong kind of hoses together. Sporadic efforts, yes. To have an effective fire service you have to have a certain amount of equipment, but the prime thing is a commitment from the people. And we worked at it, you know. There'd be a fire and everybody would get excited, and they'd rush around and say that we were going to do this and do that, but we never did. Until finally, enough people took the bull by the horns, and it just grew from there. Then the ambulance service was a logical spin-off of the fire department.

We were just saying how now the road just north and south of here is completely fenced. You drive through here now, and it's hard to imagine the situation that existed even a year or 2 ago. There were vast distances of US 95 that were unfenced, and there were cattle and there were burros. The bad part about it is that the grass tended to grow better right next to the road. Of course there are still big areas in Nevada that are open, where, boy, if you drove down that road, you had better keep your eyes open. It was OK. I was raised here, and I know that cattle run out on these highways, and I know that after dark I'd better watch it. I know there are certain areas that are particularly dangerous. But you take some fellow from New York driving through here, some tourist; he's driving US 95 and it says: "open stock range." OK, he's gone through hundreds of miles of highway and seen those signs and seen virtually no cattle. By golly, they are not kidding when they say that around this area.

At any rate, all those years people were clobbering cows, and they were getting killed and injured, the people and their families. I think that was a good part of why the people in the fire department said that we need an ambulance service. And of course they were also worried about their own family members and people here in town who got sick.

MC: Living here, without any medical service, when you have small children was difficult. You had to be your own doctor. You have to treat little things yourself. The worst part was trying to guess whether you needed to go to the hospital or to the doctor.

RM: Where were the doctors?

MC: In Las Vegas. Ours was in Las Vegas, and you could telephone and he would talk to you, which I believe is not the case now. We were fortunate in that way. I know our oldest daughter got her hand shut in the truck door; it was horrid. Well, thank goodness there was a friend of ours who had a little nursing experience, and she came up and she looked at it and she said, "Well, I think if we bandage this up, it's going to be all right." The first thing you think is, "Now what will we do?" These people who were willing to become medical resource people in the community have done us an immense service. People who live here now have no idea what it was like.

RM: So there still is no primary health care available?

MC: There is a physician's assistant. We've had about 5 of them, and each one has been extremely well qualified and dedicated.

JC: Really, each one is better than the one before.

MC: That's true. Anita Johnson was the first, and she had been the nurse here, simply serving as nurse and receptionist at the clinic. Well, you know what happened. Before long she was stitching up wounds and putting ice on bumped heads.

JC: She helped pioneer the whole program.

MC: She did; in fact when it came time to develop the nurse-practitioner program at the university's school of nursing, she was one of the people who was called in as a resource, because she had been there. So she went and took the course.

RM: So when did the nurse practitioner program begin, would you say?

MC: Now she's a nurse practitioner, which is a different thing because she was a registered nurse when she came here.

JC: Johnson came in '61.

MC: Well at first she was at home answering the telephones because people knew she was an R.N.

JC: People bugging her day and night, and her not getting paid.

RM: It's really interesting that the nurse practitioner grew out of this person in the community who knew.

MC: At one time we had a doctor for a few, months, and it didn't work out.

JC: He would be here one or 2 days a week.

MC: No, no, I'm talking about Dr....Martin. You remember that fellow with the German wife?

JC: I can't place him.

MC: Well, they actually lived up at the clinic on Hospital Hill. The clinic had been made by volunteers. It's at the southernmost part of Irving Street, after you cross the highway and continue south up the hill. At one time there had been a mill there. Someone donated the land, and then someone else cleared it, and some more people came and had work days and put up this building—with the idea of attracting a doctor. That was before 1957 because it was here when we came.

RM: But it was after 1950.

MC: Oh yes.

JC: This has always been a huge, looming problem to the people in Beatty and to the new people especially. They couldn't believe it. Here they were, 93 miles one way from medical assistance and 114 the other way. And here again, Ralph Lisle worked an incredible amount of time on this.

MC: He not only pushed it at the commissioner level but worked himself to help raise the walls and put on the roof and all these things.

JC: Yes, but there was a time when doctors would come here for a day a week or something like this, several years.

MC: There was a Dr. White who was hired by the Department-well in those days the AEC out at Mercury. He would come up once a week, for a day and an evening. And then there was a time when there were some doctors from Las Vegas who were buying themselves an airplane, in order to write off the taxes. They established office hours in Beatty. Well that lasted as long as the tax advantage, and then that was over. But of course it was a contact for us, a man who had been here and would be accessible when you had to go to Vegas. So it wasn't a bad thing. Anita became the nurse and receptionist up there at the clinic when these people weren't in town. Gradually, she just took over more and more. And then we got in trouble with the narcotics division for her dispensing of medicine.

This is all in the early '60s. Probably till 1970 or so. That's when the State began to realize that they had to do something about rural health, and they began to organize a program for training nurses to take over. Anita was one of the resource people that they drew on because of her experience.

RM: So from the early '70s to the present, you've had the nurse practitioner in the community?

JC: Or a physician's assistant.

MC: Then is when Anita decided that she'd had it. She resigned and we began to get a series of about 4 physician's assistants. And they have been excellent. Very often they have military backgrounds.

RM: Who do they work under?

MC: Their umbrella is out of Tonopah, the Central Nevada Medical Consortium, I think, is the name of it. It's partly state funded, partly federally funded, and of course partly locally, because of the payments that people make for the services.

JC: There is a local hospital board, I think 5 members, isn't it?

MC: That's right. And they bill the ambulance.

RM: OK. Could you kind of give me the stages of how the ambulance grew out of the fire department?

JC: Well, as I recall, it was an old Chevy Carryall thing.

MC: Well first it was the Sheriff and the Deputy Sheriff in his station wagon. When I was pregnant all those many times in Beatty, that was always a worry of mine because I am a fast deliverer. I had my first child in 3 hours. Of course I was worried. My first child was born in Alaska. With the others I was going to a doctor in Las Vegas, and I spoke to him about this. He said, "Well have the Sheriff bring you." And Jack said, "Over my dead body." As it turned out it wasn't necessary, but that always was the alternative.

JC: Well, there were really some nasty wrecks on US 95, usually at night and usually involving cattle. There were times when we would have some kind of a so-called ambulance, some primitive thing, some old Carryall or something, and somebody else would have to have a station wagon to get these people to medical help. It's a long long run to Tonopah or south to Vegas.

MC: You know, it was only in the last couple of years that they lost somebody in transit.

JC: But it's like the fire department in that you are kind of leapfrogging. You are training your people, and your people are more qualified, and then you get a better vehicle, and back and forth. You're getting better all the time, and the Fleischmann fund has helped us several times. We had a couple of big old Pontiac ambulances, and those things aren't cheap. The better the equipment the more likely the people are to work hard to operate it.

MC: The most recent ambulance has been funded by the County. Perhaps they had some federal funds; I don't know.

JC: I think now we have 2 vehicles that qualify as ambulances. A nice big, modular thing, a Ford; and there's always a back-up in case we have a big wreck. I never was involved with the ambulance service, but I have the utmost respect for those people for the work they do.

RM: Something I've always wondered is when you have a wreck out there, in the middle of nowhere, what's the chain of action?

MC: The first person that comes, if he has a CB, calls in.

JC: CBs in the truck drivers, I think, are a big item.

MC: If he doesn't, somebody drives in and says there's a wreck.

JC: Yes. And the highway patrol and the Sheriff's department respond and the ambulance responds. There have been a few times with this flight-for-life thing, this helicopter from Vegas.

MC: In the most desperate cases.

JC: I think it would be easy to think that we don't have to worry now, that a helicopter could be here. Really by the time the word has to get down there, and they get that thing up here and down, a good bunch of EMTs--and that's what we have now--would do as well. The word gets to these fellows, and they roll and get up there and get those people, and they start the IVs and this kind of stuff. They have radio contact as they go. Occasionally, I think they get, say, to Mercury or somewhere and then a helicopter takes them on in, but once they get rolling they move pretty well.

RM: Now these are people that also have a job, a regular job.

MC: Yes, just ordinary citizens, yes. One of the teachers of the EMT program is a teacher at our school. He has all his normal duties and family life.

JC: I can recall one of the early ambulance drivers. He was a driver for Ringsby. There's always a truck line that trucks freight through here, stops in Beatty and on north. This fellow, for his day's work he picked up a truck and went to Vegas or back to Tonopah. And then at 2:00 in the morning or sometime, if he was on call, they'd rotate their duties. There would be crews.

MC: There's always somebody on duty.

JC: They go in pairs. So if there are 12, there are 6 crews. They have it for 24 hours or whatever.

RM: So they would be called off the job?

JC: Yes, well he couldn't be called off the truck of course. But the point I am making is he's working all day driving his truck, comes home, and then at 11:00 or midnight he gets a call. There's a bad wreck; somebody's hit a cow up north of Springdale, so out he goes. He gets that, and after the wreck hauls the people to Vegas, gets back maybe at 5:00 in the morning, and no doubt is up driving that truck again in 2 hours.

MC: Like U. S. Ecology down here. They let their people go at any time, whenever they are called.

RM: Oh, is that right! What do you think motivates people to do this, almost above and beyond the call of duty?

MC: They do burn out. After a while they just can't handle it anymore, and they'll stop for a while and take it up again. I think, by and large, it's the knowledge that somebody might help their child or their family, if it came to that. And they want to be of use.

JC: I think it's so great, though, in this day and age. As time goes on people are less and less concerned about other people, and you see less and less of this volunteer thing.

RM: So you're seeing a decline in volunteerism in Beatty.

MC: No, we're not. But what I am saying is that around the country there is more of "I'll take care of me." I think this is particularly true the larger the town or the city or whatever. There is more anonymity. They just take care of themselves.

It's not that nobody cares; they don't know the people. It's characteristic. We go to Vegas, and we are in a nursery and the siren sounds. Well, you can tell we're hicks, because what do we do? We're straining our eyes to see what's going on, because here a siren means to come and help. There it means get out of the way. You know that they've shown that the bigger the crowd, the less likely someone is to help--in cities for example. With confrontations, or an illness, and they find that if one person comes forward, then other people will help.

JC: Each person thinks that somebody else is going to do it, because in cities somebody else does do it.

RM: Yes, that's a good point.

JC: Well, then, the legal aspects of it too. If you try to help somebody, you're liable to end up with a law suit.

MC: Well, the good samaritan law has done a lot of good in rural Nevada to relieve people of that likelihood.

RM: Well, you know, this is a particularly important discussion that we are having right now, because we've got real distance out here. In most places you have a wreck, and you are in an isolated area and it's 5 miles to the next town.

MC: Yes. Read the newspaper. They are talking about this poor town someplace in the midwest, and they are 16 miles from the doctor. It's hard to be sympathetic.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

RM: Maud, you have mentioned that women's response to coming here is sometimes a little bit different than men's.

MC: Oh, I think it is. For one thing many women have professions or jobs, and they are accustomed to working, and there are no jobs for trained women except teachers in Beatty. I think that for many that is a drawback, but a friend of ours when her husband was assigned from northern California said that she cried for 2 weeks--all the way here and 2 weeks after. And they enjoyed living in Beatty; they had a lot of community participation, and then she said she cried for 2 weeks when she left. I think it is quite common to see men liking it. In a way this is the past; women stay home or they do menial work. And men are in charge; so why wouldn't they like it. Women have been taught that they have rights too, so they're not so satisfied with an old fashioned environment like this.

RM: Yes, it's a poor environment to be liberated in. Could we talk a little bit about the formation of the Chamber of Commerce?

JC: Actually, we're not very well founded in that. The old Lions Club really undertook a lot of this for a number of years, from about when they formed in the spring of '59 until they disbanded in about '72 or '73. But then this type of thing went undone unless it were some motel owner that answered questions. There has been a very effective Chamber of Commerce in Beatty, and here again neither of us can give you much information. Our very good friends, the Johnsons, are into it. Harry Johnson was the chairman of it for several years, and he has just recently been replaced. They've been quite effective; they brought out a new little folder extolling Beatty's virtues. They have a secretary who answers letters, people writing here for reservations or asking the climate or particulars on Beatty.

For example, Beatty has a room tax that was instituted in 1965 by park and recreation. The State assembly and senate passed something 3 or 4 years ago that added something like 1/2 or one percent to the room tax. Of this one percent, 3/8 goes to the state, but 5/8 is reserved for community and Chamber of Commerce type activities in the local areas. We in Beatty, having no Chamber of Commerce, really didn't take advantage of this for several years. The Chamber of Commerce that we have now has been able to use some of these funds for this folder advertising Beatty.

I must confess, our mining business is such that it has really nothing to do with tourism, so neither Maudie nor my interests have been vitally wrapped up in this. As a consequence we haven't joined it.

MC: Plus they meet in the middle of the day, which makes hard to come out of the shaft.

JC: Yes, but it is a great thing for the people who own most of the other businesses--certainly the motels and the restaurants and casinos.

MC: You know it is an interesting thing. We, for years, had thought of ourselves as a mining and ranching community, but in '69 when we had the flood and the road was severed both to the north and the south of us, we found out that we really were a tourist-oriented community, because it caused havoc.

JC: US 95 carries an incredible amount of traffic. The truck drivers alone represent a huge amount of business. You don't have to be very astute to drive by the Burro or the Stagecoach and every time there are 4, 5, 6 trucks parked out front. It's obviously a big thing. Of course right now, things are really busy here. This is about the height of the tourist season now in Beatty.

It ties in quite closely with Death Valley in the spring. A lot of people come all winter to Death Valley. People play golf there all winter. But especially from about Washington's Birthday until about Easter or Mother's Day or so, that's when people really move through here, especially I think the snowbirds and the people from the north, where really it's not very nice yet, and here it's just terrific.

RM: Driving from here to Tonopah these last few weeks I have seen just one trailer and motor home after another.

MC: So many of our older citizens are positively nomadic now. They don't care about "home." They just move from one place to another, depending on the season.

RM: I noticed a number of parking spots that have opened up in Beatty just in the last few years.

JC: Yes, 2 of them north of town, and there is one right in town and another one about 4 miles north of town.

RM: Did we talk enough about the PTA last time, Maud?

MC: Well the PTA. has had a good deal of influence, perhaps not in school affairs; but it, like the fire department or the Lions, was a community center for people who were interested in the school and the children. It had a lot of hours given to it for money-raising particularly. Mostly carnivals and bazaars, and we always had a scholarship that we gave to a graduating senior. It wasn't very big, but it was something. It would pay for books or a few things.

It gradually petered out; I don't know why. Probably there were just a few people who were sincerely interested. Apparently, there came a time at which there was a certain amount of resentment to the national organization, and so the PTA dissolved.

RM: When was that now?

MC: When Jim Anderson was principal, about 1974, I'd say. Then the Boosters Club came forward, which has been active in helping with athletic affairs and raising money. It, too, had its

principal duty as raising money, mostly with parties and auctions. So that is what we have now, but it too is fading.

RM: So you had a PTO that grew out of the PTA

MC: Sort of. Well, no, the Boosters Club came forward about '75 and took over some of the functions that had been filled by the PTA, but of course their goals were different because they were so much more interested in the athletic side of the school. Then finally about 1979 or '78, the PTO was born. They decided there was too much emphasis on athletics and there were other things that were needed academically. Now even the Boosters Club has faded, and even the PTO really needs help. There are a lot of people who are just burnt out, and now there are not enough members.

JC: I was president of the Booster Club for 2 years, and of course it's just a simple fact that you are active when your kids are in school. I always thought that was kind of cheap, and we stayed in a number years after our kids were gone, just to kind of prove a point. But it is just a fact that you are not interested when your kids aren't there.

MC: And when you spend the day at school, as I do, you're not interested in going to any meetings after school.

RM: Yes, really. When did the Booster Club go?

MC: Oh, I suppose about 5 years ago, early '80s.

RM: OK, maybe now is a good time to talk about the evolution of the park and recreation program in town, Jack.

JC: Well I can speak first-hand on that I guess; I'm intimately involved with it. I suppose the Lions Club was a good background for this, because a bunch of us realized that it's pretty difficult to accomplish any goal by yourself. If a number of industrious people, willing to work and fight for what they want, get together and work, you can accomplish things. This is probably what we learned with the Lions Club. There were a number of people like myself who were deeply entrenched in Beatty and had either been here a long time or had recently come and wanted to improve things. Well at this time Ralph Lisle--I keep referring to Ralph, but of course he's been so instrumental in the improvement and building of the town. He was the commissioner about this time, about the early '60s. Maudie is wigwagging here.

MC: I thought you should say something about what was here before. What we found when we came.

JC: Yes, when we came back in '57, for example, it really hadn't changed much in the 20 or 30 years that I could look back on. We had no swimming pool. If kids wanted to go swimming they either went to some cold reservoir of some rancher up north--which we did as kids--or some

old mudhole somewhere. I can remember as a kid going down to what we call the narrows, about a mile and 1/2 south of here. We'd bicycle down there and splash. It was great fun. That's what we had, so that's what we did. But still there was no real softball field. Our softball field was a 2-block area.

MC: It was a park, just a reserve that was on the original plat that was bounded by Amargosa Street to the south and Lewis in the north, between Third and Fourth. And here was this bare spot. When it was surveyed by the people who later made improvements, it was 14 feet from the top corner to the bottom.

JC: A 14-foot drop. The whole town is on a slope; you don't realize it, but it's all slope.

MC: And the kids played flag football on this rock pile. It was really bad.

JC: Softball and baseball, and I guess the best thing you could say about it was that the sagebrush had been scraped off of one corner of it; it was gravel and rocks. This is what we had. And, as I say, no swimming and no track, no football. Of course we didn't play football, so we didn't need a football field. That's where we were in the late '50s.

I don't remember where the original impetus came, but there were several of us who thought, by golly, this wasn't good enough. And it was for our kids, and yet some of the people didn't even have kids. So we talked to Ralph; he was one of the 3 Nye County commissioners, and he said, "Well, if you guys are serious, come on up and meet with us in Tonopah and tell us what you want to do, and we'll see what we can do." So we did. In our original Park and Recreation Advisory Board that was formed here in 1965 there were 5 of us, but there were more people than that interested and willing to travel to Tonopah, because that's where the commissioners met. And we said, "Hey, we don't think this is good enough. We want a better facility."

It started from there. The commissioners made an effort. In fact I think what really launched this is that they passed a business license ordinance, though I think as it turned out this was misguided. But you can't blame them for it, because they wanted to help set us up. You can't do anything unless you've got money to back you up. So they passed this county business license ordinance.

MC: Well the reaction of the community to the one that they passed was so outrageous. It just was: "Good heavens, what are they trying to push down our throats?"

JC: Here would be people who would be involved in 6 or 7 or 8 businesses, and this business license ordinance would tax them for a business license on each one and they screeched and howled. So, as often happens, nothing happened for a long time, but this really brought everybody out of the woodwork. They had a meeting here where people just let the commissioners know in no uncertain terms that they didn't like this at all.

So the outgrowth of this meeting was that they elected a 9 or 11- member committee to draw up a business license that would work. I ended up being elected chairman of it. I just shudder when I think of the hours and nights that we spend thrashing it out. One night a week

we'd meet down in the basement of the Exchange Club. I suppose I was chosen as chairman because I was of a business that really was not so locally involved. I appeared to be more objective perhaps, but boy we really worked on this. And there was a lady who worked as a secretary, Ruth McVeigh, and she laboriously typed up minutes. At any rate, we met for the better part of a year, and you can't imagine how difficult it is to word an ordinance. We finally came up with something that we thought might be workable, though we weren't really terribly pleased with it. Then we met again with the townspeople and the commissioners, and the upshot was that it just didn't seem like a very intelligent way of raising money, and it never came to pass.

MC: You, Jack, didn't emphasize it too much, but I was there since he was presiding over the meeting. The night that the committee revealed their plan for the business license ordinance after working on it for a year was such a fascinating experience. Here were a group of people who had before that night been viewed, I think, by the community as leaders, the people who were eager for the advancement of Beatty. And they showed themselves, then, as being exactly the opposite--people who were anxious to keep the status quo, or perhaps go back. There was a lot of ill feeling; tempers just flared. Old Jack, he really kept his cool.

RM: Why were they perceived as just the opposite? I don't understand the connection.

JC: They wanted things to stay just where they were, with them in control, I think is what it was.

MC: Because they would have had to pay all these license fees for the different businesses. Finally, the woman of this pair said, "But we have to buy 9 licenses." And suddenly everybody in the room realized that they had 9 businesses. And that wasn't the main thing. The main thing was that they didn't want anything to happen. And they lost their power. In that instant it was gone. Well, so often you look back and say, "Yes, that was a turning point."

JC: Somehow the community didn't want the license.

MC: The people wanted progress, but they didn't necessarily see how it was going to be changed.

JC: It was a poor idea really, and we just stumbled and fumbled around and did the best we could. But a business license ordinance is not the way to raise money. If you want to control the businesses, then have a business license ordinance; but if you want to raise money, don't. You don't get enough money to make it worthwhile.

MC: And it's a darn nuisance besides. But I think the lines were drawn then between people who wanted something to happen and people who didn't. And the business ordinance really wasn't central, but it kind of drew the lines. The people who had been viewed as big-hearted were seen to be kind of small and standing in the way of what people really wanted.

JC: At any rate I know it produced real interest in park and recreation improvements, and it led to the local room tax which has been the whole heart of our parks and recreation projects.

RM: When was this?

JC: In 1965. Again, we had to make some trips to Tonopah to urge the commissioners, but Ralph was still there and he was backing it. He was chairman of the commissioners then. They passed a room tax ordinance for Beatty, whereby 5 percent room tax would be charged for all the rooms rented in Beatty for less than a 28-day period. The money was reserved solely for park and recreation improvements in the town of Beatty. And Tonopah passed one at the same time, but theirs applied also to their convention center. And it's been an absolute marvel for them, too, to write off their convention center. It was the money that has made everything possible. Before we had gone out and tried to do this and tried to do this or that, mainly trying to get government matching funds. The first thing they ask is, "Tell us how you are going to guarantee that you can maintain this." And if you don't have a constant, reliable money supply, they won't talk to you. So the room tax was step number one, a big step.

RM: What is the room tax now?

JC: It's 6 percent now, but only 5 comes to park and recreation. The additional one percent was for the Chamber of Commerce, both state-wide and local. So for every dollar that anybody pays in Beatty for a room, 5 cents of that goes to park and recreation. And with this, then, we were able to start in. It was kind of hard to pick the project, but you know these rural areas love to play ball. It used to be baseball a long time ago; now it's slow pitch. Really popular. So we improved the softball field. We put sprinkler pipes in; we had to put a well down. We leveled it first. The County people did a great deal of the work. I'm not a civil engineer; I'm a mining engineer, but I'd had enough surveying. I had a transit and all. We did the surveying, and they leveled it, and we got a ball field put in. Finally The scrounged the money by getting some assistance from the Nye County Park and Recreation, which had formed this same year.

I was the member from Beatty appointed to be on the county Park and Recreation, and have been ever since. I was the secretary right at the start; I'm chairman of it now, and have been for about the last 8 or 10 years. It was something like \$25,000 or \$30,000 that the County Commissioners would appropriate for the fiscal year to be spread out among Nye County. It really isn't very much money if you think about it, but a little bit here and a little bit there, and it was matched maybe by local or something. Sometimes they put it together and get a federal match, and it finally amounts to something.

Then, by utilizing some of the \$2,000 to \$3,000 from the county, Beatty was able to use their room tax money. We got our softball field, and then we got our little park, and then....

MC: The picnic area.

JC: Yes, the picnic area. We got our football field first; that was about '73, I think. There was a fellow here who was the principal who was from Texas, and Beatty had never played football

MC: We had played flag football

JC: Yes, but the upshot of it was that he came to one of our park meetings and he said, "If you guys can build me a football field, I'll put a football team on it from the high school." Well, you know, it was kind of a challenge, and the kids seemed to be for it. And, by George, that's what we did. We got some money from the County over a 2 or 3-year span, and local money; all volunteer. We hauled manure from Lida; I don't know how many trucks of it. Some of us took our trucks and hauled manure down. Then we got somebody's disk and we borrowed somebody's tractor, and just kind of farmed the thing up. Put all the pipe in and everything, and that's how our football field was born. Then very soon afterwards, the county surveyor helped us survey it out. And then here again all the county equipment did all the earth moving, and we had it all lined up, and of course had the plans for a track to surround the football field, standard set-up. Developed the track a few years later. We got the stuff planted, and I think it was 1973 that Beatty fielded a football team, and won 4 and lost 4 the very first year they played.

MC: Eight-man football

JC: So that was '73 and '74, and by this time we had really lined out on a swimming pool. This had always been a particular thing of mine. I can remember walking down to the narrows to swim and going to reservoirs and stuff, and we all agreed that by golly a swimming pool is what we want. On the field we could build a little bit and then run out of money and wait until the next year to build a little more. But the difficult thing about a swimming pool is you can't build a quarter of a swimming pool. You build a swimming pool or you don't, and in order for it to work: you have to have a bathhouse, so it's really one integral unit.

We hired an engineer to come down and see what we had and to advise us as to what he felt we needed. The upshot of it was that we needed about \$106,000 to build a complete swimming pool. And here it had to be pretty much a turnkey job, because we got into federal funds to help us. And, of course, it's pretty hard to build it yourself and assign a value to what you do because it is a matching fund kind of thing. We also were aware of the Fleischmann Fund, which we have spoken of before, which has just been a godsend to Nevada. Finally we found that, if we could assure the rest of the funding, we would be able to get \$40,000 from the Fleischmann if we could convince them that we really needed it. So we put together a program where we planned to get \$40,000 from Fleischmann and about \$13,000 from the county over a 3-year span to make \$53,000. Then we went to the State Park Board to get a matching \$53,000, and thereby we'd have the \$106,000. This is land and water conservation matching funds, but the state park authority are the people who disburse this.

Maudie and I went to Carson City and presented our case. We had the plans and everything from our engineers. That was really fascinating, because they were nice people. As a matter of fact, we knew 2 or 3 of them. Thalia Dondero was on it, who is chairman of Clark County commissioners.

CHAPTER TWELVE

JC (continued): We told the convention of state park people that we--instead of Lake Tahoe or North Las Vegas or so-and-so—would need the money. There always were far more applicants in the state than money available. It was really kind of fascinating, because in my halting manner I gave the presentation. I said that, though we do have a swimming pool, a small pool at one motel, it can't be considered a public pool in any stretch of the imagination. That was why I said in my presentation that for our kids to swim they either went 40 miles to Death Valley to swim in a pool down there or else swam in some cold farmer's reservoir. And they kind of grilled me on this and said, "Do you mean to say that there is no public pool closer than this pool that you can go to in Death Valley that's 40 miles away?" Or Las Vegas, which is 114 miles, or Tonopah, which is 93 miles. That is why we want a swimming pool. Well, whatever, we got our money. And by golly we built our pool.

RM: What year was this, now?

JC: Built in spring and summer '75. We had hoped to swim in it that summer, but as it turned out we didn't make it in time, so '76 was the first swimming season. It has always been one of the things we are really pleased that we did. It's a costly thing; swimming pools never make now. It costs us between \$5,000 and \$10,000 a summer to offer it.

RM: And that comes out of the room tax?

JC: The maintenance of it does, yes. The kids swim; the grown-ups swim; and a lot of kids learn to swim, which is a pretty important thing too.

RM: How large is the pool?

JC: Thirty-eight by 75, and it is 9 feet in the deep end. It has a diving board, and it's a pretty nice little operation.

RM: Are you working on any current projects?

JC: Yes, we are working on our second softball field now, using county funds to help us. We fenced it last year; it cost us \$9,000 for the fence and backstop. The county appropriated \$5,000 of that. Right now, we just planted it and we are waiting for the grass to come up. It's going to cost us in the neighborhood of \$40,000 to have it, and this will be a lighted field.

RM: Where are you building it?

JC: Well, it's pretty close to the football field, just west of the football field in the south end of town. As you come into Beatty from Las Vegas it really is the first thing you see on the left.

MC: Turn left on Amargosa. You would be going to the south end of the park and past Fourth Street over to where there are no more north-south streets. The football field, the horse arena, which was also done by the parks and recreation, and this new softball diamond. There's a restroom there that they built. And there's a restroom at the park that they built too.

JC: We have found that slow pitch softball is just immensely popular. We have a league with about 8 teams.

RM: Eight teams out of one town?

MC: Well not only Beatty but Amargosa too.

JC: The women have teams, too, and there are 8 male teams; I'm just picking 8 out of the air, but there are so many teams that they all can't practice adequately on the one field.

RM: Amargosa doesn't have a field?

MC: It does have a field.

JC: Yes. I don't believe it is grass. But our first field has lights. It's a pretty nice field. We have tournaments here, some 8, 10, 12-team tournaments the last several summers. And it's immensely popular with the people. Different things we do get a different number of people to participate in.

MC: They've been playing for a month at least.

JC: Yes, by the time May rolls around until through August. They kind of burn out at the end of summer, but from May through August just about any night you can go down there, and you are likely to see about 150 or 200 people. They have several games a night. Of course, I think quite easily it's the best field around. Amargosa has one or 2 fields and one or 2 teams in Death Valley, with the employees. And sometimes Mercury teams come up. We are not totally satisfied with it; the grass isn't as good as we'd like, but the lights are pretty good, and we have pretty good bleachers, and there's a concession stand there.

MC: Which was built by the fire department.

JC: Very very popular, so this is why we are building a second field. It's going to take a while to get a good stand of grass, but the lights are going to be really nice. Beautiful fence; it's going to be a beautiful field.

MC: It's nice because it has a hill on two sides that serve as a kind of amphitheater that people can sit up on the sides of.

RM: And you also said that you have tennis courts.

JC: We do. They have never really been as good as we want them to be, and we are going to re-work them this summer, put better lights up and more concrete in, and we already have a better net bought.

RM: Could you say something about the evolution of prostitution in the town? I'm not sure evolution is the right word, but first of all where were the houses of prostitution located, say when you were a kid?

JC: There were, as I recall, two when I was a kid, as far back as I can remember. The Willow Tree and the Red Rooster, and they were just almost next door to each other, down right across the street from where our swimming pool is now at Amargosa and Fourth.

RM: And it was tolerated. I guess that was kind of on the edge of town, wasn't it?

JC: It was. I'm sure that was why they were there.

RM: And when did they disappear?

MC: Well somebody complained. You know in the old days prostitution was tolerated as long as it wasn't a nuisance. As long as no one declared it was a nuisance, it could exist. And until the last 6 or 8 years when they passed the law in the assembly that loused that concept up, it was OK. But somebody complained. This was probably in the early '60s.

RM: Just one complaint?

MC: That was all that was necessary. So somebody came, probably from the Sheriff's office, in response to this complaint and closed the two houses, the Willow Tree and the Red Rooster. Well, it was exactly like the dragon's teeth, you know; all of a sudden there was one down at the airport; there was one out a mile and 1/2 out of town; there were two up at the hot springs, 5 miles north.

RM: You mean they grew up as a result of this closure? When was this? Late '50s?

MC: Yes. The indignation in the town when they closed the Red Rooster and Willow Tree was actually comical. And even in the newspaper people complained: "We don't even have television." [laughter] "What are you trying to do to us?" So that led to some utterly comical things happening. There was a big war going on between a couple of the owners of the houses, and somebody opened the door of one of the ones up at the hot springs and threw in a sack full of rattlesnakes. This sort of thing went on for a while until that settled down. Well, in the end there was just one, which was probably all that was economically feasible. None in town. There's never been one in town since. It was the one that is about a mile and 1/2 up the road.

RM: It's called Fran's?

MC: Fran's Star Ranch. It started out as the Jolly Dolly, which I thought was a wonderful name. They never should have given it up.

RM: But there was one down at the airport for a while?

MC: There was, called the Blue Goose, as I recall. And Joe Conforte owned, at one time, the Jolly Dolly. The person who runs it has been there for a good many years.

JC: That's Fran. She's pretty well liked in town, isn't she.

MC: You know in the old days the prostitutes and their madam kept a very low profile. They crept up to the clinic and got their exams and crept back down to where they were, and no one ever saw them. And if you ever saw them in town, they didn't see you. Nor of course did we see them.

But with Fran, it was kind of a different era that had care, I suppose maybe the more open '60s, and she has always maintained a fairly high profile in town. And of course when she had the famous fire, certain people in town did hold a benefit dance. When you read about it, it sounds like the whole town of Beatty turned out to put her back in business. But it wasn't really like that. And in fact we were in Vegas the day of the party, and we came back kind of late, and we were not about to show our faces up there, but we sent our son to look at her. When he came back he reported that half the people there had cameras around their neck so we knew they weren't local. Sure enough, Time Magazine had a thing about it. She's paid her way. She gives big donations to all the charities and all the drives, and it's true she gets her name in the paper more than the old ones used to. I think the gal up at Cottontail has been partly responsible for that, because she has a genius for self-aggrandizement, publicity. Oh, that gal could have made her fortune on Madison Avenue; I'm convinced of that.

JC: It's remarkably well accepted here.

MC: Well, whom does it harm? Nobody's forced into it. It's certainly safer than street prostitution, both for the girls and for the clients. It's hard for me to get excited about it.

JC: The people of Beatty have been particularly touchy about this, I think, because of all the snickering, sneering attitudes of neighboring towns, and particularly Las Vegas. One story always springs to my mind. One of these ambulance drivers that I was saying used to drive a truck was a pretty outspoken fellow, and he had hauled a load of injuries from an accident into Vegas. He was the driver, and the other fellow was the attendant I think. At any rate, they were checking these people into the hospital, and somebody was asking where they were from and everything, and somebody said Beatty. And this receptionist made some disparaging remark about Beatty. "Oh Beatty, that's where all the hookers are," or something like that. And this guy was never shy about talking. He said, "Don't tell me about hookers in Beatty. There's more hookers within 3 blocks of here than the whole county of Nye!"

MC: In a loud voice. Everyone in the waiting room heard it.

JC: And we do get a little tired of this holier-than-thou attitude when it's so phoney, you know. It's here, but it's everywhere. The only thing is people take it for granted here, and they take it at face value. It gets a little old sometimes, and we do dislike having that nametag hung on us, because there's a lot of nice things here, really. That goes on everywhere. Outside of that, it's never been a problem, I think.

RM: I wonder if we could go through a chronology of the development of the motels in town. The first one was the El Portal

JC: It had to be the El Portal Must have been built '38 or '39 somewhere.

MC: The second was Hank's, wasn't it? It was right on the corner of Beech Street and Main. It's called the Amargosa River Inn, which I think is a name of ill portents, because I've seen the water flow right through it. When I saw what they named it, it gave me a bad feeling.

JC: It's the first one you see just after you cross the bridge, coming from Tonopah.

MC: And that's quite a small place. It's been quite improved in the last few years. Hank Melcher built that. And I think it was before 1957; it was here when we came back in '57. I'm good friends of the people who built it and very good friends of the people who operate it now. But I guess Hank's is probably the second.

JC: I suspect that right in the middle '50s there was a sudden upsurge due to the atomic testing, because when we came back to Beatty there were 3, beside the El Portal. There was Hank's, there was Wagon Wheel, which is on the corner of Main and Second, across from the Exchange. And Brockman's had built the Desert Inn, which is kind of in hiatus right now. That's across the street from the Burro, from the highway. And then Burro of course is quite recent. It was preceded by a funny little motel that was made out of pre-fabricated trailer modules.

RM: Well, now, what's the name of the one on Second, across from the Exchange?

MC: It used to be called the Wagon Wheel. I don't know what it's called now.

RM: That was originally the Gold Ace.

JC: That's right. Farley's, yes.

MC: That motel that Elliot hired built.

RM: What was originally where the Amargosa River Inn is now?

MC: That was Hank's, Hank's Motel.

RM: What was originally there when you were young?

JC: A long time ago there was a little tiny Standard gasoline station. It was just north. Going way back, in the '30s, there was Richings, just north of the big store, the Revert store, the big curved roof building that we could see in some of those pictures there. Pop Richings had just a tiny little old building there where he sold oil and stuff and one hand-pump gas pump, where you put the thing back and you put 10 gallons in there and then he drains it out. That was what was there originally.

MC: Then on the other corner, the corner of First and Main, there was a gas station when I first came.

JC: There was a Standard station there, yes, where Bobby Revert's station is now.

MC: But it was a different building.

JC: No, I think that was Standard. In later years there was a Standard where Revert's station is now.

MC: Tom Welch had it.

JC: There was a terrific fire, and it burned down. Way back; it had to be in the '40s; it might have been during the war, maybe just after the war. A tremendous fire. Gasoline drums were exploding and this kind of thing, but nobody was hurt, as I recall.

MC: Ralph Lisle too had a Texaco station that burned in the same location. Where the J&B Ceramics is now. That would be the corner of Second and Watson.

JC: Right across the street from the hardware store.

MC: Of course in those days the Bonanza Airlines flew from Vegas to Reno, and they flew DC-3s and naturally they didn't get above 10,000 feet, so when the night flight from Vegas to Reno went over supposedly the pilot radioed in that Beatty was burning. It was such a fire.

JC: Now that must have happened in the early to middle '50s, because it was while The were gone. To go back to the fire department, these were big landmark dates when big things burned down.

MC: In fact the first summer after we came back from Alaska, a truck driver came dashing in and said, "Tonopah is on fire." So we got in our car, drove up the valley, and there was the most incredible, brilliant, red northern lights I ever saw, and that's after 2 years in Alaska. Nothing to compare with it. It was terrific, just a red curtain. It was seen as far south as Florida.

RM: They thought it was Tonopah. Now what was the motel across from the Burro Inn?

MC: That was the Desert Inn. Built by the Brockmans, it had only about 6 units I think. They lived on the place in a trailer that served as the office.

RM: And that was built when you got back?

MC: That was already here.

JC: That was just finished in '57.

MC: Brockman bought the land. You know they changed the alignment of the highway. It had formerly formed a deeper curve as you came up from the narrows. When they changed the highway in '52, he bought the land that had formerly been the right-of way.

RM: Oh, I see, OK. And meanwhile, there was a little bar where the Burro Casino is now?

JC: Yes. There was a lot of stuff built right about then. I think they built that after we came back. I think around '57 or '58 was when they built that.

RM: So it seems like nuclear testing gave impetus to some growth.

MC: Whether one caused the other or not, I don't know, but certainly they seemed to come at about the same time.

JC: And really these were the years, really important formative years for the town, because we were undergoing a revolution in our water department. People were just raising Cain. We had some people move in, a family or 2, who just objected to this one-family control of both the electric power and the water. Namely, Reverts. It was a gentleman named John Way, who was a retired army officer.

MC: An engineer too.

JC: There were law suits originated about then over the water thing that still are going on. Challenging the ownership of the water.

MC: See, the people who were unhappy with the Revert's ownership, their management of the water system, thought with research that they detected a gap in their continuous use, which would of course make the springs available.

JC: A legal technicality.

MC: So they went out, this one particular person, went out and staked a claim on the springs. That resulted in a law suit in which they tried to determine whether in fact the springs had had continuous use.

RM: But didn't they discontinue the use of the Revert springs at one point because of the fluoride?

MC: That's right. This is just my opinion of course, but I feel that the Reverts sensed that if they kept it, they were going to have to put in some kind of purification or improvement of the water that would have proved extremely expensive. The town has never been able to afford it, and I am quite sure the Reverts couldn't either. Basically they gave up the distribution of the water; they didn't give up their claim to the springs.

JC: The Beatty water and sanitation district was formed.

MC: That's a general improvement district, Beatty water district. It's a legal definition.

JC: Our park board here in Beatty operates under this same thing; it's under NRS 318, I think it is. Members are elected and they're able to conduct business.

MC: It's an autonomous political unit, a general improvement district.

JC: That was about '60 or so, and interestingly enough almost the same time that we ended up getting co-op power from a cooperative. Here again, the Reverts had had the power company. I don't remember exactly how it came about.

MC: Rural electrification.

JC: Yes, that came up through Pahrump and Amargosa Valley and Beatty.

MC: Amargosa got theirs first.

JC: About '61, I think.

MC: And also the White Mountain Cooperative was in existence under the REA ordinances, and then down here in Amargosa they began talk of bringing in power from Davis Dam.

RM: Oh, it's not Hoover Dam?

JC: No, Davis Dam, and which they put in the late '50s I guess, apparently assuming now-made this power block available. Of course the locally-generated power was always very expensive, about 12 cents a kw or something like that. So Beatty jumped right in with this thing with Amargosa and Pahrump.

RM: I was talking to Hank; Hank Records had a lot to do with that, and he can give me the lowdown on that.

JC: But, you see, what I am saying is that in the early '60s we had quite a revolution here.

MC: That's when we got the telephones too.

JC: We were changing the water system into our own governmentally organized, and the co-op brought in considerably cheaper power and a better quality-power. More reliable and the cycles and the voltage were better regulated; you didn't get surges.

MC: They couldn't keep it at 60 cycles so your clock was running fast.

JC: Oh yes, we just took it for granted, but this was higher quality stuff.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

RM: This revolution that was taking place probably began about 1960?

JC: Yes, 1960 or so. Bear with us; we are within a year or two when we are saying this. But it had never really occurred to me that these two really vital changes took place in a very short time.

RM: Water, sewer change?

JC: Water and power. The sewer change came a little later. We had implied that it would be part of the water program a little later, and it indeed did.

MC: Well, not only that. I think the state was starting to lean on us a little bit because of the quality of the water, the high fluoride in the spring water, many parts per million, I think between 6 and 8. The allowable limit is 3, so naturally the first thing the new water district did was start scouting around trying to find good water. They bought from the Reverts at the spring for many years while they were drilling and searching for more water. Also, the state started to complain about the quality of the ground here as a result of all the cesspools and septic tanks that people had, and rather inferior ones perhaps, not satisfactory from the health point of view. So the idea was that we were going to have to do something about that too, which became the responsibility of the water district.

RM: So when did the sewer system change?

JC: I pin water to about '60 or '61, which is just about when the power came in. The sewage came later, some 3, 4, 5 years or maybe a little more. Before that, each house had its own system.

MC: Part of the sewer system was funded by block grants from HUD, and part county, part state; they just scrounged wherever they could to get maw. They dug the sewer ponds that are down towards the narrows and installed a network of access lines, new pipes and everything.

JC: Both the water and the sewer just dug up the whole town. But, coming back to the water, feature if you will a couple of 8-inch lines coming down from Beatty spring on the surface of the ground. This was the old water supply.

MC: They're still there.

JC: I don't mean to be disparaging to the Reverts because if I had been doing it I'd have done it the same way I suppose. Just a ticky-tacky old arrangement of 2-inch pipes, and you add on and add on, and some of the pipes were bigger, but naturally they rusted out in time. A bunch of leaks. There was a lot of water, so nobody really worried about it. Then they drilled wells and

had tanks and stuff. But the distribution system; good lord, they had to dig up the whole town essentially and lay all these lines.

MC: When we first bought this house, we had only 2 bedrooms and 4 children, so Jack and I slept on the porch out here for 6 years.

RM: You mean in winter and summer?

IC: Oh, yes. It's on the lee side from the north wind, so it wasn't bad at all. But I shall never forget lying in bed early in the morning while they were digging the water line right through our yard and talking about it. They were saying, "Yes, there's a mine up here somewhere." Oh, they were funny.

RM: Is that right, and here you were and they didn't know.

JC: These were a bunch of contractors that they brought in, and of course later, several years later the same thing happened with the sewer system.

RM: And so they dug up the town twice really. Well, where did they get the money for the water system? From grants and that kind of thing?

JC: Big loans and grants, yes; it's mortgaged for...whatever; I don't know.

MC: Oh yes. And then we had meters—oh, what a shock to the system that was, because before for a million years we paid \$10 a month for water, however much we wanted. And in fact, when we lived out at Pan Welch's, here at the end of Montgomery Street, Norm Revert would come over and say, "Johnsons don't have any water in the motel; can you stop watering your lawn." We had this 8-inch main that ran across practically from the spring itself.

JC: And you see as Beatty built up the hill, especially up the hill to the west, it got higher. Naturally, they had a problem with the water pressure. These are the kind of things that really brought this on, this health thing, the creation of a really good water system.

RM: And then about this time they put in a new phone system.

MC: Yes, we went on to dial phones. Well, I'm really proud of that. The man from the Bell Telephone came to see us and talked to us about what kind of service we wanted, and after countless years of having 10-party lines, of course everybody was dying to have privacy in their phone conversations. So he said, "And now, would you like to have a private line?" And I thought fast, and then I said, "No we want a 2-party line," because I figured there wouldn't be anyone else on that party and it cost half as much. I think it was about 10 years before they put somebody on our line. That was one of my coups. That was great, because everybody else was sick and tired of having everybody listening in on their conversations.

JC: Really, it's interesting to think of this, but the '60s were really a vital decade for this town. So many things happened.

RM: What are some other things that began happening?

MC: Well, you started to tell about the land sale.

JC: Oh yes. I think that was in 1961. Beatty is, with I guess most of the rest of Nevada, totally hemmed in by the BLM, federally owned land. There was an original town site here, and we were just kind of elbowing out against all the edges. The lots were being sold, and people were building.

MC: Not only that, the lots are extraordinarily small, 30 by 100. On Main Street and on Montgomery Street the lots are extremely small; they get bigger.

RM: Like in Tonopah, they are 25 by 100 or 150 or something.

JC: So there was a lot of agitation, and finally the BLM did hold a land sale here, and I am quite certain it was 1961.

MC: Originally, they had said they were going to sell 5-acre lots, and they surveyed that, but then so many people appeared willing to buy that they cut them in half and sold them in 2-1/2-acre lots.

JC: And as I recall, they had the land sale downstairs in the Exchange basement.

RM: It sounds like it was almost a community center, but then you had a community center.

MC: Well, we had the old hall, you see, so you had the choice of going up there in the winter and freezing or the summer and burning up. They did have coolers later on. But then you couldn't hear.

JC: But it was pretty nice down in the Exchange. The Knights, or before them the Doings, were extremely helpful. Of course it was a good thing for them that they were, to draw people. But it was more than that. They were willing to let anyone come there and do anything you wanted to; that's what it amounted to.

But the land sale was down there at any rate. In our case, for example, at the time we were renting from Tom Welch out where Judge Bill Sullivan is.

MC: It's really the end of Montgomery Street, the northern end of Montgomery.

JC: Just on the west side of the river, about as far north as you can go in Beatty. There were a lot trees up in there, and it was a very pleasant place. When we came back in '57, it ended up

we stayed there 7 years. But we wanted some land, as did a lot of other people, so we ended up buying a 2-1/2-acre parcel for \$1,000, that was the base price.

RM: Was it an auction?

JC: Yes, but it really wasn't that heavily bid. I think most of the people got their land for the minimum price.

MC: Well, there wasn't too much competition. I suppose if people saw someone else was interested, they kind of fell back to a prepared position, and some of the plots were not sold at the auction though they were offered. They repeated about 9 times at the beginning of the sale that you had to pay then. They wanted the money.

JC: They wouldn't take a personal check.

MC: Right, you had to have a cashier's check or cash. As it happens we came rather late, and we were sitting right by the cashier's station, and I couldn't help hearing what happened. A man, who since has left Beatty, bought a lot for \$600, which was the minimum on that particular piece, and he came over and he said, 'Well, how about I pay you tomorrow?' And she said, 'No, you have to pay now.' 'How about I give you this check?' 'No; there are no personal checks accepted.' Finally, that so-and-so pulled \$600 out of one pocket and then another, and finally this pile of money. He had that money on him the whole time. I was just outraged. Well, I never believed another thing he ever said after that.

RM: Well, did people subsequently sub-divide those 2-1/2 acres?

JC: Yes, I guess they did.

MC: Sure, well Dave has those up there on E Street, or whatever it is.

JC: But that has just happened in the last year or so.

RM: Most people's 2-1/2 acres are intact?

MC: We still have ours.

RM: There is 2-1/2 acres here?

MC: No, it's over there on the corner of Crowell and A Street.

JC: Over by county maintenance.

RM: Are there buildings on yours?

JC: No, we haven't done anything. As it turned out, Art and Opal Revert had raised their family here in this house. This was moved in from Tonopah about 1945, and they had a nice yard.

MC: Then the porch was built on.

JC: Nice yard and all. They decided in 1963, the fall, that they were going to build a new house and that they were going to sell this one, so we subsequently bought it from them.

MC: Actually, it was earlier than that, because, remember, their daughter Brenda was married in the summer from this house.

JC: We closed the deal I think November '63, and we moved in January '64. Got a G.I. loan for 5-1/4 percent; it makes you just drool now.

MC: And we bought the lot next door. There were only 3 lots, which is now fenced and part of our yard.

JC: You know, there's another thing that we haven't touched on at all that kind of fits in with the power--and here again it happened in late '50s or early '60s. It's television.

RM: Yes, that's something that I wanted to get into.

JC: Because, of course, there was absolutely no television as I grew up as a boy. There wasn't any such thing. I think about '58 or '59, Norm Revert started it--again, one of the Revert people. People resent them in a lot of ways for the control that they exerted on the town in the early days, but, by George, they were the people that got out and did things.

RM: They provided the services.

JC: That's right. And here Norm, who was a very dear friend of ours, liked television. He died about 15 years ago.

MC: He lived in Long Pine for a while, and then came home to Beatty. JC: Of course the Revert family had been based here since about '31, a rather large family. But he and his wife and kids came back here around '58 or '59. He's not like a lot of people who would say, "Gee I wish we had television." I don't know how he ever got hooked up with him, but he found this television technician.

MC: A madman named Morris Faulkner.

JC: Kind of a Third character, you know. These electronics experts a lot of times kind of march to a different drummer. This guy was one of them, but he knew television. Norm wasn't the most ambitious person in the world physically perhaps, so I'm not saying that Norm himself walked around, but if he didn't he hired this guy to do it. At any rate he stomped around all

these mountains with some kind of monitor or receiver and determined that at one particular spot up on the mountain up here back to the west, they could pick up a signal. Up what they call "television hill." He found this one particular spot where, through some weird bounce, he could get a fair signal of NBC out of Vegas.

MC: "Fair" is probably complimentary.

JC: Rather poor, but at any rate, you know TV is a pretty important thing everywhere. We had radio, but we didn't even have a damn motion picture house.

MC: Radio had started to decline, because in other places TV had filled the bill. We got the radio and that was not much, the talk show and the records. And some people would say, "No bowling alley!", as though that were the ultimate insult.

JC: But anyway, they managed to put some kind of a mickey mouse routine up there, and he got something of a signal, and people in town started getting the one channel, NBC. And it went on from there. That was '58 or '59. As I recall the growth of it, that went on for a number of years, and then finally—was it the county?

MC: Well they started to get more ambitious and wanted to put in better equipment, the translator, and they wanted to get another station, but I think that came a little later.

JC: People wouldn't pay. I don't think Norm could even sell.

MC: They just were broadcasting. Then it was voluntary to pay for it. JC: He did it for a while, but there were people who got it that wouldn't pay for it.

MC: They formed a TV district.

JC: Yes, my father worked on it quite a bit too, and Norm and Dad, and I think Ben Matthews and Marvin were on it. Marvin Walker. He's the manager of the water board and sanitation. But there were 4 or 5 fellows who did the work and never got paid a cent. Traveled, they hauled the stuff.

MC: Dad would haul the translators and the crystals down to be reworked.

JC: But they finally began to secure a little county funds.

MC: Actually they used Beatty town funds.

JC: And they improved NBC, finally worked it out until where, by this time, the Test Site was getting television. There was kind of a relay system where they'd come from Vegas up to Angel Peak, which is in the foothills, the northerly foothills of the Charleston.Mountaine, up to the Test Site. They pick up something there, and then they got up on a mountain in Secret Pass,

about 5 miles east of Beatty, and they could pick it up pretty clearly there, then they relay over to this television hill. Every time you relay an electrical signal, you're going to pick up a little junk. But it was better; it kept getting better.

MC: We saw a lot of Midland, Texas, actually, in the summer.

JC: But what was bringing this up, really, was that at one point in this there were going to be some changes in the television situation. Somehow it evolved that we had this town meeting on television.

MC: Bob Ruud was just newly in office as a commissioner.

JC: A fellow from Pahrump. Absolutely marvelous guy.

MC: Seventeen people who were just outraged at the way the television board was running things went down and called on him there in Pahrump and persuaded him to come up to Beatty and have a meeting. It was the election of the new board members.

JC: I've forgotten precisely, was it the television board? That's an advisory board to the county commissioners, really.

MC: No, they did everything themselves. Anyway, they had an election and for once there was some opposition. And of course feelings ran high, tempers flared, and we had this town meeting.

JC: This happened numerous times. As Maudie says, people seemingly couldn't care less. Of course this apathy I've been involved with a lot, maybe with the park and recreation stuff. You just finally assume that, well, we must be doing a decent job or they'd be coming and screaming or yelling or trying to vote us out.

MC: Apathy is perceived as approval.

JC: That's right. But every once in a while, something sparks it off, and perhaps 2 or 3 different groups get after each other, and we have some jim-dandy meetings. This television was a dilly. Poor old Bob Ruud. I do remember that I talked to him, and I kind of warned him that tempers were kind of...and to be prepared. And, boy, the lid blew off; I felt so sorry for him. There were about 100 or 120 people or so.

MC: For Beatty, that's a tremendous turnout.

JC: One of the last meetings in the old hall, and I always remember the Johnsons, these friends of ours. They had 2 sons in high school at that time, and they were taking some civics class. Harry told the boys, "You know we are having a town meeting tonight. You ought to come

down and it will give you some insight into how a town meeting works." And here, this knock-down and—there weren't any punches thrown, but the words flew.

RM: And what was the heat over?

MC: The idea of having a having a different television board. So there were people who wanted to elect new ones, and others who wanted to defend the ones that we had. We have friends who were our neighbors, and Carl was an electrical engineer and he got up and he had his say. I don't remember exactly what it was, and later his wife was recognized and was standing up and saying her part, and he kept interrupting her. Finally she turned around and said, "Carl, I have the floor!" But that was just a mild example.

JC: It's just fascinating to see the dynamics of one of these meetings. That old one with the business license. I was the chairman of that one, so boy you are really on the spot. It's just fascinating to see how things can work, and what makes people mad, and what people will accept.

MC: Oh, I don't know. At that meeting that Jack refers to, he said, "Everybody will be heard " And, you know, that was the most calming thing that he could have said.

JC: That's the biggest worry. They won't get to say what they want to say.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

RM: Now, Beatty has a town board which is advisory to the county commissioners.

MC: Yes, citizens advisory council.

RM: Well, were you here when the council got going or has it always been here?

MC: No, it was first started in about the early '60s.

RM: Do you want to talk about the evolution of this council?

MC: The committee was nominated by a town meeting, and then the people whose names were submitted to the commissioners were appointed to serve for a year or 2; I think it was a year. They began to hold meetings once a month for people to speak, to suggest things that needed doing, arguments and problems that they wanted presented to the commissioners. The town board, so-called—it's really the Citizens Advisory Committee, but somehow everybody just calls it the town board—would go to a regular appointment with the commissioners at their meeting and present whatever would come up even to the point of figuring out the town budget, under the guidelines that the commissioners laid out. It has been extremely successful. I don't know about other communities in the state, but certainly in Nye County it has been.

RM: What gave the impetus for its creation, do you think?

JC: I suspect that the workload on the commissioners was getting very high and they needed to have input. Part of their routine needed to be diverted to some other people who could transmit information and could probably accept a lot of flack. It hasn't of course served to totally relieve them of all of that.

RM: In Amargosa they say that its evolution came about because they felt like they were paying taxes, and they weren't getting anything back. It was kind of from the bottom up; whereas it sounds like this one was from the top down.

JC: I think that, too, but Amargosa was not formed as an unincorporated town until quite lately, and you see it's only with unincorporated towns that they have this. Beatty was in place as an unincorporated town, so probably what they are talking about is their gaining the unincorporated town status, which is grassroots.

RM: But they did it so that they could have input and stuff.

JC: Also so that they could have money. You see, they hadn't been able to have bonds or anything. As Jack has said about park and recreation, you don't have much of a community government if you don't have money.

RM: But prior to 1960, you didn't have it?

JC: I don't think so.

RM: So the county commissioners decided.

MC: They decided, and of course pressure groups. Anyone who had a grievance could go up to the meeting and raise heck and get a hearing.

JC: Of course, it is obviously a better thing for the county commissioners, because you can just imagine them sitting up there in a meeting. Here comes 2 or 3 people from Beatty to say that, hey, Beatty wants this or something. Sure, but how do they know that these people really represent Beatty. So it makes so much more sense to advertise it and have everybody know that if you want something or don't want something, then you'd better go to a meeting and say so.

RM: Now, when did they build the Burro Inn Motel?

MC: Oh, in the last 5 years.

JC: Well, as we were mentioning before, they had those trailer modules in there for a number of years, and that was the Burro Inn, I think.

MC: It wasn't called the Burro; what was it called? The Horseshoe?

JC: Yes, maybe it was the Horseshoe. But they had a whole row of them around essentially in the same position where the motel is now, for a long time.

RM: And when did they put those in there, do you think?

JC: It's hard to say, hard to date, but they were there.

MC: The building that is now the Casino and restaurant of the Burro was not open.

RM: But it was called the Atomic Club.

MC: After it had been called the Atomic Club, it had been closed for many years.

RM: Oh, it was the Horseshoe for many years.

MC: The Knight family had purchased that property during the 20 years that they had a lease on the Exchange Club. Their lease expired, what, in '78, '79, something like that? They had had the Exchange Club all those years. Then the owners of the Exchange Club refused, or declined, to

renew, so in the meantime the Knights had prepared this other position to fall back to, and that's when they built the motel with what's there now. So I would say about 5 years.

JC: I would suspect that the Knight's lease was about '60 to '80, because I think it was a 20-year thing. So I think they took over the Exchange Club. The Doings were there in '59 when we had the charter for the Lions Club. Larry was there; the Knights were there in '61 for the first burro race, so I think it was about '60, and it was renewed in '70, I think, and then they dropped it in '80, and that's when they moved down and built the modern Burro.

RM: But they owned the modular part of the Burro before?

MC: Well, I thought they did. They owned that land.

RM: And then the Stagecoach; that was built in the last 3 or 4 years.

JC: A little more than that, I think. I thought it a rather admirable undertaking too, because there were 2 fellows, Ringle and Plotkin. Gosh, my picture of it is that these fellows just came here and they did a lot of the work themselves. It took them really years to build the thing. I can remember in one of the town council meetings it was advertised and a lot of people came. Kind of a move by the people who were here to keep them from getting a liquor license. That of course is always an important thing.

MC: And this guy got up and claimed that they were never going to compete in Beatty; they were going to have people that they brought in from California, which is kind of a laugh when you think about it.

JC: I never have known them very well, but it was Plotkin I think who talked. I was rather taken. He put the people who were here with the licenses in rather an awkward light, I think. He kind of said, "Well, it's a free county, you know. Why can't I get a license and operate. I've built this thing. I've shown that I want to be part of the town and have a business here. Why can't I get a license?" And I was a pretty sympathetic.

MC: Almost everybody voted for it.

RM: And then when was the Lori built?

MC: Now that was really recently. That was built in response to these red flag operations, because it was the Air Force that financed it.

JC: Not built as a motel. It was built to house Air Force personnel.

MC: Quarters for military people who came up from, I suppose, Indian Springs.

JC: Well, I helped haul some of the gravel over there and stuff. I can't pin it to a date, but it's been the Lori Motel for probably 3 years. There were a number of years before that that it operated just to house the Air Force. I think it was some fellow in Reno who got the land, and then he contracted to have those things built.

RM: He must have had a contract with the Air Force or something.

MC: We used to call it Riverside Inn, trying to picture what was going to happen the next time the river came up.

RM: The next big flood, yes. Have they done any channeling or anything?

JC: Yes, quite a bit.

MC: They came out and deepened the river at times into quite a deep "v"; in fact we had a fairly substantial flow of water after the big flood in '69 that probably would have done damage except for that work. But it's now up again.

JC: Here again, it's hard to pin down, but I'd say somewhere between 3 and 5 years ago they came down and did just virtually months of work with Cats and stuff, and they really have improved it so that floods that in the past did some real damage and caused a lot of problems would not be near as much a problem now. Of course, it just depends on how big the flood is. Of course if you get one like we had in '69, there's going to be lots of problems.

RM: Now the ribbon factory has made quite an addition to the local economy.

MC: That's a real story. I know they built that house--it was their home. Now it's a part of the ribbon factory. It's practically next door to Jack's parents. I can remember when I used to visit, and Jack's mother would point it out to me and say, "Look, those people built half a house." And she kind of giggled. But I always thought that that's great. If they have the money to build half a house, half a house is better than none. Here was the sidewall, and here was the roof, and that was it. And they built the other half later. They have worked so hard.

JC: I have the utmost admiration. They started from simply a bootstrap operation.

MC: On their kitchen table--literally, her kitchen table. It was because their daughter was an entrant in Miss Rodeo type things, you know gymkhanas and...

RM: Gymkhanas is a rodeo organization?

MC: Well it's more a horse show than a rodeo. She'll tell you I'm sure, but Jane looked at the prizes and she said, 'Well, I can do better than this.' She got some yards of ribbon and started making them.

JC: Just a resourceful person.

RM: I guess it's really the biggest employer in Beatty, isn't it?

JC: Well, what does she employ? Thirty?

MC: I would have thought that the Exchange and the Burro, maybe, was the biggest. Whatever, she's done it all herself.

RM: One thing, it's all women too. I was talking to...I can't remember. But she said a man couldn't survive in there. She said, "You couldn't work there." She said that all those women, they'd drive you.... [laughter]

JC: But, she has just taken off and never looked back. She's got machines that she and her husband practically designed. And the organization is virtually international--she ships stuff abroad.

MC: They had a terrible time with the text for the Polish National Horse Show.

RM: What about the presence of minorities in the community? I think we talked about Indians.

JC: As far as the school, there have been remarkable few minority people in Beatty, I would say.

MC: Whether that's because none came or perhaps some came and didn't care to stay. I would characterize Beatty as quite a redneck community.

RM: You would? In what sense?

MC: I think people are extremely prejudiced against other cultures and other colors, and for no reason that I know of. They are different, and so they are to be shunned. In school we've had perhaps a half dozen at the most in the 8 years I have been there, of black children or part, usually half. And I can't say that I've observed great prejudice against them. They are usually quite young, and small children aren't prejudiced. As far as the community is concerned, it would be hard for me to judge what a person would feel who comes into it who doesn't belong. I think maybe white people who don't belong feel discriminated against. So why-wouldn't others.

Our school has about 1/4 of our school population Hispanic. And they mostly come from the Amargosa. Very few come from Beatty, and they are certainly well-accepted in the school.

RM: Is there a language problem with them?

MC: Some of them, yes. We have 3 boys in school right now who do not speak English. And we have a migrant aide who is federally funded helping them. We have really quite a good program, with computer-assisted teaching and a lot of electronics with tapes. They are coming

along very nicely. This happens quite often. Here someone will show up, perhaps a person who has children in school, and say that I brought you a student, and here's somebody from Mexico—more than likely illegal. And that's the reason they came; they needed to learn English. I would say Beatty is probably not a very comfortable place for people who are not quite accepted.

RM: Would you go along with that?

JC: Yes. Of course Maudie's talking of the school. I can think of the mine. I don't think we've ever had a black person underground. I guess there are a lot of people who could be characterized as rednecks in Beatty, but I think in the mine it's kind of nice, because I think they are respected for what they do more than what they are. We've had a number of Mexican fellows, and I feel particularly close I think to Mexicans. We have traveled in Mexico a number of times, and fished, and I like Mexican people, and I think I would probably go out of my way to hire a Mexican because of this. We've had a number of Mexican miners who have been very good workers and totally accepted in the mine. I've never seen any problem with this.

And we've had Indians I grew up with Indian people here, and we've had Indian workers a number of times, and they've been excellent workers. No problem. As long as they did their work, they were accepted. So that's really a rather limited experience, I suppose.

RM: How about organized labor in town? What has been the role historically?

JC: I don't think it's reached in here very well. We've touched on labor problems a time or two perhaps when people in the mine didn't think they were getting paid enough. It's usually been a thing that we have been able to work out amongst ourselves. I remember one occasion, must have been some 20 years or so ago, I guess, when the guys thought they weren't getting paid enough. They tried to bring a union in here, and it was kind of enlightening to me. A fellow actually came up from the union hall in Vegas and met with us, and the upshot of it was that he wasn't interested because there were only about 10 or 12 people. I guess the final result was it would have cost them more to organize a union up here and keep things going than it would have been worth to them, so they couldn't have cared less, which I thought was kind of weird.

Of course we are management, and so we have always thought we were on the opposite side of the fence. We were greatly relieved I guess when this happened. But that's really the only occasion that I can think of personally.

MC: Certainly it has impinged on our lives in the effect it has in the Test Site, where they pay many times the salary that we could afford to pay. And naturally people would rather work where they get more money, if they are willing to commute. So it has touched us in a tangential sort of way.

RM: Has it made it difficult ever for you to get employees?

JC: You would think really that it would, but it hasn't been that much of a factor. Of course we're talking here of hiring anywhere from 5 to 10; we've had at the most maybe 15 people working. There always seems to have been at least that many people who valued living close to

their work and being with their families. Of course there are a lot of people who historically have lived in Beatty since the early '50s and worked at the Test Site--and still do. But it entails either living out there during the week and coming home on the weekends or something between 50 and 60, and sometimes as much as 100 miles each way. By the time you drive, Mercury itself is some 55 miles from here, and gosh they go on up to the Test Site some 30-40 miles sometime.

RM: There's no way to get in at Lathrop Wells?

JC: There was at one time, but I think that is closed now. That shortened it some, but it took 10 miles off. It didn't make that much of a difference, deep into the Test Site. But from our experience, there have always been enough people who are willing to work for less to be close to what they are doing. I have always thought, thinking about our mine, that we had pretty close to ideal conditions. We are close, within 5 miles of town; there's no water underground, which makes it more comfortable; there's good ventilation, and well lit; nice working temperature. I suppose all that stuff helps. But it has been a problem at times, but not as much as you'd think.

RM: In town meetings I've attended here from time to time, there's a complaint that they don't have a union hall here, where local people can hire out of. They have to hire out of Vegas.

MC: Pat Mankins ran for office with that one of her platforms, but I can't see that anything has happened. Probably, it's too much expense for the companies with not enough results. There's not that many people who are seeking work.

JC: I think that touches on one of the overriding concerns of the local people, with the thought of the coming of the burial site out here. Many of the people are deeply bitter that the people in Beatty are expected to accept the risk of having this close by, and yet not reap the rewards of perhaps being given at least a fair chance of working out there. They think, and it will probably be so if history is any indicator, when the times comes, if it is indeed at Yucca Mountain, that the people will be hired from Utah or out of Las Vegas or wherever, because that's what's happened in years past.

RM: Did they have a hiring hall out of Beatty?

JC: No, I don't think so. I have attended a number of meetings here in Beatty on Yucca Mountain becalming the repository, and I've heard this voiced numerous times. If it's going to be put in close to us, then why shouldn't we get at least a fair chance to work out there. I don't feel that way myself, but I've heard this mentioned numerous times.

RM: Thinking back to when you were a kid, was there trouble finding employees in World War II, with so many men in the service and all?

JC: Yes, it was hard.

RM: How about your dad? Did he have trouble finding people for the mine?

JC: He did, but on the other hand there were some people who were really able to stay out of the any because of the fact that they worked for us, because it was fluorspar and it was necessary for steel. So it goes both ways.

RM: I know that they had trouble getting people at Henderson at BMI. They used to tell them, 'Well to jail or to Henderson' when people got in trouble. Has there been a problem through the years of people not able to have their children remain in the community because of the lack of economic opportunity?

JC: I don't know that I ever heard it represented as a problem. It's probably so. A lot of them do go away.

MC: I think they are eager to, actually. Or at least to begin with. And then drift back later. I think it speaks well of the community in a way, because I'd hate to think that we were turning out people who were only capable of living in Beatty.

The federal government has seen to that in many respects. Jack and his dad used to have a pretty good entry-level job for people. If you were 18 and could lift a shovel, well you were quite eligible; now you have to have all this training to work in the mine.

RM: You can't just go and get a job at the mine?

JC: No. As Maudie says, I really feel pretty bitter about this, because it's the Department of Labor and the Mine Safety and Health Administration; they have all these rigid federal mining laws. Not too many years ago, maybe 8 or 10 years by now, they instituted this situation where you couldn't hire a man to work underground unless he had 40 hours training, which on the face of it seems innocuous enough, I guess. But it is a big thing, because the mine owner has to pay this man while he is training. In order for us to hire a young boy who comes out of high school here, we've got to hire him, train him for a whole week. Besides, we don't have the slightest idea if the guy's ever going work. But this training is a requirement before he can ever work underground. And I complained bitterly about it. Over the years, there have been many, many young fellows who have come out of school in Beatty, or moved here or whatever, 18, 19, 20-year-olds who wanted a job and wanted to go to work in the mines. We put them on; they worked for us a few years; some of them stayed a long time. Most of them moved on, but many of them liked mining and went on and made it their business. But now you can't do it. I'm not going to do it, because it just doesn't pay.

MC: The government's attitude is, "Oh, is that a problem? Turn that over to your training officer." Or, "Is that a problem? Turn that over to your health officer." [laughter]

JC: But with an organization so small, the owner is everything. It's his time you are talking about.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

RM: Do you have anymore comments on the mining situation with the safety and restrictions that they have put on you?

MC: Well, I think that the main thing was that the rules are made without regard for the small operator.

MC: Like it's some big coal mine in Pennsylvania or something. Training Officer! And of course their attitude is always, "Oh, gee, you can always pass that expense on to your customers." You can if your competitors aren't from Mexico.

JC: Yes, this is kind of politicking a little bit, but I think this is the kind of thing that is wrong with the whole country, this business of these regulations and stuff. These are the kind of reasons why the U.S. industry is failing. They think, well it isn't going to cost much more, just a few cents more a ton, but a few cents here and a few cents there, and with all the labor contracts and everything, we've just priced ourselves out of the business. That's exactly what's happening.

MC: I think it's quite terrifying to think of us as a country that doesn't produce anything. People take in each other's laundry.

RM: Yes, that's what it is coming to, isn't it.

This next is really an anthropologist's question, but in most societies newlyweds tend to reside either with the groom's folks or there are other unwritten rules about it. There's nothing like that here, is there?

MC: Do you mean in the same household?

RM: No, not exactly, but do the boys tend to live here, and the girls come to live with them, or vice versa? Or any process like that.

MC: All of our children have left Beatty. Boys and girls. They had the opportunity of a college education, so that's probably partly responsible for that. Of high school graduates who live here, many do live in the community afterward. They don't live with the parents, though they do make homes in the community. Certainly we have done so, and it has been a great benefit to the children to have their grandparents nearby.

RM: There haven't been any real subdivisions here, have there? There was the original town, and then the BLM auction, and that's where all the land came from. Is that right?

JC: Yes, I think so.

MC: In fact there's no opportunity unless the BLM releases more land.

RM: There weren't any patented claims or anything like that?

MC: Of course you can't live on a patented claim—you can't legally, I think.

RM: Well, after it's patented you can.

JC: Yes, you can do anything you want after its patented. That's true.

RM: So there were no patented claims here in the valley.

JC: No, I don't think so.

MC: I think Fritz Roland lives on a mill site.

RM: Let's see, we really talked about medicine, didn't we, and the problems you had.

MC: Yes, when the children were small, we were very conscious of that, but of course it also coincided with the time when there was no medical facility.

JC: There again, though, so much of that was really solved in the '60s. It's really remarkable. We've never really sat down and rehashed how many things were really changed in the '60s, the real groundwork set for a proper growth of a community.

MC: Well, a lot of them were sparked by the growth of the community, though. You had an adequate, not great maybe but adequate, water system until people came, and then it wasn't adequate any more. So it's hard to judge which came first.

JC: But it's strange that so much of it did really seem to happen in the '60s.

RM: What would you attribute it to?

JC: The Test Site.

MC: Yes, but not only the Test Site, but the Jackass Flat aspect of the Test Site. That brought a lot of quality people to Beatty. People who really made a contribution.

RM: When did that begin, the Jackass? That was the nuclear engine.

MC: Yes, NERDA. Isn't that what they called it? But anyhow, the EMAD building and stuff that they put up there.

RM: EMAD was for nuclear engines?

MC: I don't know.

JC: I think it was.

RM: When did that begin?

JC: Well, Hopkins, he worked for Aerojet, and there again it was probably early '60s.

RM: Maybe there's two things: one, you had an influx of people, but it was also people who had a community spirit.

MC: Quality people, yes. The Bendix people came at about the same time.

RM: They were with whom?

JC: The X15.

MC: The high range radar plane.

JC: And between the two of them they brought some real sharp people, for some reason people who really wanted to put as many roots down as they could, and some of them were on the town council, some of them were on library boards or whatever. These people really wanted to live in the town and help improve it. Of course nearly all of them have moved on, but it spoke well for them, I think, that they took such an interest in the town.

MC: I wonder if maybe the fact that some of them had been military people had something to do with it. Military people are famous for going someplace and establishing themselves quickly in an area, and participating, and then moving on. They are used to that, and I expect that some of them were operating on those experiences.

RM: Are there any key people that you want to mention in this period, with Bendix or EMAD, that you haven't mentioned or you might think whose names should be listed here?

MC: Well, I think the Ducks were important. He was--I suppose he was the boss out there, wasn't he, at the X15 station.

JC: I think Bill was not so much of a technical nature; I think he was perhaps more involved with the facilities to see that they were there and maintained. He was here for nearly all of the project.

MC: At any rate, they bought a house here, and they have maintained that even though they live in Rosamund.

JC: They had a number of children who went to our school.

MC: They still have the house here, and they talk of retiring. However, Bill retired and he went down to Edwards Air Force Base and worked there for quite a while after they left Beatty, but they still maintain their ties here. I think they're important people to our history.

JC: They were important in the advancement of a church here.

MC: The Community Church. And they have let their house be the parsonage all these years, rent free.

RM: Oh. Have we talked enough about the churches and the religious life in town?

MC: We don't know very much about the churches. We've never been affiliated. Our children went to the Episcopal Church, and that's more our interest than the others, but our friends the Johnsons were charter members of the Community Church, and we've heard of that through them.

RM: So let's review the churches that exist in town. Could you say approximately when they were established.

JC: I think the Episcopal probably is the oldest.

RM: And that goes back?

JC: Well, I guess before the '20s.

MC: The church was in that picture.

RM: And could you state their locations.

MC: The Episcopal Church is on the corner of Third and Main.

RM: Did that building come from Rhyolite, by the way? Art Revert thought that it did.

MC: Well, he may very well be right. It certainly is attractive, a stone building.

JC: It's been there as long as I can remember.

RM: I wonder if they could have moved it. It's stone?

MC: They could take it down and put it back up. I think that's been done. Then there's the Catholic church, which was built in the '50s, and it has never been anything but a mission. The priest comes down from Tonopah twice a month. Some priests are more enthused about

missions than others. This one seems to be. Our daughter-in-law is Catholic so we kind of keep in touch that way.

RM: Now the Catholic church started when, and also where is that located?

MC: The '50s. Some military people, I think, were the sparkplug behind that. They raised the money, and they built the building. It's on Main Street between Third and Fourth. The Community Church is set on one of the 2-1/2 acres that was added to the town site.

JC: It's out there near the community center. Very nice building.

MC: It is nice. It's been funded by the American Baptists, and they don't have a very big congregation, but I think it's quite active. They probably have 20 or 30 families.

The Mormon Church has been very active, and I don't suppose they have many more. They have bigger families maybe. They met for a long time in the community building and received a certain amount of flack, because some people saw that as a conflict between church and state, which I thought was baloney. But nevertheless, I was on the town board at the time, and I didn't see any reason why they couldn't rent the building and meet there just like every other community organization.

MC: Most recently, with the last 3 years or so, the Southern Baptists have broken off from the Community Church and built their own church.

JC: It's more than 3; it's probably at least 5, because I hauled some gravel for them, and that's about 4 years ago.

RM: Are they fundamentalists? There's a fundamentalist church in town, I think.

MC: Well, that's probably it then, more conservative certainly. You think of the Southern Baptists as more conservative than the American Baptists.

RM: What would you say their congregation is?

MC: I have not the faintest idea, but I think it's quite small. They do have a nice church, though. It's on the highway toward Death Valley.

JC: Yes, maybe 1/3 of a mile from out of town on the right.

RM: And then where was the Mormon Church?

MC: They have a building up on about Last Street, that's to the north.

JC: The extreme west edge of town. And we had a cult. Believe me, it was a shock to the town. About 5 years or so ago. I don't know where those people came from, the originators, but they

just really took over, especially with the younger people, many of the younger people who had been involved with drugs and a little bit of the fast lane. And they were scary; they really were. And it's odd that the parents of these people, as one of our teachers pointed out, were more scared about their belonging to this church than they had been when they were involved with drugs. And they were scary. They completely dominated the lives of the people who joined, and somebody had a vision that Beatty was going to be the next Sodom or Gomorrah. So what did they do? They gathered everybody up on about a week's notice, and went to Las Vegas.

RM: What was the cult called?

MC: The Bride of Christ. And then they went from Las Vegas. I guess they decided that the fire was going to fall on Las Vegas, so they moved up to Oregon. Some of our young people just disappeared into this group.

RM: So it's still active in Oregon?

MC: As far as I know. Some have returned, at great cost. They've had broken marriages and children that were yanked this way and that. It was really quite sad. There were young people whose parents we knew rather well. One just practically had to kidnap his children to get them back, because the wife was so deeply involved, and is still.

RM: I guess you can't talk about the history of a Nevada town without saying a little something about gambling. What about gambling in Beatty over the years?

MC: It's awfully hard for me to say anything about gambling, because I don't. I'm one of these people who can't put \$3 worth of nickels in the slot machine, you know without saying, "OK, that's enough." Totally boring.

RM: There's always been gambling in the Exchange, hasn't there?

JC: Yes. And some of the other clubs.

RM: The Golden Ace. Did it have gambling?

JC: Yes. In fact most of them did, I think old St. Peter's Bar.

MC: The Beatty Club even had a roulette wheel. It was the only place in town. They had a 21 table, and a roulette wheel, a few slot machines, I guess. Exchange has always had slot machines and a poker table.

JC: A craps table, usually in the Exchange.

MC: Yes, they don't now, but they did. And of course the Burro, they don't have a craps table either; they just have 21 and slot machines.

JC: Yes, that's about it. I guess the Stagecoach has craps--I think, don't they.

MC: They don't have roulette. I don't think there's a roulette wheel in town.

JC: We just really don't gamble, so we can't tell you.

MC: And yet of course the casinos have been an enormous influence. For one thing the Exchange Club for 30 years has been our bank.

RM: How do you mean?

MC: You could cash a check there any time of the day or night.

JC: You didn't deposit there; there was check cashing.

MC: And when you travel and you go to Illinois or somewhere, and they roll up the sidewalks at 7:30 at night, you are totally.... It's so funny; there's no place to cash a check to buy a quart of milk.

JC: I don't think places like the Exchange have locks on the doors. They've always been open 24 hours a day. They can't lock it up.

MC: And you know, for many many years, between the formation of the ambulance service and the 24-hour dispatch at the Sheriff's office, which is only a year or so old, the Exchange Club served as our dispatch for fire calls. You called the Exchange when you wanted the ambulance.

JC: The fire department at one time tried a system where if you had a fire you called 2222, and they keyed this in to a relay that automatically set off a siren. Well, there were always some kids or somebody-who started turning in, and so this didn't last long at all. It had to go through a clearing place, and the Exchange Club--bless their hearts--for all those years, they were the ones.

MC: They had the list of who was on duty for the ambulance, and they would call. They didn't have beepers or anything. It was all telephone, and they had this old red phone under the bar there.

JC: And it's only just a very few years ago that they got over this, and that we have a 24-hour dispatcher. And, apparently, right now we are in jeopardy of losing that because of the budget cuts.

RM: Yes, to with the budget cuts you may go back to the Exchange.

MC: Well, the siren used to be up on the roof. They just pulled the thing that set it off. Then they changed to the siren out by the fire house, and yet again they changed the siren. People complained that they couldn't hear.

JC: But that was still keyed from the Exchange. Through a phone, I think.

MC: But they really served the community in that way. But that doesn't discuss gabbling, but gabbling just isn't a factor in our lives.

RM: Have we said how the school got here?

MC: Some of its hearsay now, of course. Now our friend Kels Hall, who came here as a very young boy, he and his sisters, two sisters, were the only ones in school.

JC: Was the one up on the hill the first one, or the one up back of the Exchange? It shows in one of those photos.

MC: Yes, that was the first school in Beatty. And I think--I'm guessing--but I would say 1906, 1904, something like that, and our friend was one of the students in that school.

RM: Is she still living?

JC: He. NO, I'm sorry to say.

RM: Oh, that's your father's friend.

JC: Yes, H. K. Hall.

MC: Then they put up a building that's just about where the bank is at the corner of Watson and Second. That was the school for a while, up into the '30s. Then, during the '30s, we are told that they took the elementary school, or a building from Rhyolite, took it apart, and transported it here, and reassembled it at the site between Fourth and Irving on Montgomery Street, where the school is now, which was reserved in the first plat map of the town. That's the one that Jack went to school in.

RM: And so those are the schools to the present day?

JC: Well, then all the classrooms in the high school and the gym and all that.

MC: Right, we have 7 buildings. That first building is no longer used as classrooms; it's used as storage. And then the old high school building, which came next; there was an interim building in frame that blew down I guess in a bad storm, and after that they built a concrete block building that is also used as storage. That had been the high school in the '50s.

They finally felt that they were outgrowing those, and in the early '60s they had something like 3 bond elections attempting to raise the money to build a gym. Until that time they played their games and used the town hall as their center. Finally, with the third attempt the bond issue passed, and they built the buildings that are an office and 3 classrooms and the gym. In the late '60s they outgrew that and built the buildings that face that. Now there is the office, what used to be the library, and 3 classrooms plus attendant storage and stuff. And then, after that, they built, perpendicular to those buildings and in line with the gym, 6 classrooms. And this is a school that runs from kindergarten through 12th grade. More recently still, they put up a Butler building that's the shop and dressing rooms for the gym. So those are the buildings that comprise the school.

RM: OK. Just a point of clarification. From the old Revert water system, you said that some of the pipes came from the Tonopah air base.

JC: Yes, 8-inch steel pipe.

RM: It seems like we've had a pretty good discussion of recreation, particularly from the viewpoint of developing recreation facilities. I wonder if there are any other recreational kinds of things that people do here that we haven't talked about?

JC: Well, there is one. There's always, not always but for at least the last 20 years a lot of people have wanted a golf course here, and it's been kind of a bone of contention and some rather bitter feelings at times, I think. As I say, I've been pretty deeply involved with the park and recreation for a while, since 1965 certainly, which is some 22 years. The Park Board has really never felt that we were to the point where we wanted to commit that much money to something like that, because it's such an expenditure. We have seen to it that land has been withdrawn from the BLM, enough to certainly build a 9-hole and possible somewhat more if it came to that, but we have just never been able to raise the money. And I think some of us, at least, I, have some real doubt that we could truly support a really good golf course.

Recently, I guess about 2 years ago, a rather concerted effort was launched to build a golf course here by getting some additional land withdrawn from the BLM surrounding this, and then promoting this land and selling it and using those funds to build a golf course. They even went so far as to sell memberships in a golf course, and a great number of people in Beatty, some in Tonopah, and some from as far away at least as Vegas actually bought into this. But it has still not come to pass, and in my own view it is not just quite the time yet to do it.

As I say, that's strictly my own opinion. Of course a lot of the people who have commercial ventures such as the clubs and the motels and stuff would very much like to have one built. And if somehow we could get over the financial hump and get one built without hocking ourselves up to our eyeballs and we could build a very good one, I would be willing to believe that a fair number of people would play. Whether enough would come to really carry it and pay it off, I'm a little skeptical. But I feel the land is there; it's been withdrawn, and so far . have been able to hold it from the BLM with this in mind. And of course in most golf courses the land is the biggest thing, the biggest expense.

RM: Where is the land?

JC: It's just to the south of where the football field and the new softball field are. There's about 65 acres out there just held out for that.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

RM: Do you think I've given you a chance to say what you know about the development of the Test Site? It's obviously so important in terms of the history of the area.

JC: Well, it's been a good thing for Beatty. It has provided employment for a lot of people. Probably a lot of people we know and live with as friends wouldn't be here if it were not for the Test Site.

It's been good in other ways too, of course. There's a lot of--how can I say it--surplus equipment out there. As in any government project, there's just apparently an incredible over-buying and stuff and, I would say, poor management of things, so that the end result is that there's all kinds of equipment, electrical equipment, buildings and such. Of course many people work out there and are aware of what is available. I think most of this is certainly on the up-and-up. Some of that equipment has been released to us over here, so that in our water and sanitation district and in our park and recreation projects, we have been able to get electrical equipment and plumbing stuff at much, much less money than we would have otherwise. It has been a great help to us. For example, if you need a 200-amp electrical switch on your lighting system on your ballpark, to be able to pick up something that is next to new and to be able to get it for next to nothing is a great help to us.

MC: Also the suit that Nye County brought against the Test Site to force the payment of taxes from contractors working under government aegis has been of enormous benefit. The poverty of Nye County before those taxes became available to us is really astonishing.

RM: When was that suit, do you know?

JC: Probably longer ago than we think. Bill Beko pursued it, a great man.

MC: Well I was in the Grand Jury in '61 and it hadn't started then. They were just rumbling then about how these things were escaping us, things like drill rigs of enormous value that were of no benefit to Nye County while they were in it. I would say between '65 and '70, but the suit of course dragged on a long time. Clark County helped finance the suit, but Bill Beko did all the trial work, and he and about one other person did all the research. So it was quite an undertaking. In the meantime use contractors had paid taxes under protest, and it had gone into a bank account that garnered interest. When the suit was decided in our favor, the county was able to do things that they had never been able to even consider before. I know one of the things they did. They paid cash for Pahrump High School. About \$4,000,000.

RM: What about the low-level dump? I haven't asked you a thing about that.

MC: There's been a lot of misunderstanding, I think, about that. We've had some very unfortunate publicity, especially since several years ago they discovered that the items that were supposedly buried there had been distributed throughout the community. Well if you read the newspaper accounts of that time, you thought that we were all going out there in the

dead of night and climbing the fence and stealing stuff. Of course the truth is that the people who worked out there were handing things out to their friends. And they weren't dumb. They knew those things weren't radioactive.

JC: Well, and there's another side to it too. I think that many, many of those contractors, who were probably contracting to the government, found a handy way to dump stuff off, write off taxwise, stuff that really wasn't radioactive at all. But I don't think there's any doubt that there have been drill presses and lathes and some pretty remarkable equipment. I went out there one time with the fire department to help with a fire in a truck. So there's two sides as to how that stuff got out.

RM: Well when did they start the dump?

JC: That dates back to the Lions Club, so probably again in the early '60s; everything dates back to then.

MC: Probably 12 families at the most are employed out there.

JC: It's been such a political football statewide, and it just infuriates people here. I don't think you're going to find hardly anybody in town who has much of a complaint against the burial site out there.

MC: Well, if it were north of town, that might be another matter, but since the water table and everything flows to the south of us, it doesn't affect us.

JC: If there's any gripe to be had, Amargosa Valley would have a much bigger gripe being downstream.

RM: But you do hear that they wonder why they put it on top of the river.

MC: Yes, well there's something mysterious that happens there. Jack's probably better qualified than I to mention this, but at the narrows, on this side of the narrows, the water is practically at the surface, but then it dives down. It's as though there were a dam there under the ground. And, what, 600 feet they've gone down at the Airport ranch and they don't find water.

JC: Apparently it just goes down a channel there, and just doesn't broaden out, as you would really imagine. As I think back on the burial site out there, the only time that there was ever any concern from the people here was when they were burying phosphoric acid?

MC: Oh gee, it smelled to high heaven.

JC: Which was a chemical waste, not a radioactive waste; and this stuff had an absolutely horrible smell. It smelled like burning rubber. If the wind were in the south, we could actually even smell it here in town, and of course the people driving by on the highway. It's, good lord,

less than a mile from where they are burying this stuff. It used to be a big joke. You'd drive by there, and the people from here knew what it was. They smelled this horrible smell, somewhat akin to burning rubber or burning electrical insulation. Time and again you'd go by, and a fellow would have his car stopped and his hood lifted up.

RM: Thinking he had trouble?

JC: He smelled this thing, and he thought he car was.... But really that was pretty obnoxious.

MC: That came from Stauffer, down here. They changed their method of handling it apparently, because we haven't had it. They did apparently dump some PCBs down at the Airport ranch. There was a lot of complaint here in town about that, and they stopped. I don't know whether that was what caused it or other factors.

JC: But really the people who have operated it have always been very supportive of the community, and particularly now. A number of the people who work out there are firemen, and so there's a pretty close liaison there. They have donated money for fire trucks and things. They have been very supportive.

MC: They have been generous in the community. Naturally it's good PR, but even aside from that, they've given. Every year--they prefer an engineer; but it's not limited to that--they give a scholarship to a graduating senior. A cherry-picker's crane to decorate the community Christmas tree. They've done a lot of good things.

JC: It's been a real irritation to the local people here that the governors, for example, at least the last 2, have taken up such a big thing against it. Here again, it's like the Test Site and Yucca Mountain. The closer you live to it, the less the people are opposed to it, it seems. Certainly if there is going to be any personal harm to anyone, the people who live the closest are the ones that have the risk. Now I suppose you could immediately say, well, we're a bunch of dummies; we don't understand the situation. But I don't really think that's the case. So people get a little upset about the way it's treated in the press and around the state.

RM: Is the employment at the dump pretty steady? Probably they don't get too much turn-over?

JC: U. S. Ecology? Yes they have quite a number of people here in town who work for them, and yes I think it's pretty steady.

RM: What mines are operating in the area now? Besides yours.

JC: The Saga is a gold mine which is just over Bare Mountain from us. To get to the Saga you would go south from here about 13 miles, just a mile or 2 beyond U. S. Ecology, but you would turn left going south, which would take you rather northeasterly, I guess. And some 5, 6, 8 miles up there, against the east edge of the Bare Mountains there is this gold mine.

MC: I think it's real name is the Sterling mine.

JC: Sterling, yes. Saga Exploration, I think, is the name of the company. It's a private group; I think 3 fellows own it.

RM: Is it a heap-leach operation?

JC: Yes it is, and it is near, I think, the old Panama mine.

RM: Probably part of the same ore body? I think your dad mentioned the Panama mine.

JC: Yes, but there are some fluorspar deposits over in that area and some old gold. In the old days, back in the teens and the '20s, they mined some gold there. But this has been, to my understanding, a very successful gold mine, and they're working right now.

MC: Well, and then there's the Columbus. Aren't they working the Montgomery Shoshone? The Columbus mine?

RM: Montgomery Shoshone?

JC: The old Montgomery Shoshone.

IC: Well, I don't know about the mine itself, but they are doing something out there. Maybe they're leaching the dump; I don't know. I think that's called Columbus.

JC: The gold mining around here right now is a little slow. The price dropped off a little bit. Of course there was a time there when it was at about \$700, and everybody was rushing around and launching into the gold mining business, but then of course when the price drops back it's a little different situation. There's some exploration going on in a number of areas.

RM: Are there any other active mines in the immediate area?

JC: Well of course the Vanderbilt, but we've talked about them.

RM: The Vanderbilt—clay, yes.

RM: Another question which is interesting to me is how much timbering is required in your mine. Historically, how much have you had to do? Does the ground stand pretty good?

JC: It stands quite well actually. In our shaft it's not even square-settled all the way down; it's in dolomites and limestones; holds quite well. In the ore bodies themselves, sometimes there's clay slips and such that tend to be a little bit hairy, I guess. So we have kind of a random stall

timbering, and rarely do we have to square set and lag. Occasionally, there's some broken up limestone or dolomite, but just for a few feet. So really we get away pretty easy.

It's kind of interesting. Now we buy timber from northern California, and it's shipped down in anywhere from around 20-foot lengths. So we got the 6 by 6s, 6 by 8s, and then 2 by 12s and 3 by 12s; so we can cut them any length we want. But, through most of the history of the mine, we used railroad ties, because of course at one point there were 3 railroads in the area

MC: About a zillion railroad ties.

JC: The logical result was that there were a lot of ties, and of course in this old dry desert atmosphere they last virtually forever. So a railroad tie is 6 by 8 by 8 feet long. A lot of the drifts and such in our mine were driven about 8 feet high and about 8 feet wide, because that's the length of timber we had.

RM: That's interesting.

JC: Yes, kind of unusual. Some of the old ties still have the railroad spikes still sticking in them.

RM: Down in the mine, eh?

JC: Yes.

RM: Is that the original gallows frame on your shaft?

JC: Yes it is. Well, we have beefed it up and added other stuff, but basically it's the same one that was put in about 1920, I suspect.

RM: What about some of the machinery that you are using in your mine now. What kind of an air compressor do you have or what kind of a hoist? You talked about what it was originally.

JC: We haven't really made many changes in the last 20 to 25 years really. We have 2 generators; they are International Harvester UD18s. Each one of them runs a 50 kw Palmer generator, 3-phase, 240 v. And then most of our fan motors and occasional 5-horse hoist motor or slusher motors are 240 v, 3-phase, electric. We found it better than air. A lot of places use air Blushers.

MC: How about your fan?

JC: The federal government kind of was leaning on us about some 10 or 15 years ago about radon daughter problems. It's a slight radiation problem that seems to come with fluorspar, and the seriousness of it seems to vary from time to time. They were leaning on us pretty heavily at one time, so we have a fan, a ventilation fan, a 10-horsepower ventilation fan that pulls air. We have 2 ways of getting in, so we put a suction fan on the one we don't use so it pulls air down

our main shaft and then up this escape shaft. There was a time there where they were foreseeing that we would have to run these on the weekends, so we bought a little German, air-cooled diesel to run a little generator to run this.

But the hoist is a 25-horsepower electric hoist, Vulcan hoist. We compress our air with a 360 cubic foot Ingersoll Rand compressor, run by another International Harvester diesel engine. So we power them all ourselves.

RM: How much do you hoist at a whack?

JC: About 2/3 of a ton. It's a wheel skip. We're down about 600 feet to the bottom.

RM: One other question. For some reason I've noted the name of Ralph Welles in my notes. Who was he?

MC: He is the narrator of that film, and it was his idea for the burro race, so he was kind of the father of the burro races, along with others. Mel Eads was very, very instrumental. He owned the grocery store when we came back.

MC: He was Joe Andre's nephew, and he took over the Andre's Trading Post when Joe went to Vegas, retired.

JC: He lives in Vegas now, still owns a great deal of property in town. MC: Now he owns [an] interest in the ice company. But Ralph Welles is the one who followed the bighorn sheep.

RM: Oh, yes, the naturalist.

JC: Yes, he and his wife. They wrote a book on it.

RM: Well, I guess what I'll do now is kind of ask each of you to summarize sort of how you see the past and how you see the future of Beatty.

JC: I've enjoyed living here, and we lived here not really because of choice but because our business was here, the mine. I guess we've made the best of what we've had; I've never really been sorry. In many ways I've been pleased at being able to live here. It's the old big frog in the small puddle syndrome, I guess. But it is nice to be in a place where you can do something and make your efforts felt. It's small enough that a person can do that.

As I look ahead, I have mixed emotions. Talk about the burial site out here and everything. In a way you want to the town to grow, and yet in a way you don't. There's a happy 'medium. It always gives me a pain when people move into a small town, and then start trying to make it just like some other big town that they probably moved here to get away from. I don't want to see it get too big. I think everybody agrees they'd like to see it get big enough to have a full-time doctor, perhaps.

MC: And a good grocery store.

JC: Yes. I wish we had a golf course. It'd be nice to be big enough. I don't what kind of a population level I'd want. Of course what I want has nothing to do with it, because what's going to happen is going to happen. But it would be nice to have it get a little bigger and have some more things. Yet on the other hand, I'd hate to see it boom out of all proportion.

MC: Well, federal things have a way of having no perspective. And right now, they want 50,000 people, and they want all the things that it takes to have those, to support and to serve those people, without thought as to what is going to happen when those people are gone and you have your maintenance. I'm thinking of course of the Yucca Mountain. A maintenance group that's perhaps 1/3 or 1/4 of that. Well, phooey, that's your problem. They don't seem to be of much help in that regard.

I think it would be too bad if we got to the point where we would have to expand in order to accept a huge influx of people and then be stuck with that. It would be hard on us. I think water probably is a problem. It's probably going to be a limiting factor, and perhaps that's a good thing. Enough's enough. I think many problems that people have are directly related to the crowding in huge populations. The human animal is just not prepared to cope with it. And naturally I don't want that for Beatty. I suppose we'll retire and move away, but I'd like to think of it here and going on the way it always has.

Beatty's been extraordinarily fortunate. It's had a steady, small growth; it's never been forced to confront boom. Even when Rhyolite was booming, Beatty didn't boom. Beatty was just a little shipping point. And that's been its saving grace, because it has always been kind of a controlled sort of growth.

So I do view Yucca Mountain with mixed feelings. And maybe Yucca Mountain will come, in which case Beatty will probably muddle along, very much in the same awkward way it always has. I would hope for it that it has people that love it and want to do well by it.

JC: It's been a good place to grow up.

MC: A good place to raise our children.

JC: I was just going to say that I think we agree that we've felt it was a good place to raise kids, and I'd like to see it stay that way.

IC: I'm not absolutely sure that the children would agree with us.

JC: Oh, I think they would.

MC: I think they might not.

JC: It's tougher for girls, I think.

MC: Their feelings about us would not be affected. But as far as having to grow up in a town in which there were such limits on what they could do, what we would allow. So probably they

would say that it was not that great a place, but it was a place free of many worries as far as we're concerned. If they did something they shouldn't, we were to sure to hear about it, and that's the most effective way to stop bad behavior I know of.

JC: It's nice, though, to live in a town where you don't need to lock your door. When we go on a trip, we do. We sure don't during the day or whatever, nor does anybody else, I imagine.

MC: One time quite by accident--we wouldn't have done this on purpose--but Jack left his binoculars on the seat of the car for a week. Nobody got them.

RM: This is maybe a good time to get into what I guess would have to be called a kind of pet perception or idea of mine. I think that there is a kind of spirit, particularly in rural Nevada, but also vestiges of it probably in urban Nevada now. I'm not sure how much it exists in other parts of the country. I think maybe you do find it other places too. It's a sense of freedom that is not as strong as it was 30 years ago, but it's still here, where people leave you alone, and you can do what you want to do as long as you are really not stepping on somebody else's toes.

JC: It's precisely that type of thing that irritated people so much about the business license ordinance; that's exactly what it was.

RM: I have talked to some people in the Amargosa, and almost to the person they say yes that they really understand it. Do you sense the same thing in Beatty?

MC: Absolutely.

JC: Yes, I'll tell you an example--this is a kind of far-fetched one. You drive down the street, still you can do this in Beatty, maybe not on 95, and you see somebody. Here's Joe you haven't seen in 3 weeks or something. He's coming the other way. You pull up opposite each other and stop, and you sit there and talk. The other people--now maybe some newcomers might drive up and honk--but there's always room. The other people just pull around. No big deal! And that's something to treasure That's nice; that's what you want. It fits right in with what you are saying.

MC: I've always said that someday I'm going to write a book that says: "You know you are in a small town when ____." My favorite example of this happened to me. I was driving from the school home for lunch, and I got right in front of Johnny Lisle's house, and his dog was asleep in the middle of my side of the street. So I stopped and I honked, and she opened her eyes and she got up and grudgingly walked away and lay down in the middle of the other lane.

RM: The dog just knew its territory.

JC: You bet. Of course, probably more so in Amargosa than here, because we are just a little more urban.

RM: To me the worst thing about living in Tonopah, aside from the extreme isolation, are the barking dogs. It's horrible. My theory is that you don't criticize your neighbor for his barking dogs, because that's part of the whole ethic, you know.

JC: We have that here too.

RM: If you ask your neighbor to shut his dog up, they are very indignant about it. You know, well, "My dog has a right to bark," kind of thing you know.

MC: Yes, "Why do you think I live here? So my dog can bark."

RM: Yes, it would be like telling your neighbor to close his door, or something like that. "What do you mean? I like my door open."

MC: But I think that spirit is all through rural Nevada It goes right back to the founding fathers, you know. That you should have as little government as you can possibly have.

RM: A lot of times in rural areas, or in Nevada, it comes out as a conservatism, a hostility toward government and a hostility toward rules. Other times it comes out as a kind of liberalism, because along with this independence, it is almost an accentuated independence. You know, you help your neighbor.

MC: And you let your neighbor be. Which you might view as liberalism. It's tolerance really.

RM: Well, anything else you'd like to add,

MC: Well, this has been fun. I think it's been a privilege.

JC: Yes, it has.

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