An Interview with
STEVE P. BROWN
and ROSIE B. ARNOLD

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

Tonopah
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Steve P. Brown
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Rosie B. Arnold
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PREFACE

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

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

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

in preparing a text:

a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;

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

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

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

e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

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

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

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

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

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--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

--R.D.M.

Robert McCracken interviewing Steve Brown and Rose Arnold at the home of Mrs. Arnold's son in Pahrump Valley, Nevada - April 21, 1988

CHAPTER ONE

RM: First of all, let's introduce you.

RA: I'm Rose Arnold. I am the mother of Richard Arnold, who's the Director of the Indian Center in Las Vegas, and I'll kind of help Steve along.

RM: OK. Steve, could you tell me when you were born?

SB: July the 15th, 1913.

RM: And where were you born?

SB: Resting Springs; right out of Tecopa.

RM: Could you tell me who your father was?

SB: Gallant Richard Brown.

RA: Oh, Richard? Because your oldest brother was Gallant C. Brown.

RM: What was your mother's name?

SB: Dora Lee Brown.

RA: Philander's daughter.

RM: She was the daughter of Philander Lee. Could we talk a little bit about Philander Lee and who he was?

RA: He was your grandpa, and he came here from where?

RM: I think, according to history, he came from Oregon, didn't he? He and his brothers?

SB: I think so.

RA: And do you remember the brothers' names? Philander, Milander . . . [chuckles]

RM: There was Philander, Milander, Leander [and Salamander].

SB: Anyway I didn't remember our time at Resting Springs, but when we got

up the mountain I was older, and that's when I started remembering life.

RM: How long did you live at Resting Springs after you were born?

SB: That's one thing I can't tell you.

RM: When did you go up on the mountain, then?

SB: I don't remember - I probably was too young.

RM: Whereabouts on the mountain did you go?

SB: Trout Canyon.

RM: And what was up there?

SB: My granddad had some vegetables and apples and stuff up in there, and he made sorghum syrup out of the cane.

RM: So Philander Lee had a little homestead up there? Did it have a name?

SB: Just Trout Canyon.

RA: And you lived up there for a while, didn't you, with your grandparents?

RM: Did you grow up up there or just stay there a little while?

SB: I don't know how long I stayed there.

RA: Where did you go to Sherman - to the Indian school - from?

SB: Manse.

RA: After the Trout Canyon.

RM: Did you move to the Manse Ranch, then, after Trout Canyon?

RA: His grandparents were there, but I think your mother and father were at the Manse, weren't they? Is that the way it was?

SB: My dad used to work at the Pahrump Ranch. Then he went back, and then he worked over at the Manse . . . we were up the mountain but he was working down here. Then he was working on the country road crew grading road, he and Long Jim, with a team. I don't know what . . .

RA: His father and Long Jim worked on that highway, I guess, from here to

Shoshone?

RM: Oh. When was that road built?

RA: When was that? In the '30s? But he remembers there used to be a . . .

SB: It must've been the first part of the '20s.

RA: Early '20s?

SB: No, because I left here in '24.

RA: Oh, you left here in '24. Yes, I left here in '28. OK, in '24 he left to go to the Indian school at Sherman Institute in Riverside, California.

RM: Oh, I see. What was here before you left for the Indian school? What did Pahrump look like in the '20s?

SB: Oh, they had the ranch.

RA: And the Indian village, right out of the ranch.

RM: Where was the Indian village?

RA: Right by the water hole that Pahrump is named after - Pahrump Spring. It was a great big kind of a lakey pond, and there was another one added to it. Of course, they've capped it all off now.

SB: Yes, it's all covered up.

RM: What street would that be by?

SB: It's next to the highway up here.

RA: Yes; the Shoshone highway that goes up into highway 160 here; that's where an Indian village was. Of course, they lived all over Pahrump.

RM: How many people were at the Indian village?

SB: I doubt if there were 50.

RA: I don't know. I wasn't alive back then - you were ahead of me. [chuckles]

RA: And they were living down in the southern end, too. Like Hidden Hills . . . they were scattered all over this area; this and Ash Meadows.

RM: Were they Paiutes?

RA: Yes, and Shoshoni. In Ash Meadows there was a mixture of Shoshoni and Paiutes, although his mother - Dora Lee - said that we're not Paiute, we're Panamints. Now, whether we migrated from over the Panamint way, I don't know. And she told his brother Ernie - Ernie said the same thing.

RM: That you're really Panamints?

RA: She told us we were Panamints.

RM: Was Philander Indian?

SB: No.

RM: No; he was a white man.

RM: And he married an Indian woman?

SB: Yes.

RA: Yes. My father was the same way. He was white and married an Indian woman.

RM: And Philander married a Paiute woman, or was she a Panamint woman?

RA: That's what she said; that we were Panamint, but . . .

SB: Of course, she couldn't speak English.

RM: Yes. And then, did your mother marry an Indian, or a white man?

SB: A white man.

RM: Now, are you two related?

SB: As cousins.

RA: Well, we're supposed to be cousins. And the same way with Long Jim; we're all related.

RM: You're cousins to the Long Jims?

SB: Yes.

RA: And the lady next door.

RM: What kind of housing did the Indians at the village have?

SB: Most of them had canvas tents, and a few of them had little brush shades in the front of them.

RA: And the wikiups.

RM: They moved around a lot, didn't they?

SB: Oh, yes.

RA: We were like nomads. They followed the pine nut season - the different areas to go hunting and the different areas to do different . . .

RM: Could you tell me some of the areas you went to, and in what seasons you would have gone to them?

RA: It was always the mountains in the fall for pine nut-picking time.

RM: Which mountains did you go to?

RA: The Spring Mountains. In fact, there's a legend - the blue jays up there are supposed to be our ancestors. [chuckles]

RM: So in the fall you would go to the Spring Mountains to pick pine nuts. Did you go to any special area?

RA: No, because the Indians went to all different areas. There were pine nuts and deer and the mountain sheep was plentiful then, too.

RM: And where did they spend the winter?

RA: Mostly in the warm area. I would say down below, here.

RM: You didn't go down to Death Valley or Tecopa?

SB: No.

RA: But there were Indians living there. The lady next door lived in Shoshone and . . .

RM: And what's her name?

RA: Mary Bow Sackett. There were several Indians who lived in Shoshone -

I think more in Shoshone than Tecopa, don't you?

SB: Yes.

RA: But most of them were in Ash Meadows and Pahrump.

RM: What did the people eat in the winter when they were camped here? Did they store their pine nuts?

SB: Whatever they could get hold of.

RA: They used to grind and store the mesquite beans. There are little berries that grow on bushes - you call them squaw berries - [chuckles] or hoop berries or whatever - they have different names. The Shoshonis and the Paiutes both gathered them. You can dry them and store them.

RM: Do they grow high in the mountains?

RA: No, they grow down here. And we also had our wild cabbage, or spinach - whatever it was. You'd go out in the spring . . .

RM: When did you start gathering in the spring, and where were the first plants that you would gather?

RA: I guess mesquite; I don't know.

SB: Cabbage, because the cabbage is out now.

RA: And then those little berries.

SB: Yes.

RA: And then mesquite. And there were also wild grapes.

SB: Yes.

RA: They were plentiful, all over Pahrump and all over Ash Meadows. In Ash Meadows we used to get the cane sugar, too - wild cane sugar. They stored that.

SB: The other day when we were over at Ash Meadows there were wild grapes about ready to start graping.

RA: Yes, we went on one field trip with the federal people over to Ash

Meadows.

SB: It was a week or 2 ago.

RA: Yes. We also have a cemetery over there in Ash Meadows. This one (Pahrump) used to be our cemetery, but then everybody else moved in and took it over. Chief Tecopa's buried up there. And . . .

RM: Are you related to Chief Tecopa?

RA: Yes, but I don't know how. My mother and Anna Tecopa were first cousins, and I know she's a . . .

SB: I don't know, either, how we . . .

RA: I think some way we're all related to one another. We had such a small tribe . . . We're not recognized by the government.

RM: Let's say that you're Paiute, not Panamint, just for the sake of argument. Your tribe wasn't part of the Las Vegas Paiute, was it?

RA: No.

RM: No; was it a different band?

RA: That's what I say. His mother said that we were Panamint. If we were Panamint Paiute, then we've migrated from the Panamint way, over Death Valley way. And there were a lot of Shoshoni who came, and a lot of the Panamint Indians were intermarried; they were intermarried in Ash Meadows and Beatty.

RM: The Las Vegas Paiute didn't come over this way, then?

RA: They came over, but they were recognized over on that side; same as Moapa. And we supposedly came from this other way . . .

RM: You came from the west?

RA: And I guess that's why we got left out. As I said, everybody's studying the pupfish and everything - they took priority over us. [laughter]

RM: Yes; that's right.

RA: We [chuckles] are an endangered species, too. There aren't too many of us left.

RM: Yes. What brought Philander Lee down here from Oregon?

RA: Probably mining. They were all in mining because he was working at Borax.

SB: Yes, I think they were all in mining.

RA: I've been reading that book over there - Lingenfelter's Death Valley And The Amargosa. It tells about Gottschall's relatives, too . . . He took over the Resting Springs Ranch and he was a retired dentist and he . . .

RM: Yes, that's a wonderful book.

RA: I've been reading that, and it says in here that Phi Lee's grandfather was in mining. I read in another book, too, about where he [was mining] borax.

RM: What crops were they growing on the Manse and Pahrump Ranches in the 1920s?

SB: Oh, they had a few apples, grapes . . .

RA: Plums . . .

SB: Yes, they had all kinds of fruit.

RA: Peaches, almonds . . .

RM: Were they growing alfalfa?

SB: Yes.

RA: And they had vineyards, too - remember? We used to always shortcut through them to the swimming hole at Pahrump when we were kids.

RM: There was no cotton, was there?

RA: Not then, no.

SB: No. That came . . .

RA: In the '40s wasn't it? I wasn't here when that happened, but I'd heard about it. It was mostly all fruit and they had good, big melon patches. Corn . . . oh, it seemed that just about anything could grow here.

RM: Did they grow grain - wheat or anything?

SB: Not too much. It always was in alfalfa.

RM: What did they do with the alfalfa?

SB: They fed the cattle with it and they might sell some once in a while.

RM: Where did they sell their crops?

SB: Mostly to Las Vegas.

RA: He was telling me the other day about how they planted - what was it, elk - up here in the mountains and they all came down, eating up all the alfalfa here on the Manse and Pahrump Ranches. [chuckles]

SB: Yes; elk and antelope.

RM: When you were a boy, did they do much hunting of the mountain sheep and the deer, and everything?

SB: Oh, quite a bit.

RM: How did they hunt mountain sheep?

SB: Some had bow and arrows and some had rifles.

RA: We have a bush around they call the arrow bush, and every branch is just as straight as can be, with a smooth bark on the outside. You don't have to do much . . .

RM: And that's how they made their arrows?

RA: Those were the arrows. Other tribes would trade with the Paiutes - Southern Paiute - because they made the best arrows. They had plentiful arrow bushes, but now we just have about 2 little bushes across from Western Auto up there, and we found some over there at Ash Meadows. You

can't pick them now - it's under that wilderness thing - but we found a few over there; it's just about all gone.

RM: What kind of clothing did the Indians wear in the '20s?

SB: It was pretty much white man's clothes.

RA: Yes, I remember it seemed the women always wore long dresses. My mother wore them clear up in the '30s. Some were a half-skirt, almost like the Navajos, and then a cotton top.

RM: Rose, would you say when you born, and where?

RA: I was born up here at Mount Sterling, in the Spring Mountains, September 14, 1921. My father married a local Indian woman - a Paiute from around here.

RM: What was your father's name?

RA: William Eugene Beck. He was in mining and prospecting and ranching and we had a small ranch up there. He and his half-brother bought it from Charles Labbe, and Charles Labbe had gotten it from Johnson. So we were the third owner.

RM: Did the ranch have a name?

RA: No. We just called it the old Beck ranch. It was at Crystal Springs up there.

RM: And what was your mother's name?

RA: Annie Bruce Beck. She came from the Bruce family of the Paiute tribe.

RM: And did you have brothers and sisters?

RA: I had one brother and one sister and a half-sister. And the half-sister's father was Paiute; she was born in San Bernardino. We lived [in the Spring Mountains] until 1928. Then I left and went to Bakersfield and started school. I was then put in the Indian school at Sherman - the same place Steve went. Back then it was all military and you had to put

your 4 years in. In the meantime, they transferred my brother and me and a bunch . . . they were going to make Sherman a high school, so they were cutting these grades off.

They were cutting 3rd grade off that year, and they sent his youngest brother, Ernie Brown, up to Carson City. I felt sad about that, because he went such a long ways from Pahrump - he was first separated from his mother and father and sent to Riverside, then he had to separate from his 3 brothers to go up to Carson City at Stewart, Nevada. It was just like the army. They transferred you . . . and my father didn't know where we were for a while. We put in our 4 years, and then I came back and stayed here a while, then I voluntarily went back to Sherman again. This was after the military thing was through. I went back and ended up working there.

RM: Steve, when did you leave to go to school?

SB: In '24, and I came back in '35 - about 12 years.

RM: And where was the school, again?

RA: Riverside, California. Most of the Indians around here either went to Sherman or Fort Mojave. Philander's daughter, Steve's mother, Dora Lee, also went to Sherman 'way before he did. A lot of the old-timers were sent to Fort Mojave, by Needles, and some went to Stewart.

RM: Could you describe a little bit about what it was like, being in school after growing up in the wide-open spaces here?

RA: I'll tell you one thing - a lot of kids ran away. [chuckles] I remember one Indian woman at the Las Vegas Colony telling me about her mother running away from Fort Mojave.

SB: There you could take up any trade you wanted.

RM: Yes. What trade did you take up?

SB: Well, I've been through everything. And the last one [was] an auto

mechanic. I went through all the different trades down there.

RM: How many grades did you go to?

RA: They went through the 12th grade.

SB: I went pretty near all the way.

RM: What was Pahrump like when you returned in '35?

SB: There wasn't much in Pahrump, was there, when I was back?

RA: No. I came back here in '34.

SB: That's when Ed Diemel had the Pahrump Ranch.

RA: Yes. It was just the ranch. In 1934 George Ishmael was the manager of the Pahrump Ranch.

They were going to try and make it into a dude ranch, but I guess they had no success. Mrs. Diemel, Ed Diemel's wife, approached my mother and me about going with the tourists on horseback rides - sort of as Indian guides - but my mother didn't want to.

RM: Who owned the Pahrump Ranch in the 1920s?

SB: I think it was Fred Shoup and Mina . . .

RM: Did he live here?

SB: No, I don't know where in the heck he lived. That's when my dad was first foreman down there.

RA: Steve, didn't you go to school in the little school house in Pahrump for a while?

SB: Yes, but I've forgotten what years it was, now.

RM: Who worked on the Pahrump Ranch in the '20s? Was it mainly Indians, or were there also white men working there?

SB: There were a few white men; it was mostly Indians.

RM: The Pahrump Ranch wasn't as large then as it later got, was it?

SB: No.

RA: And now it's back to nothing again; it's drying up. It used to be a pretty place, back in the '30s. It was green, with plenty of water. Remember, they used to have water right in front of the gate, and . . .

SB: That was when they had those springs in there.

RA: And the water went all the way around - clear on down.

RM: Who owned the Manse Ranch in the '20s?

SB: I think it was Hoffman?

RA: I don't know. My mother always told me that the Indians traded the Manse Ranch for a gold watch. I don't know how true that is . . . [chuckles]

RM: That would've been back in the 1800s, wouldn't it?

RA: Yes.

RM: You don't know who they traded it to, do you?

RA: No. Another Indian story was about how the Indians used to rob the miners. They didn't want the gold - they dumped the gold out. All they wanted was the canvas sacks for leggings and to cover their arms.

RM: [laughs] Is that right.

RA: [laughs] That's what he said, "I wish I knew where they dumped it." Back then it didn't do them any good because there was no place to spend it.

RM: What were the roads like in the '20s here?

SB: Just about a wagon trail.

RA: There were many wagons; we had a wagon, they had a wagon, his uncle [chuckles] had a wagon. Everybody either rode horses or wagons.

RM: How did you get to Las Vegas?

SB: Wagon. [chuckles]

RM: But what trail did you take?

SB: Mountain Springs - down through that way.

RA: Now, we lived the other end, at Mount Sterling. My father went the other way. Around the Indians Springs way - that way.

RM: He could've taken the railroad, couldn't he?

RA: Yes, but they went horseback and they took their shortcuts wherever.

RM: Did you go down the Red Rock Canyon wagon road that used to be there?

SB: No, we went around to Arden right where the highway goes now.

RA: We had a train that went up this way, too. Remember - once a week? It went all the way up to Goldfield-Tonopah from Barstow by Death Valley.

SB: That was the T&T.

RA: Yes. And didn't you say they had some other track or traction road or something - where was that?

SB: It was right over here this side of that mountain over there - Nopah.

RA: Oh; Chicago Valley?

SB: Yes. That came from Ash Meadows, I think, and went clear to . . .

RA: Ash Meadows had a lot of outlaws living over that way, too. There were stories back . . . I know one was about Jack Longstreet. He married an Indian woman.

RM: Yes, he married an Ash Meadows Indian woman, didn't he?

RA: Yes. Well, they were all the same this way. We lived over there, too. My mother's people were living in Ash Meadows when she married my father and they lived over there before I was born. And when they moved to the mountains, Steve's folks went over there, and that's where his grandmother died. There was also an Albert Howell who lived in Ash Meadows.

RM: Was this in the '20s?

SB: No.

RA: It would've been the '30s, but it could have been in . . . I don't know how long some of them - Albert Howell - lived there.

RM: You got back from the Indian school in 1935. What did you do then?

SB: I worked on farms around here.

RM: Who owned the Pahrump Ranch in '35 when you got back?

SB: I think it was Diemel. Ed Diemel.

RM: Ed Diemel. And who was he?

RA: I don't know where they came from.

SB: I don't know where he came from or what he was doing.

RA: I know they wanted to make a dude ranch out of it. Who took it after that? When I left here, George Ishmael was on it for a while.

SB: Ernest said he was just staying here; he never owned it.

RA: Hugheses had it next.

RM: Had Pahrump changed much from 1920 to 1930? Did the ranch get bigger, or were the crops different or anything?

RA: No . . .

SB: No, I don't think . . .

RA: I think most of the people were actually in mining.

RM: You mean, most of the people here were doing ranching and mining?

SB: Yes.

RA: Yes, or either ranching or mining.

RM: Where were they mining?

SB: Garney - all around.

RA: Just all around. I know my father was in mining and prospecting; I don't know where all he went. He was also raising Morgan horses. His brother who bought the ranch with him and he put up $100 and bought the thing from Charles Labbe, and then they decided to go into raising Morgan

horses. They did that for a while, but he was mostly in mining and prospecting.

CHAPTER TWO

SB: I went to work over here at Tecopa, in talc. From there I went up to Noonday and worked in the lead [mine]. Then I went out here to Warm Springs - Death Valley - and worked in the talc mine there.

RM: Was this in the '40s?

SB: It would've been in the '50s.

RA: There were other Indians working there, wasn't there? Daniel Fields and Clyde Lee and Ernie, your brother . . .

SB: Yes, Clyde Lee and Ernie and all of them.

RA: Going 'way back to your grandfather's time, 2 of his boys had a mine in Beatty; they were in mining, too.

RM: Two of Lee's sons?

RA: Yes.

SB: But I don't know what kind of mine they had there.

RM: I wonder what mine they had?

RA: I don't know - it's in that book - Lingenfelter.

RM: There were 2 Lee brothers here in the area, weren't there? It was Phi Lee and Cub. What did your grandfather do? Was he mainly in mining, or was he mainly in farming and taking care of Resting Springs?

SB: I think he was mostly in farming, because that's all he did when he got to the mountain. He had cattle and things up there - a farm.

RM: Where did he sell his cows? In Vegas?

SB: I guess that's the closest.

RM: Or maybe some of the mining camps.

RA: Some went over this way, too. They had the railroad here but they had people living in Tecopa and that area where they could send food.

RM: Was Resting Springs ever a ranch or built up at all?

RA: I don't know. Philander's home is still there, and Gottschall's trying to preserve it. I don't think it was [fixed up] as well as it is now. Gottschall really did a lot of work. He's raising Arabian horses, and he's got date trees and everything else.

SB: No, Gottschall's got it down so it's better than it used to be.

RA: Even when Len Ishmael lived there?

SB: Oh, I don't know. When Len Ishmael was there it was nothing - all grub and bush and stuff.

RM: Did George Ishmael own the Pahrump Ranch at one time?

RA: No, I think he just worked there.

SB: Yes.

RA: And the Ishmael who lived at Resting Springs was George's son, Len. And then there was the old man - all I knew him by was Pop Ishmael - George's father, who used to wear overalls. I just remember him wearing his overalls.

SB: Doggone, I can't think of his name, either.

RA: We all called Fairbanks "Dad" Fairbanks. And there was "Pop" Buol. [chuckles] Pop Buol is the one who introduced my mother and father.

RM: Could you say something about Pop Buol?

RA: He was one of the first ones in here, too - when the Pahrump Ranch was going. He was our mail carrier. He picked up the bag at the highway north of Johnnie every Wednesday; the stage stopped off there. He lived where

Binions are. They have his ranch; it used to be Frank Buol's. I don't know how long Pop Buol was here and the other one, right across - Raycraft?

RM: How big was the Buol ranch?

SB: I don't know how many acres.

RA: It wasn't big, but he used to make wine a lot.

RA: And then there were, for instance, the [people] from Shoshone - the Charles Brown family. They have stories of how it used to take them 2 days to come from there over to Buol's ranch.

RM: When did Buol come into the valley?

RA: I don't know.

RA: I often wondered . . . The first mayor of Las Vegas was a Buol, and I wondered whether it was a relation.

RM: Yes, they were brothers.

RA: And he'd been here 'way back, too, so you might trace it down that way. Whether he had children . . .

RM: Was he primarily making wine or was he raising cattle, or . . .?

SB: No, he was just making wine.

RA: No, he was just making wine, and he was always good to everybody. One Indian man told me that he used to always keep a big book where he used to write everything down. He was friends with my father, and he introduced my mother and father.

RM: Was there a spring on the Buol ranch?

SB: No, he had wells.

RA: Pahrump had a lot of artesian wells all over the place in the '30s.

RM: When did Buol have his winery - in the '20s or the '30s?

SB: I guess he had it all the time - as long as I knew.

RA: Yes.

RM: Why did it die?

SB: Because he died.

RM: Why didn't somebody keep the winery going?

RA: I don't know about that. I thought you were wondering where the grapes came from. They either had domestic grapes, or the wild grapes were plentiful, too. Up around Pahrump they used to just cover the mesquite trees. [chuckles] My brother and I used to try to play . . . we'd get up and climb on them.

SB: You go down there and you can't see any grapes anymore.

RA: No. Over in Ash Meadows they still have some wild grapes. And they have some down there where your uncle Bob used to live, 'way down there at the other end of the valley. Usually, all around the springs the wild grapes . . .

RM: How big did the wild grapes get?

RA: They remind me of little miniature Concords; like blueberries, but a little bigger.

SB: Oh, about twice as big as a buckshot.

RA: Yes. But didn't they taste a little bit like Concord grapes? That's what they tasted like - probably a wild one.

RM: Were there a lot of grapes on the vines?

RA: They were just hanging; yes.

RM: And they grew naturally here. Nobody had brought them in?

RA: Not that I know of. I know all the springs had them; we had them in Ash Meadows and they still have them over there.

RM: Buol had domestic grapes too, didn't he?

SB: Oh, yes.

RA: Yes. Pahrump Ranch had a lot, too.

SB: So did Manse.

RM: When did the Raycrafts come in?

SB: I don't know.

RM: Were they here when you were a kid?

SB: Oh, yes.

RM: What did they have on their ranch?

RA: Raycraft - is that were Randy Bell lived?

SB: Yes.

RA: Randy Bell didn't have anything that I remember in the '30s.

SB: I don't think he had anything.

RA: The old house is still up there, isn't it?

SB: Yes.

RA: I was bucked off a horse there, and they carried me in on that porch. Every time I see it, I think of it. But all I remember is that he had horses. I think he was a caretaker, wasn't he? But I know it was always green around there; even all the pasture out there was green. The creek came down from that artesian well up there where the Indians lived, and came on down, and that was all green with all the willows and everything.

RM: Could you list the Indian families that were living in the valley in the 1920s, say?

RA: I don't know the '20s; I could probably name the ones in the '30s, because there wasn't very many here in the '30s; so many of them left.

RM: OK, go ahead with the '30s, then Steve can give us the '20s when you're done with the '30s.

RA: Well, I'll start with my family: the Becks, the Long Jims, Whispering Ben and his wife . . .

RM: Where did Whispering Ben live?

RA: He lived at the Indian camp up here by the artesian well. I can't think of what's there now; they tore it all out.

SB: Oh, that's where Ronnie Floyd has a some kind of a . . .

RA: Whispering Ben used to live at Indian Springs.

RM: And he sold it, didn't he?

RA: And then he came down this way - to Pahrump Valley.

RM: After he left Indian Springs he came to Pahrump?

RA: I think he lived somewhere up here for a while. There used to be springs all along up here where the highway - across from the community center - along in here. He lived up in there, and then he moved down here to the Indian camp. And then Jim Steve and Mamie Steve lived there. And who else was here in the '30s? The Browns [chuckles] - Steve and Ernie and his mother and dad.

RM: Were they all part of the same tribe?

RA: Yes. And we were all the same; everybody around here was. We were all somehow related - somehow. There weren't too many here in the '30s, were there? There weren't too many of either white or Indian in the '30s.

SB: No.

RM: Who was here in the '20s, Steve?

SB: I know Long Jim was.

RA: Where was he living then?

SB: By Pahrump Spring?

RA: That's where one Indian village used to be.

RM: Was Whispering Ben here?

SB: I'm pretty sure he was. They used to have a bunch of tents along where the bank is; I don't know what they called it.

RA: He has a grandson who comes over once in a while - he lives over in Henderson. He works at the Test Site, I think.

RM: What's his name?

SB: Roger Ben.

RA: My son who works for the Indian center has a lot of phone numbers, or addresses, if there was somebody you wanted to contact.

RM: Rosie, you're off on an errand and then you're coming back?

RA: Yes.

RM: OK. What other Indian families were here in the '20s?

SB: I think old Jim Myers was along where the bank is.

RM: OK, let's move up to the '40s. What was happening in Pahrump in the 1940s, as far as the Indians were concerned?

SB: My family were still here, and the Long Jims.

RM: Was Whispering Ben here?

SB: I'm not sure. I don't remember what year he passed away - it was in the '30s or '40s.

RM: Steve, has the weather changed since you were a kid?

SB: I think it's worse, now. We get more rain.

RM: Was it drier in the old days?

SB: Yes. It was also colder.

RA: And it's a lot damper now.

RM: Would this be caused by all the irrigation, I wonder?

RA: I don't know.

SB: I think it's caused by the atomic outfit up here.

RA: It could be caused from a lot of that stuff.

SB: That's what a lot of people say.

RA: There's an awful lot of wind.

SB: A lot of wind.

RM: There's more wind now?

RA: I think so.

RM: What kind of an Indian community do you have here now? Are there many Indians in Pahrump now?

SB: No.

RA: Just offspring of some of the old ones. I forgot to name his uncle, Bob Lee, who was here in the '30s, too. He had a place back over here by the sand dunes.

RM: That would be Phi's son?

SB: Yes.

SB: And Dick Lee.

RM: Was he was another uncle? Tell me about your father.

SB: I don't know much about him. He used to be a mail carrier before he married my mother, but I don't know where from - probably Goodsprings. That's when they had what they called the Pony Express, or something. But he and my mother met over there in Resting Springs, got married, then lived over there for a while. Then my granddad traded a mountain up there to Sam Yount for Resting Springs; that's what I heard.

RM: Oh, he traded Resting Springs to Sam Yount for the mountain at Trout Canyon?

SB: Yes.

RM: Did you know Sam Yount?

SB: No. I know Johnnie Yount, that's about all. He was part Indian, I think, because he always talked Indian. He married an Indian woman - I forgot her name - and had Hidden Hills down here where Roland Wiley has . . . I don't know when he came in there and I don't remember what year

he died.

RM: Steve, I was wondering what the Indian men did while a lot of white men were marrying Indian women? Were they dying, or did they not have wives, or what?

SB: Golly, I . . . [chuckles] Maybe they were easy to get. [laughter] When I came back from school, every time I went to town I got a bottle of wine; you didn't have any trouble catching a squaw; they liked that drink.

RM: Did you get married? Twice? Who did you marry?

SB: Lena Scott.

RM: Was she an Indian woman?

SB: Yes. She was from Beatty.

RM: How long did that marriage last?

SB: About 10 years; 'till she died having the last child.

RM: How many children did you have with her?

SB: Three. The boy died last July and the 2 girls are up in Montana. They're married, and one of them has 3 girls. The oldest one is working in the Indian center and the other one adopted a girl because I guess she couldn't have children.

RM: Who was your second wife?

SB: Irene Weed.

RM: Was she an Indian woman?

SB: Yes; a Paiute.

RM: Where was she from?

SB: Shoshone.

RM: What happened to her?

SB: She died.

RM: Did you have any children with her?

SB: Three.

RM: Where are those children - do they live around here?

SB: I couldn't tell you. I never heard from them or saw them since they left. I imagine they're in L.A.

RM: So you worked in the mines around here?

SB: Yes.

RM: What else did you do?

SB: I drove tractors around here and baled hay; worked on the farm. I also did a little cow punching.

RM: Are you pretty good on a horse?

SB: Not now. I guess I could still ride a horse if I hung on the apple tree.

RM: [laughs] What do you think about all the change in Pahrump that you've seen?

SB: It seems to be all right, but they have meetings and make up a lot of laws but they never invite Indians. It makes it kind of bad. We have to abide by their laws and we haven't even voted for them. I don't know. Somebody wanted to know if they had a mayor in Pahrump, but I don't know of any.

RM: No, I don't think they do.

SB: I think I'll run for mayor. If they did have one, they wouldn't let us know; they'd just have their vote.

RM: How long have you lived in this house, Steve?

SB: I guess 20 years or a little longer. I live next door over there. Of course, I willed it to my children.

RM: How many acres do you have?

SB: Just the lot. I think it's 60-something wide and 100-and-something

long.

RM: When you were young, did the Indians practice any of their traditional religion?

SB: Not that I know of.

RM: Did they have medicine men for when people got sick?

SB: I'm pretty sure they did, but I never got acquainted with one.

RM: What did you do when you got sick as a kid?

SB: By golly, [chuckles] I don't remember. Of course, it was a long ways to Vegas until they got the Model Ts.

RM: Did it help out a lot, when they finally started getting cars going into town?

SB: It helped out a lot; yes.

RM: Of course, those roads were bad, weren't they?

SB: Oh, yes.

RA: But those Model Ts were easy to fix, and could take it all. [chuckles]

SB: They plugged along, but they got there.

RM: Do you know of any medicine man in here in the '20s and '30s?

RA: My mother, I guess, did most of it in the '30s. She brought Steve's daughter, Sherea Jeanette Brown, into the world.

RA: She didn't do it where they lie down - she had Steve's wife - Irene Reed Brown - standing up.

SB: Yes.

RM: Is that right - not squatting, but standing up?

RA: Yes. They do that in South America, too, I know. I saw a film of the Indians in South America.

SB: And then I had to get her around the waist, and every time she started pushing, you'd have to kind of squeeze her and kind of pull down on her.

RM: Did that make a better delivery?

RA: I really don't know.

SB: Gosh, I don't know.

RA: But that's what she did. When we moved to Beatty, she doctored some of the Shoshonis there, and they used to bring some [people] down from Fish Lake, or something - she was the doctor.

RM: What were some of the other treatments that she used?

RA: Well, I know the one little girl up there . . . Eva Smith and I had to go out and get a chuckwalla one time. She was a Shoshoni girl. We got the chuckwalla and then she - I guess - made a broth from it or something and gave it to the little girl.

RM: What was it for?

RA: I don't know.

RM: I wonder what the little girl had?

RA: We didn't stay around; we were just kids then. But she used to take care of her. She doctored that one 3 times, I think. The first time, we went way out on the desert and Holly Charlie, who was another Paiute, went with my mother and he did the singing and my mother did the doctoring. They got her out of it that time and took her back to Fish Lake. They brought her back the following next year, and that's when we had to go get the chuckwalla, I remember, and I don't know what-all they did. And then the third time my mother doctored her they brought her down and I guess it was too late. It was in the wintertime and I know my mother doctored her then, because I remember her blowing in her mouth or something. I don't know what-all she did, but she didn't pull through that time.

RM: You were talking some more about your mother's cures.

RA: I was saying that I remember when I was sick to my stomach or I was just sick, she would boil sagebrush for me to throw up. Oh, it was bitter - and everything just came up. I know there are different shrubs for teas and things they give them. And then of course the old greasewood is the cure-all.

RM: What did they use greasewood for?

RA: They used it for a lot of stuff. It's good for colds - you make a tea out of it. And what else? [chuckles] He's laughing because his mother told us about a man who had syphilis and his uncle cured him. He had him sit on it. And I said, "Well, if it does that good, it ought to help the AIDS." [chuckles]

RM: He had him sit on it in a bath?

RA: Yes. But it cured him.

SB: The guy had gonorrhea.

RM: He cured gonorrhea with the greasewood?

RA: Or whatever venereal disease he had; yes.

SB: That's what he told me.

RA: That's what his uncle had this fellow do. He was a white fellow. But they use it for a lot of stuff. They even used to smoke it; my mother said you could smoke it, too.

RM: Just roll the leaves up like a cigarette?

RA: Yes. And if somebody has an earache, you just blow it in their ear. It's supposed to be a cure-all thing. It's almost - to the Indians - like

aspirin is. Of course, willow bark has the same ingredient that's in aspirin. I used to say, "No wonder." You never heard any of the old Indian women complain of headaches, because they were always making baskets, and those willows were always in their mouth. [chuckles]

RM: Did your people make a lot of baskets?

RA: My mother did. She would sell them over at Death Valley Junction, because the train came through there. It was enough to buy our needs like flour, sugar, coffee - things that we couldn't get by living off the land.

RM: Now, you and Steve are related through your mothers, aren't you?

RA: Yes. And the Long Jims.

RM: But you're not necessarily related to Phi Lee?

RA: No. You see, my father was white and of course he had the white in his family, and . . . but there were a lot of them that had married Indian women, or had Indian women, you know.

RM: Do you think the greasewood really worked?

RA: Well, I don't know; it helped a lot of people. In fact, we have some people right around here . . . The fellow up on the hill here swears by greasewood. When he gets a cold or something, it just knocks it right out. I just don't like the taste of it - it's such a mediciney, nasty taste.

RM: How do you prepare it?

RA: They just boil it; make a tea out of it. Steve used to soak his feet in it. [chuckles]

RM: Is it good for your feet, Steve?

SB: Yes, for athlete's feet.

RM: How do you prepare it? Do you take the leaves, or the stems, or what?

RA: The leaf part is what you boil.

RM: Along with the little stems that the leaves are on?

RA: Yes.

RM: How much do you put in a pot?

SB: Whatever you want.

RA: Yes. [chuckles] I don't know - they just take a bunch of it and put it in there. Of course, the more you have in there, the more bitter it's going to taste. It tastes nasty as it is.

RM: Yes. But maybe it's stronger, the more you have in it.

RA: Yes. That's what I think. Here it grows wild for miles, and . . .

SB: There's some right in the front of my yard - can you see it there?

RM: Yes. How long do you boil it?

SB: Not too long.

RA: It's just like a tea. We have that Indian tea that grows all over, too. It grows in the mountains and there's some that grows on the desert floor.

RM: What do you use it for?

RA: That's supposed to be a thing that's good for a lot of things, too.

SB: You see some of that growing right in my yard, too.

RA: Yes. This is what the boys picked. But it was just - it looks like that. It grows in the mountains.

RM: It looks almost like pine, only the spikes are really long.

RA: Yes; it's kind of a strawey bush.

RM: And you boil that in water, too?

SB: Yes.

RA: Yes. And it turns a reddy-kind . . . But this isn't bitter; this is good tasting. I like the taste of it, anyway. It is good for colds, and a lot of the women used it for cramps and female troubles. I also hear it's good for arthritis. I read somewhere where that it has the same medicine

they use for arthritis. My husband's brother lives in Ohio, and he had it analyzed, and he said it does have the same thing. We were sending him a lot of it through the mail, and it was helping him, so I guess it does have some cure, too.

RM: Where did your mother get her knowledge?

RA: It was just passed down.

RM: She didn't have training from another person?

RA: No, Indians all get knowledge from one another, you know. I'm trying to think of what [other cures there were]. Of course, we had the mineral baths over at Tecopa. And I guess my mother and some other women used to have a little spring up above that was hidden, and when they were through they'd cover it all up with bush so nobody else would see. There used to be other springs around; they were all hot springs. And that water all goes down that way. It seems that all the water along the Amargosa's hot anyway; or warm. When I lived in Beatty, the Indians there had a hot springs up there that they used to go to.

RM: At the hot springs along the highway there?

RA: Well, there are 2 of them up there. One's up farther - the oasis. But that's public. This one was right down, just as the turn went around, and it was over in the hill there. I don't know whether it's still there now or not.

RM: How long did you live in Beatty?

RA: Oh, I just lived there a couple of years. I went to school, then I went back to Sherman to the Indian school.

RM: You went to school in Beatty in what year?

RA: Oh, '34, '5, '6 - somewhere in there.

RM: What was the teacher's name?

RA: Miss Roats. Bob Revert was at my school; the father. And Johnny Carpenter and Virginia Robinson - her grandfather had the general store there.

RM: The Indians lived over along the river, didn't they?

RA: They lived over along the hills on this side, and then they had some who lived over where the Beatty cemetery is, on that side - the Strozzis and the Cottonwoods.

RM: I interviewed both Dolly Strozzi Gillette and Bombo Cottonwood.

RA: She went to school there when I was there; she was a little thing then. And Bombo and his brother Phillip did, too. Then on this side were Indians that were kind of mixed in - Paiute and Shoshoni. They lived on the little ranches on the way going up that were Paiute and Shoshoni.

RM: Up the valley to Tonopah?

RA: We lived there at the ranch, but it's now a red light place.

RM: Oh, OK; yes; Fran's old place.

RA: That's where a lot of them lived - there. We were just talking today - I was telling them how they used to plant those little white beans. They would pile them up in the canvas and we'd have to beat them, and then they'd get their winnow baskets and blow the stuff away.

RM: So all the Indians just didn't live along the river there - they lived in a lot of different places in Beatty. I didn't realize that.

RA: Oh, yes. The Sharpes lived up there, too.

SB: Between Beatty and the red light there used to be a little wash coming on that side of . . . Is that the cemetery over on that side?

RA: On the wash? I don't remember.

SB: I think there was a little wash coming down . . .

RA: The only cemetery I remember is on this end, as you come into Beatty

from this way.

SB: From this side.

RA: Yes; from Vegas. But I know the Indians used to go up on that hill on the other side. They used to make their offering and they used to go out and buy new blankets and everything and burn it all.

SB: Yes.

RM: Could you discuss a little bit about the religion? When you were young, did any of the Indians practice any of the traditional religion?

RA: I don't remember too much about that, outside of just that when there was death and sickness, they would sing and dance.

RM: Who would do the singing? Was it a special person, or just everybody?

RA: I know when my mother was doctoring, Holly Charlie always did the singing. At one time, I guess, he came from Ash Meadows, too. The Shoshonis were the ones who did a lot of the offering in Beatty. They would go up on the hills there and burn it all and sing all night.

RM: How did they dispose of the deceased? Did they bury them?

RA: Yes.

RM: Was it a traditional burial ground, or did they bury them where they died?

RA: As far as I knew, they just buried them on the ground.

RM: Wherever the person happened to die - for instance, out on the road, or something?

RA: Yes, unless they had a cemetery. Now, in Ash Meadows we had one - and we still have one - and hardly anybody knows about it. It's an old Indian cemetery. My grandparents are buried there.

SB: We had one up here and now we haven't got it, hardly.

RA: Yes. But the one in Ash Meadows is on a hill, and they're all in a

row. It's over by the Devil's Hole-Pointed Rock area.

RM: Can you still use that, or has it been restricted?

RA: I don't know; we haven't been over there for a couple of years. The last time we went over, he put some barbed wire around it, and we mentioned it to the county commissioner - it was Bob Ruud at the time - and we also talked to BLM. We couldn't get in there; we had to make our own way - our own road and trail. And Bob Ruud thought that if we put a road in there it would just bring everybody in and there would be grave robbing or something like that.

RM: Do the Indians tend to return to the burial spot?

RA: Well, they usually return to their roots. They can go away and always come back to the tribal roots, or, keep in touch.

RM: I was wondering if you had any thoughts on this. It seemed a lot of Indian women were marrying white men, so what happened to the Indian men?

RA: There was a story that goes back years ago. In fact, I think Steve had a relative, too, who went over . . . Many of the men used to go to the Moapa Indian Reservation. Moapa had a lot of Indian women and they would go over there. My mother even told me that. I remember Clifford Steve went - that's when she told me. He left here because there was nobody around, except those who were related. They would go over and get their wives.

That goes back into a legend 'way back, where the Indian men from here would go over there and get their wives. One time the men in Moapa were gone, and they were getting their wives, and somehow there was supposed to have been kind of a war between the two. That's why they say the bluebirds in the mountains are the warriors that came back. [chuckles]

RM: Oh, they got killed over there?

RA: Yes. That's why the legend [says] we're supposed to be good to the mountain bluebird.

SB: That was just going over to greener pastures.

RA: Well, there weren't too many women. What women there were, the white prospectors and outlaws grabbed up, so there really wasn't . . .

RM: I've always wondered if it wasn't because that the whites were killing a lot of the Indian men?

RA: It could have been that, too. And a lot of the Indian men, probably, went off to work on ranches and other places. When I was here in the '30s, it was the same way. There were hardly any women around here. Even in Ash Meadows there were mostly all men. They were still going to the Moapa Reservation, or wherever there were Indians gathering or hanging out.

RM: Why didn't the Moapa have men? I mean, there are as many boy babies born as girl babies.

RA: Yes; I don't know - unless they just went off and worked, too. Also, a lot of the kids were shipped to Indian schools. This . . . I'm speaking for the '30s. I don't know about 'way back, except for that legend. The white people who did come in were mostly men, naturally, and most all of them grabbed Indian women. Either that or probably shared them with Indian men. [laughs] I don't know.

RM: What was Pahrump like in the '50s, then?

RA: I think you were here in the '50s, too, weren't you Steve? '50s - wasn't that when most of the Indians were living down around Manse?

SB: I think so.

RA: Bowman came in in the '40s. He took over the farming and things down here, which gave them work.

SB: And I was up here at Pahrump.

RA: That brought in work, then. They more or less followed the work, I guess.

RM: And most of the work was on the 2 big ranches, wasn't it? The Pahrump and the Manse?

RA: Yes. And the Indians more or less did their own little gardens even 'way, 'way back.

RM: So most Indian families had a garden?

RA: A lot of them did, yes.

RM: What would they typically plant in a garden?

RA: Usually corn, squash, beans and watermelon. Always they dried the corn, and beans are dried, of course.

RM: How did they decide where to plant? What if I wanted to come and plant where you were planting?

RA: Well, a lot of them shared; they shared the work and shared the food.

RM: Tell me about sharing in the '30s and '40s.

RA: I can say, during the Depression time, a lot of them lived together; it was communal. Everybody put their food in and put their work in. I lived in Ash Meadows with Albert Howell and his wife and the wife's sister and my mother and my brother and Danny Fields and his brother. We all worked on the ranch there - he had a great big field - and we all took our turn at everything. In Beatty it was the same way - it was all communal. Everybody pitched in and did the work. The girls, mostly, did the cooking and work while the older women were making their baskets and probably sewing and so on.

RM: Was it cousins, or a woman and her husband and her sisters and their husbands? How did it work?

RA: Well, I got in one in Beatty through my half-sister, who had married

one of the family members. Also, my brother and I had to go to school; there was no school here in Pahrump at the time so we went up to Beatty. It was either that, or having to go back to the Indian school.

RM: Why did you leave Beatty, then, and go back to the Indian school eventually?

RA: Times were getting hard. We still were in that Depression, and so I wanted to go back, I guess; to finish school.

RM: What was it like, going away to boarding school?

RA: It was kind of sad, I guess, for some.

SB: For a while.

RA: Yes. Because you're away from your parents; you're miles and miles away. When it was military it was even worse, because you couldn't leave unless it was an emergency, and you couldn't see your parents unless they came to see you. And they had letter-writing - what was it, once a month, wasn't it?

SB: Yes, once a month.

RA: It was a school English project, but everybody had to write home. And whether they got there or not, I don't know, but that was the only communication. After your 4 years were up you could leave.

But what was so sad - I didn't see it so much at Sherman, because they were older students there, but at Stewart they took in the little ones who were just starting school. [They came] all the way from St. George, Utah, up this way . . .

SB: Arizona . . .

RA: We had them from all over - northern California and Oklahoma. Everybody was going to Stewart for the low grades. You'd hear those little ones crying at night and that used to get me. It was - they were just

toddlers. First grade . . .

RM: They'd cry at night.

RA: They were just starting school; miles and miles away. Then they had to stay there all that time, you know.

RM: Did they go home in the summer?

RA: Sometimes they did. They used to have buses that would take them out to the different reservations. If you were lucky enough you lived close enough to [go home] for the summer. The Schurz Reservation had a bus - Fallon had one, and Yerington had one. Usually the close reservations were able to go. A lot of us had to stay and we just spent the whole year - summer, winter and all - there.

RM: So you went away for years at a time?

RA: Yes. I was gone for the 4 years and I came back.

RM: How do you feel about that?

RA: I don't how I did it. I guess I must've just [laughs] looked sad enough. But I'll tell you one thing . . .

RM: Did you cry?

RA: Crying was bad for the Indians. Crying, to an Indian, was always a sign of weakness and you were always taught to be brave; you were not supposed to cry. I heard that ever since I was little. So you would try to brave it through. When I went to Stewart, it was so cold up there, and the winters would snow, and here I was from the south. [laughs] It seemed you could never get warm.

RM: Steve, how did you feel about it?

SB: Just like she did. Worrying about your folks, worrying about home.

RA: Yes. You'd wonder, and you didn't know what to expect. As I tell other people, I can see how a prisoner feels when they're stuck in there

for so long and have to come out and face the world. I didn't know anything about getting on streetcars and shifting for myself out in public. When we were at Stewart, you're way out there; now it's built up clear to the school. But back then it was like Pahrump Ranch - stuck in the middle of the desert, 3 miles from town. It was kind of hard to get started out when you went out into the world.

SB: And you're broken-hearted and everything, and here's some bullies in the school who want to fight with you - they're picking on you. Then when you get used to the school and everything, you go take it out on them.

RA: Oh, they used to have the tribal fighting, too.

RM: Oh, the tribes would fight?

RA: Yes. For instance, the Navajos used to hang together, and the northern Indians. I know those 2 were very against one another for some reason - the Navajos and the northern Indians; Indians from northern California and Oregon and so forth. They were all lighter-complected, and a lot of them had curly hair and . . .

SB: Now, this was over in Sherman.

RA: Yes. You tried to be friends with every . . . It's almost like in prison - you have to be friends and watch who you're in with. You don't go along with this or that, and you're in. I don't know, we did have a few good times, I guess, and we did learn a few things [laughs] which we probably wouldn't have learned here. It got better after the reorganization act of '34; that's when they did away with the military.

But I remember when I first went to Sherman, it was military. I didn't even know how to march and I got there at noon and somebody in the dormitory had done something and the whole building was being punished. They had them go out on the parade ground and march and I had to follow

right along. I had to change from my [chuckles] good clothes into govvy clothes, as we called them; everybody's dressed alike. We had to get out and march. And that's where I learned my marching. I didn't even know right and left, or what they were doing, but I learned the hard way.

RM: How old were you?

RA: Gee, I don't know. I was going in the 2nd grade, I think, and I was supposed to be in 3rd grade.

RM: About 7 or 8 years old?

RA: Yes. And then I went to Stewart and it was still military up there. We used to have to get up there early in the morning, go out and march through the snow . . . put our marching in before we went to the dining hall. You woke up with the bugle, you went to bed with taps - the bugle. [laughs]

RM: I had no idea.

RA: Yes, that was bad. And then after '34 it got better; they eased up on a lot of things. But you couldn't speak your language - you were punished if they heard you saying anything in Indian - singing or talking in Indian.

RM: Did they make you go to church?

RA: Yes; that was compulsory. At Sherman, you had 2 churches - the Protestant church and the Catholic. And then at Stewart they just had the regular . . . they had a Baptist mission. On Sunday morning we had our dress parade, but we had to get out and march, and have our inspection - shoes shined and everything else - and then we went to Sunday School. Then we went to the church service; they held it in the auditorium. At 2:00 in the afternoon we went to the mission and at 7:00 it was chapel again. We were churched-out. [laughs] It was all compulsory - you had to go.

It was the same way when they would have football games. We were

little kids - we didn't know nothing about it - but we had to go; the whole dormitory had to be cleared out. I was telling them at Ash Meadows the other day that they had that tall, swamp grass that grows there and the little girls would weave those, and braid them. You know, they'd make spoons and everything. It was something to do, because they didn't know anything about games or anything.

RM: So while the game was on, you were making things out of swamp grass?

RA: Yes; just playing. You couldn't run around and do things. Everything was strict - you had to stay put. But you could sit there and pull that grass [chuckles] and weave and make things.

RM: Is there bitterness in your heart about it?

RA: No, not really. The only sad part is being so far away. If they had brought the education closer to the tribes, instead of having them miles and miles away, and taken from their area . . . But that's the only thing that I resent about the whole thing. Now people yell about busing their kids, and it's across town or a few blocks. They don't stop and think that we went miles. And some went out of state. And being stuck there for - not just a few hours - it was for night and day and months and years.

RM: What happened when you got out?

RA: It's hard to get out and do things. You get a little backward, and maybe have to go up to ask about something. Because everything else was laid out for you; you have your rules and regulations, you're supposed to know what to do and who to see and whatnot. When you get out, you have to find that all out for yourself. For instance, going out buying things; when we were in school we had scrip money, didn't we?

SB: Yes.

RA: They were trying to teach us to buy . . .

SB: How to use money and save it and all that.

RM: What you're saying is, they destroyed your initiative.

RA: That's it.

RM: You had such a regimented life that you never developed any initiative or anything; yes.

RA: That's it. It kind of put you in a backwards state. A lot of them would want somebody to go with them . . . they wouldn't want to go by themselves to go take care of something or see someone. I've seen a lot of them do that and I think it kind of tears your ego down.

RM: Was it a constant fight to maintain your ego?

RA: Yes, you just have to keep learning, but you seem to be backwards in a lot. You're more or less guided all the time, and told what to do; and when you get out . . .

SB: You're on your own.

RM: Yes, and you've got no training for it at all.

RA: That's it; yes. And it was even harder for people who . . . even going out to work. They worked in homes for other people. You'd work on weekends and get a little extra money, which wasn't much; outing jobs, they called them. You'd go out and work but you were still confined to just doing that. And you'd get one or two days off, when you didn't know what to do with [the time]. You'd head back early just so you'd get there; you were so afraid . . . You grew up in a demerit system - if you don't do this, you don't do that, you get a demerit. Three demerits and you're off privilege.

And I remember when we were little, at Stewart. They used to lock us up in the closets; that was even worse.

RM: They locked you in the closets if you did something wrong?

RA: Yes, the blanket closets. And it was just kid stuff - I can't remember what we were even punished for, now. But I can remember days in those closets and I can remember one time a little girl had to go to the bathroom so badly, and kept pounding and pounding, and they didn't open the door. She ended up going in a box, and come to find out the closet is the place where they kept all the sweaters and the stockings - we had long black stockings.

RM: How long did they leave them in the closet?

RA: I don't know; they just left us in there. One time they put me behind the door in a dark hall. They forgot about me until the roll call at school. Then back at the building the matron went off duty and didn't say anything to the other matron, and here I was standing behind this door. [chuckles] I missed my meal and Josephine Tondy brought me out a potato sandwich from the dining room.

I remember another time somebody marked on the walls of the large girls' building. It was a white, wooden building. A bunch of us kids had to get out there and scrub that whole building - every mark on there. [chuckles] They were so strict, way back; they were going to teach you, or else.

RM: And they wound up destroying your spirit and your initiative.

RA: Yes. That's it. On the girls' side, we used to watch the boys run them through what they called hot lines. They'd make 2 lines of boys - the big boys here - and whoever was getting the punishment would have to go through there, and everybody else would strap them with their belt. They had punishments I don't think were right way back.

In the little girls' building, when I was . . . some of them were noisy - it was right after they got in bed. I remember getting my first

spanking there. The matron just went right on down the row and spanked everybody on that side of the building. We all got a swat.

SB: Saturday afternoon, if you were punished, you had to go up and dig orange tree stumps out of the ground; they were clearing it off.

RA: Yes, they believed in giving you work - keeping you busy. But I think if there had been more to do in the way of places to go to and outings and so on it might have been a little bit better; especially on kids.

RM: Looking back, how should the Indian children have been educated? What do you think would have been a better way of handling the whole thing?

RA: As I said, I think they should have brought the education closer to the Indians, wherever they were living, giving them a better education, even if it was a one-room schoolhouse. At least it would be closer to the home. I think they would've been a lot more satisfied and better off.

RM: Tell me about Indian social life in the valley.

RA: Well, I don't know. We used to just . . .

SB: Work, work, work.

RA: Yes, and you associated with one another in your family, and with others if there was another Indian family close by. Kids would usually go off for walks, or go hunting rabbits or live things on the desert, or go swimming down at the old water holes. If the Indian women were going out picking something or gathering willows for baskets, you'd go with them. I don't know - there really wasn't that much to do. We didn't know what Christmas and Easter and all that was, did we?

RM: You didn't celebrate those days?

RA: No. Didn't even know what day it was, half the time.

SB: I think I was in kind of a lucky way; I had a girlfriend and that's where I spent most of my time.

RM: How many hours a day did you work?

SB: Eight.

RM: And how many days a week?

SB: Oh, we got off Sundays.

RM: What was a day's pay on the Pahrump Ranch, for instance?

SB: When I first went to work in 1935 it was $90 a month - $3 a day.

RM: And your board and room?

SB: I think that went with it.

RA: The girls at Sherman got $2.25 or $2.50 for those outing - weekend - jobs.

RM: For the weekend?

RA: It would be a Saturday - you'd clean their house or do their wash - whatever they wanted. You'd put in your work there from 8:00 and they brought you back by 6:00 or something like that. Some of them would stay overnight - maybe work a day and a half.

RM: So you're really talking about a 10-hour day there?

RA: Yes. And the money wasn't given right to you back then.

SB: It went to the school.

RA: It went to the school - well, they saved it for you, in a way. You had to requisition it out when you wanted it; you couldn't have it just when you wanted it. I don't know, there were so many strange things. [chuckles]

RM: Did you get it all eventually, or did they keep part of it?

RA: Well, I really didn't know, because I was young, then. I can look back, though, on the military days, when they used to open our mail. A lot of the kids would get money in their mail. My father used to send me money all the time for Christmas and different occasions. And we had to turn

that over the matron and you couldn't have that money, either. If you wanted it, you would go and ask her for some money, and she would dish it out to you.

RM: Do you think they were stealing your money?

RA: I really couldn't say, but it could've been possible; you just don't know. We were just kids then. Even at Sherman, clear up in the '30s, they were opening up mail. Were they opening it up when you were there? I don't know what they were expecting to get.

SB: Oh, they'd open up some and some they wouldn't.

RM: Steve, how much did they pay a family man on the ranches?

SB: Everybody got the same.

RM: But he wouldn't get his board and room, because he'd be living with his family, wouldn't he?

SB: It didn't make any difference; they all got the same pay.

RA: And then we had no stores. We ordered from catalogs. Women would order material; my mother used to wash up there at Pahrump. They had a little wash house up there - she did the wash and I used to go up there and help her a little bit with the ironing.

RM: It was all hand washing, wasn't it?

RA: Yes. And then we had to heat the irons on the stove. It was hot - in the summer, especially.

RM: When was this - in the '30s?

RA: Yes; when Ed Diemel had the ranch. I don't remember what they paid her, but I know she used to order material and maybe some overalls for my brother or something out of the catalogs. Then we'd have to wait [chuckles] for about a week or two.

SB: When I went to work for Diemel, he was only paying us $1 a day [and]

room and board.

RM: Room and board and $1 a day? When was that?

SB: '35. And in the late part of '35 or '36, when Dr. Cornell got the Manse Ranch, I went to work down there and I was getting $3 a day and room and board.

RM: What were some of the jobs you did on the ranch, Steve?

SB: I was a ranch hand - driving a tractor and baling hay and stuff. Planting. And when I got married, I didn't get any more. The little old stores around here didn't have much of anything; once a month I'd go to Vegas and buy a load of groceries and that lasted me a month. I had a truck - pickup.

RM: Did you go up to 95?

SB: Yes, out this way.

RA: I know in the '30s George Ishmael used to shop for the Indians. He was working at the ranch then and I guess the government allowed a little bit - an allotment - for their food. He would go over there and buy, and we all got about the same thing. He'd get canned tomatoes and milk and maybe some sugar and flour. Whispering Ben got a box, we got a box, and Mamie Steve . . . we all got boxes.

SB: [We don't know if] the rest went in his pocket or not.

RA: We don't know whether we got it all, either. [laughter] But anyway, he took care of that. When we went to Beatty, the money came to the general store there, and everybody was allowed $20, I think, a month; that was during the Depression. Then they could go and buy what they wanted with that 20. Outside of that, the Indian women would make baskets and sell them. The kids would go out and look for those purple jars and sell those for [chuckles] a quarter, 50 cents apiece.

RA: When we lived in Ash Meadows my brother used to go and look for wine jugs. Tubbs was making wine, and whoever was making wine would give you a quarter or 50 cents for them.

RM: When you lived in Ash Meadows, was the Clay Camp going?

RA: I don't remember. We lived over on this side. All I remember is, the railroad went through. It went by and . . .

RM: Whereabouts in Ash Meadows did you live?

RA: We lived over at the Howells' - I guess it's where the Lodge is now; I'd have to . . .

RM: Oh, where the Lodge is?

SB: Yes. 'Way on the south end.

RM: Did you own land there, or did you just kind of camp there?

RA: No, we lived in a communal way with the Howells. But my parents lived there before I was born and then we moved to the mountains and we lived there, sort of camping out in the screwbean trees at the Last Chance Spring. It was all thick, green in there and we lived there for a while, then went to Beatty. In Beatty they mostly had metal houses - made out of tin or whatever. But many people didn't stay in them. They kept their things in there but they had little tents and camped on the outside.

RM: Oh, I see. Was the tent the basic Indian housing during this period?

RA: Yes. One old Indian man and his wife had kind of a little cave like dug in the hill, and part of it was tent.

RM: How large were the tents?

RA: Not too big. It was enough to sleep in and keep your things in.

SB: Well, it was just whatever size you could get hold of.

RA: Yes. In Beatty we had a miner's tent. My mother and brother and I fit in there well and it was for sleeping. But it was wood around the bottom, then canvas. She had the same thing up here at Long Jim's - wood on the bottom and canvas on the top, like the old miners had.

RM: Did you live up at Long Jim's?

RA: I didn't live there; my mother did. She had her things in a place up there. That was before I came back to Pahrump in '34.

SB: I think the tent we had was 8 x 12 - the one we used to haul around when we were looking after cattle.

RM: You mean, when you were working for the ranch?

SB: Yes.

RA: So many of them, though, just slept outside; kind of roughed it. I know when we lived up here my mother had a tent, but then they had a wickiup made out of willows. It had the 4 posts and it gave us shade enough to eat under. There were 2 sides and a roof to it. The one we had in Ash Meadows, I think, had 3 sides closed in and one side open. They usually always put those up wherever there were willows.

RM: Were there many snakes in the area?

RA: Oh, yes.

SB: Oh, Christ, there were all kinds.

RA: My mother always said the rattlesnake and the sidewinders were half-brothers, and the lizards and the turtle were their cousins. [laughter] I don't know. [laughter] You've got to name them all.

SB: Oh, yes, there used to be a lot of rattlesnakes, sidewinders, coyotes, bobcats . . . now you hardly see any of them.

RA: Yes, there used to be a lot of that.

RM: What did the Indians do for snakebite?

RA: Gee, I don't remember.

SB: I don't either.

SB: There never were any getting bit.

RA: That's it - I haven't really heard of anyone getting bit. I know we had one in our tent once up there and my mother didn't kill it - she just threw a rock at it and scared it off. It didn't bother us and she wasn't going to bother it, I guess.

RM: Did other Indians think that way?

RA: I don't know. It's probably just what bothers you.

SB: I never heard of an Indian getting a rattlesnake bite.

RA: I haven't either. Or a horse, even. The horses used to go right by . . .

RM: Maybe our fear of them - or at least my fear of them - is not really justified, then.

RA: I don't know. I don't care for snakes, but I won't bother one, I'll just scare it off.

SB: The only ones I had it in for were rattlesnakes and sidewinders. The rest of them are harmless; I just let them go.

RM: Well, here you have the Indians living in the valley, and the whites are coming in and taking all the springs and basically all the good land . . .

RA: And we're down here in this wash and we all used the Indian money they gave us to buy our property. The government gave us money to buy some of our land back. [chuckles]

RM: And you're working for them for $1 a day or something like that - how

did you feel about that?

RA: I resent it. I resent it because I think we should have had a . . . We lived here when we didn't even have to pay for water; everything was free. And they wonder why Indians get resentful and there's trouble or there's an argument over land or something. But I think we should have been given something. I don't say "given" - it was ours in the beginning. [laughs] But we should've held on. That's what I told Steve. I said, "My family should've held on to that end down there," and he should've had this end, and Long Jims that and Mary and them that, 'way over that way. Maybe we'd have held on to a little something 'way back. The same thing with Steve's brothers - they should've gotten something 'way back - homesteaded it or something. But Indians don't believe in claiming land. It was for everybody - it's there - you didn't claim it. You don't put fences around it. But it's just changed; everything's changed.

RM: Has the custom of sharing been a problem? I mean, say one Indian is hard-working and another Indian, for whatever reason, doesn't want to work too hard, but yet the one who has worked is obligated to share. Has that caused difficulties?

RA: If somebody comes in and stays, you're a guest for about 3 days. You can lie around and do what you want. But after 3 days you get in and do your share, or you contribute. That's the sharing; you share the work or you share the food; either way.

SB: When a guy comes in and just lies around and eats and sleeps and doesn't do anything, that's when he gets on your nerves. He won't do a thing, and then you tell him, "There's the road - you go. You get going."

RM: Even if he's a relative?

SB: Yes.

RA: He'll go find somebody else and start . . . there are a few of those around who just . . . everybody's not the same. But the majority of them share and try to work together.

SB: If you don't say anything to him, he'll say, "I'll be back in a few days." When he comes back, he may have a dozen more moving in on you. That's the way it goes. As long as you take care of them, they don't do anything; they're going to bring in more. But if you go to their place they'll soon tell you to get out.

RA: And the same way with hunting. If they go hunting and they get rabbits and they get one too many, you share it.

RM: You mentioned collecting willows. Where were some of the gathering places in Pahrump where your mother would go?

RA: Along that - would you call that a creek?

SB: Yes. Coming out of the big spring. It went all the way down that way. Either that one or the one up here that went from the artesian well down to the Raycrafts' - that small creek there.

SB: Yes.

RM: Were there willows all along there?

RA: Yes; in both places.

RM: When did they collect the willows?

RA: Oh, usually in the summer, because they used to dry them and wind them up and store them away. Then they had them to work on. To get them limber again to work with they soaked them in a pan of water.

RM: Did they peel the bark off the willow?

RA: And they used that for the coloring and weaving in the heavier . . . My son made that one over there out of the Pahrump willows.

RM: Oh, I see, the baby cradle. It's beautiful.

RA: There were always plenty of willows around, here and in Ash Meadows.

RM: The willows are gone here, though, aren't they?

RA: Yes. They're just about gone over there, too; it's so dry over there. There used to be springs all over Ash Meadows. It used to be so green, and the screwbean trees grew so tall and were plentiful and . . .

RM: It's not as green as it used to be there?

RA: No. They didn't have that lake over there, and now they've pulled all that water over it; the same way here. All these springs have gone dry; they've pulled it all to their irrigation and every other thing.

RM: What other things did the people collect along the streams where the willows were?

SB: Watercress - they used a lot of that.

RA: Yes. We had that over in Ash Meadows, too; the watercress. Little frogs and every other thing. I know along the willow areas there was good rabbit hunting. [chuckles]

RM: Did you hunt them with guns or bows and arrows?

RA: My brother used to run them in those pipes they used to have and plug both ends, and get it out of one end. Then he always had his slingshot. [chuckles] He used to be pretty good with a slingshot until he got his .22. I don't know, we didn't really go hang around too much on the willows side. Most of the other things that grew were elsewhere.

RM: Were there special areas for picking, for instance, squaw cabbage?

RA: Yes, there were good areas for that. And my mother had one spot where she used to pick her mesquite beans because they were sweet. A lot of them are a little on the sour side, but she had one or two [places] up here along the road by the cemetery where they were real sweet. She would pick those and grind them up and store it.

RM: When do you pick the mesquite beans?

RA: In the summer, when they dry. They look like string beans hanging up. You could pick them, even, a little before they were dry, but you'd have to lay them out and dry them. Then she'd grind them down to almost a flour and pack them in cans, jars, or whatever container you had. And then you add water to it - it makes a beverage. Every time I drink frozen orange juice it reminds me of tasting that mesquite. [chuckles]

RM: Is that what it tastes like?

RA: To me it does. And a Shoshoni girl in Beatty said the same thing; she says every time she tastes frozen orange juice it reminds her of . . .

RM: So you didn't cook it; you ate it raw.

RA: Yes. And you could just eat it; just break it off in chunks and eat it like a kid would eat candy or something. Like brown sugar would be, you know.

RM: Is it sweet?

RA: If you get sweet ones; yes.

RM: Are most of them not sweet?

RA: I wouldn't say most of them; it's like finding fruit. If you find a good apple or a good tree . . . but my mother always had her favorite places.

RM: How did you prepare the pine nuts? I know how you pick them, with that hook.

RA: Yes; pole.

RM: And then what do you do?

SB: Shell them.

RA: If they were on the green, they used to pile up brush to make a big fire and throw them in that.

RM: The cones?

RA: Yes. They would burn it and then they would dig them out; get a little rock on it and they'd all fall out. You can do it that way or you can go under the tree and just pick them, too, or get the dry cones and hit them out of that. There are 2 or 3 ways.

RM: What do you do after you've got the seed?

RA: Well, store it away in sacks. Even while we were in the mountain, my mother would grind them and make kind of a gravy - cereal-like. It was good. She's grind them on one of those flat rocks.

RM: What about the shell?

RA: You kind of tap them and crack the shell and then you put them in those winnow baskets and winnow it. That gives you your unshelled pine nuts. She even used to cook them with red beans - throw them in with red beans. Other times we'd take it to school just in the shell. You can roast them in a pan if you've got the raw ones.

RM: Did you just break each one?

RA: Yes; with our teeth. [chuckles] They used to be our lunch, at Beatty, or maybe a piece of bread and the pine nuts. Miss Roats was the teacher. She finally wrote up to the agency and they put in a cafeteria-thing, or kitchen, there for all the Indian kids to have at least one good, hot meal. That's when Grace Scott used to work there; Steve's sister-in-law.

RA: This was one of the main things to their diet. At the same time the women were doing this, the men were out hunting deer or mountain sheep. Then they'd jerky that.

RM: How did they jerky it?

RA: Oh, dry it. They'd cut it in thins strips and then hang it.

SB: Put salt and pepper on it and hang it out; every few days you turn it

over.

RA: After it's hard and dry, I've seen my mother pound it with a rock and soften it all up. And then you cook it with gravy in a pan, and that used to be good; I used to like that. It's like chipped beef and gravy.

RM: How would she make her gravy?

RA: Out of the flour we used to get. And they'd always save their bacon grease or pork - either one.

RM: Did you eat a lot of bacon and pork?

RA: No, not that much. All meat, to me, seemed to be more or less a seasoning. It wasn't a thing you just ate, unless you had plenty of it, like when somebody butchered something or you had a deer or mountain sheep. You might get your fill on the meat then, but I don't think meat was that much in our diet. If somebody'd get a rabbit, you'd make rabbit soup or stew or something. Meat more or less was seasoning; it was added to things.

RM: How did you make a rabbit stew?

RA: Oh, rice, or macaroni. You'd boil it. Most of the meat was boiled back then. There wasn't that much frying because you saved the bacon grease. You didn't have too much of the meat diet.

RM: When you were young, would you say that most of the Indians produced most of their own food, or were they eating mostly white man's food?

RA: Oh, I'd say half and half, wouldn't you?

SB: Oh, yes. I imagine about half.

RA: They'd still go out and get what the could of what the Indians would eat.

RM: What items of white man's food were you eating?

RA: Well, as I said, my mother made baskets to buy - of course, the old

people used to like coffee, then. She would buy maybe some coffee, and sugar, and flour. Rice always went far, so there was always rice. Maybe tomatoes - tomatoes or tomato sauce - stuff like that. Usually they used to grow beans and pack and store those, so we had beans. A lot of the corn was dried.

RM: What kind of beans?

RA: They usually were those little white beans. They might have grown pintos; I don't remember. The ones that I usually came in contact with were the little white beans, and those red beans?

SB: Red beans.

RA: Yes; red beans. Those were the ones they used to grow - bush beans, I guess. But usually it was just the staples that you really needed.

SB: And the Indian corn.

RM: That'd be the colored corn, right? Different colors?

SB: Yes. Now, in Ash Meadows we used to get that wild sugar cane. My mother'd take that off and pack it like she would mesquite. It was sugar, but it was kind of a pale green color. It used to be on the leaves. They used to shake it off and clean it off and pack it. They grew like a cane stalk, but it was kind of short.

RM: Was it really sweet?

RA: Yes; it was sweet. It had kind of an odd taste to it, but it was sweet. My brother and I used to eat it. Some kids didn't care for it, but I used to like it. We used to get that in Ash Meadows, I know.

But you could survive. My mother knew a lot that was passed down on how to survive. People wondered how they survived Death Valley and all this desert 'way back. [chuckles]

RM: They had incredible survival skills. [laughs]

RA: Then there's always that cactus fruit, too, and getting the roots.

RM: Did you ever find any wild honey?

RA: No; I just remember the wild sugar. I don't know - I never did pay much attention to honey.

SB: I didn't either. I never monkeyed with bees and I never cared for honey, so I don't know anything about that.

RA: I know we used to buy syrup. In the '30s George Ishmael used to buy us syrup all the time - Karo syrup - for pancakes if we had them, or whatever. We didn't eat many sweets, though. They didn't bake cakes and pies and all those things 'way back.

RM: How did you prepare your corn?

RA: Just boil it on the cob, or my mother used to take it off the cob and mix it like this. She either mixed pine nuts in with the red beans to make it different, or mix the corn with beans to make it different. If you didn't have seasoning or ham or bacon to put in it or anything, you would be . . .

RM: You didn't grind the corn and make tortillas or corn meal or anything?

RA: We made tortillas, but we didn't make them out of corn - we just used flour. She used to fry the corn, too; take it off the cob and . . . They used to do that in Ash Meadows a lot - the Indians - because they had a lot of corn they grew, and when it was fresh, they'd just take it off of the cob and fry it in a pan with a little bacon grease seasoning, yes. That was always good; we always had that. And we had plenty of wild asparagus. That used to grow all over, wild, and it was sweet.

RM: And it grew in Ash Meadows?

RA: Yes; a lot. In fact, we have a little spot back here where it still grows off and on in places.

RM: Does it comes up in the spring?

RA: Yes. We used to have that morning, noon and night.

RM: Did the Indians plant any fruit trees in their own places?

RA: No. I think the only fruit that grew wild were the wild grapes and those berries that grew on bushes, and the cactus fruit. The mesquite, probably, would be almost like fruit juice; they made a juice from it.

RM: What was the relationship between the Indians and the whites in the valley when you were growing up, say in the '20s and '30s?

RA: I don't know; I guess we got along, didn't we?

SB: Oh, yes.

RA: Yes. My brother's little playmate was Dewey Ishmael. [chuckles] George Ishmael's youngest son was my brother's age . . . they were around 10 and 12 when they used to play together.

RM: Yes. I interviewed Phyllis Bell - his daughter.

RA: Oh. Yes, Phyllis Ishmael. Then there was another sister - Mabel. Mabel and Phyllis, Len and Dewey.

RM: Could you say some more about the belief that Steve's family was originally Panamint?

RA: My mother told me the story - this would've been way, way, 'way back, that her mother's people came from, actually, around Palm Springs. That there was an Indian war there 'way, 'way back before white people came, and the Agua Caliente who are living there now were from the other side of the mountain. They came over and there was a war between them and my mother's mother's people, which would be my grandmother's people, I guess, and they came this way.

RM: They pushed your mother's people this way?

RA: Yes. Now, I don't know whether they're the ones who . . . you see,

there were, at one time, Paiutes along those mountains in California, too. Whether they came this way and whether that's part of the Panamints, or not, or what, I don't know.

RM: Now, that would've been within what time frame? I mean, 1,000 years, or 200 or 300 or . . .?

RA: I would say, because that Agua Caliente tribe's been there for . . . Their legend of how they came was through birds that came over the mountain or something; that they were like birds that flew over the mountain. But now this has just passed down through hearsay through my mother; I've never really gone into it, except there was a Sunset Magazine that came out in the '60s or '70s. It had an article in there about the museum in Palm Springs and a little article in there [told about] some tribe of Indians and they wondered whatever happened to the original Indians that came from there. Now, whether that was the one they were talking about - my mother's mother's or grandparents' people or not - I don't know.

I should've cut it out; it makes me mad when I think that I didn't save it. [chuckles] It was back in the '60s. It was a write-up on the museum in Palm Springs and about tourists coming to visit, you know. And then they just had this little paragraph - "We wonder whatever became of the the so-and-so tribe of Indians - that originally were here." And I remember telling my husband, "I ought to write to them and tell them the story that was passed down to me." Maybe that was the same tribe. But I didn't; I just let it go.

RM: Were you married to a white man, or to an Indian?

RA: A white man. My first marriage was an Indian. This is my second.

RM: I'm a little unclear about what the relationships were among the Indians here. For instance, the Paiutes here and, say, in Ash Meadows, and

on the other side of the mountain - on the Vegas side.

RA: They all got along.

RM: But were they considered part of the same band, or what?

RA: No, they were all different bands.

RM: So there was a Las Vegas band, and . . .

RA: Yes. The Ash Meadows and Pahrump were more alike, I think.

RM: Were more in the same band?

RA: Yes.

RM: And then when you get into Death Valley you're into a different tribe, aren't you?

RA: Yes. That's Paiute and Panamint and Shoshoni, but the Shoshonis mixed in, I guess, quite a bit with the Paiute in this area.

RM: Who were the Indians at Tecopa?

RA: They were Paiutes.

RM: Were they part of your band?

RA: Yes.

RM: Do you consider your band and your relatives separate from the Las Vegas Paiutes in terms of the band?

RA: I don't know whether we're separate from them, because there are a lot of them who have migrated from here over there. You see, they can get government help over there. And a lot of them went to Moapa. As I say, a lot of them intermarried, so it's kind of . . .

RM: Yes. But do you think of this as being sort of separate from Las Vegas?

RA: Well, I kind of think of us as being left-out, separate [chuckles] from the rest of them.

RM: Was Whispering Ben originally with the Las Vegas Band in Indian

Springs?

RA: No. Indian Springs was with this area. We went clear up into Yucca Mountains.

RM: You went clear up into Yucca Mountain?

RA: A lot of the Indians from Ash Meadows would go up that way. And Shoshonis, even, went up in there from the Beatty side. There was good hunting and pine-nut picking up there.

RM: Did you go clear up to Paiute Mesa and up in there?

RA: Well, the Bruces, I've heard, lived up around White Rock Springs, which is the north end of Yucca Mountain. And there have been other stories come out from the Shoshonis of different ones going up in there. And my mother used to tell me - years ago - that they used to go up there for hunting and pine-nut picking.

RM: Up to Yucca Mountain?

RA: Yes.

RM: Where? Because there are no pine nuts on Yucca Mountain.

RA: No, I meant those mountains farther over that way.

RM: On - more on the Test Site?

RA: Yes.

RM: Is that Timber Mountain or something like that?

RA: I don't know what it is. All I know is, we used to sit up here on the mountain, because we lived up here, and she'd tell about the different areas. She used to point that way and say there was a lot of good pine-nut picking.

RM: Now, where did your people's territory stretch from? It went clear from up around Yucca Mountain to Indian Springs?

RA: To Indian Springs, down this way, and around - I guess all this

valley, clear down over to Tecopa-Shoshone-Ash Meadows?

SB: Yes.

RM: What about Sandy Valley?

RA: Yes; that would be the end of this - yes, 'way down. Whatever's down that way; yes.

SB: I don't think any Indians lived down there.

RA: No. It used to go about as far as . . .

SB: Hidden Hills.

RM: Where is Hidden Hills?

SB: Straight down the valley toward Las Vegas.

RA: Yes. And it goes into Tecopa.

RA: Before you go over . . . Immigrant Pass.

SB: You go back there 16 miles and it says Tecopa. From the turnoff you go down about 6 miles. Then it says Hidden Hills. And right there is where that Cathedral Canyon is, as they call it. Hidden Hills is over back of the hill on the wash, there. You can only see one building on top there.

RA: But Chief Tecopa traveled all this area, too.

RM: Are any of his relatives in this valley, now?

RA: Not that I know of. Not unless it's distant ones - like with Long Jims and . . .

SB: That's all I know; distant relatives.

RA: Anna Tecopa and my mother were first cousins and we all lived together in Ash Meadows.

RM: Now, was Anna Tecopa his daughter?

RA: I think so, because Anna Tecopa is Carol Fields Keelsus' grandmother. And her father Daniel C. Fields . . . that was her grandmother.

But the Indians all knew one another, or were all kind of related. And it got to where it's connecting both, now, with those two, because they've intermarried. But there are so many out of state. Years and years ago it was just the Nevada Indians - the Paiute and Shoshoni and then you go up north into the Washoes, more Paiutes and more Shoshonis, and that's all. Now, all the other tribes are coming in. Since World War II, I guess everybody's moved all over.

RM: In your home when you were growing up, did you speak Paiute or did you speak English?

RA: We had to speak English when we were living with the Shoshonis because there were the 2 tribes.

RM: You can't understand Shoshoni that well?

RA: A little bit. Some of the words might be . . . they say pa for "water," we say pa for "water." There is a little difference, but to get through . . .

RM: But you spoke English with the Shoshonis?

RA: Yes, except the older people. You tried to make them understand you.

RM: Do you consider yourself primarily a speaker of Paiute or . . . do you think in English, or Paiute?

RA: Oh, I don't know what I think in. [chuckles]

SB: Hey - talk like white man! Me no can talk English! [laughter] I can't speak it any more.

RM: The Paiute? You don't . . .?

SB: No.

RA: No, since we were shipped off to Indian school we forgot it all. And when we come back, I picked up a little of it; I could understand it but not speak it. I could say a few words and you learned something, as you

learn any language you're around.

RM: But they basically killed it when they sent you to Indian school?

RA: Yes. Except the ones who didn't get there. For instance, Cynthia [Lynch] and the Long Jims were up on the mountain.

RM: Cynthia didn't get sent off, did she?

RA: No. Her 2 older sisters did. And one of them died up there at Stewart. That was during the military era. They didn't even notify them of it and they buried her up there. But the lady next door speaks Paiute, and then there's one over in Tecopa who speaks it and I guess there are some at Moapa and Colony, but they're getting away from it, too, now.

RM: Well, you've both certainly given me a lot of information here, and I think it'll be very useful in helping me write the history of the Pahrump Valley.

RA: Now, my son is the director of the Indian center in Las Vegas, and he's also our chairman out here whenever we have a get-together or something has to be done, so he contacts everybody out here. He's known as our chairman, anyway. [chuckles]

SB: And I'm the mayor of Pahrump. [laughter]

RA: Yes, he's been here the longest. [chuckles]