An Interview with

DEANNA BROWN

An Oral History produced by
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada

Tonopah
2009

DeAnna Brown and her husband Darryll Brown
2007

Gwendolyn and Leon Hughes, 1945.

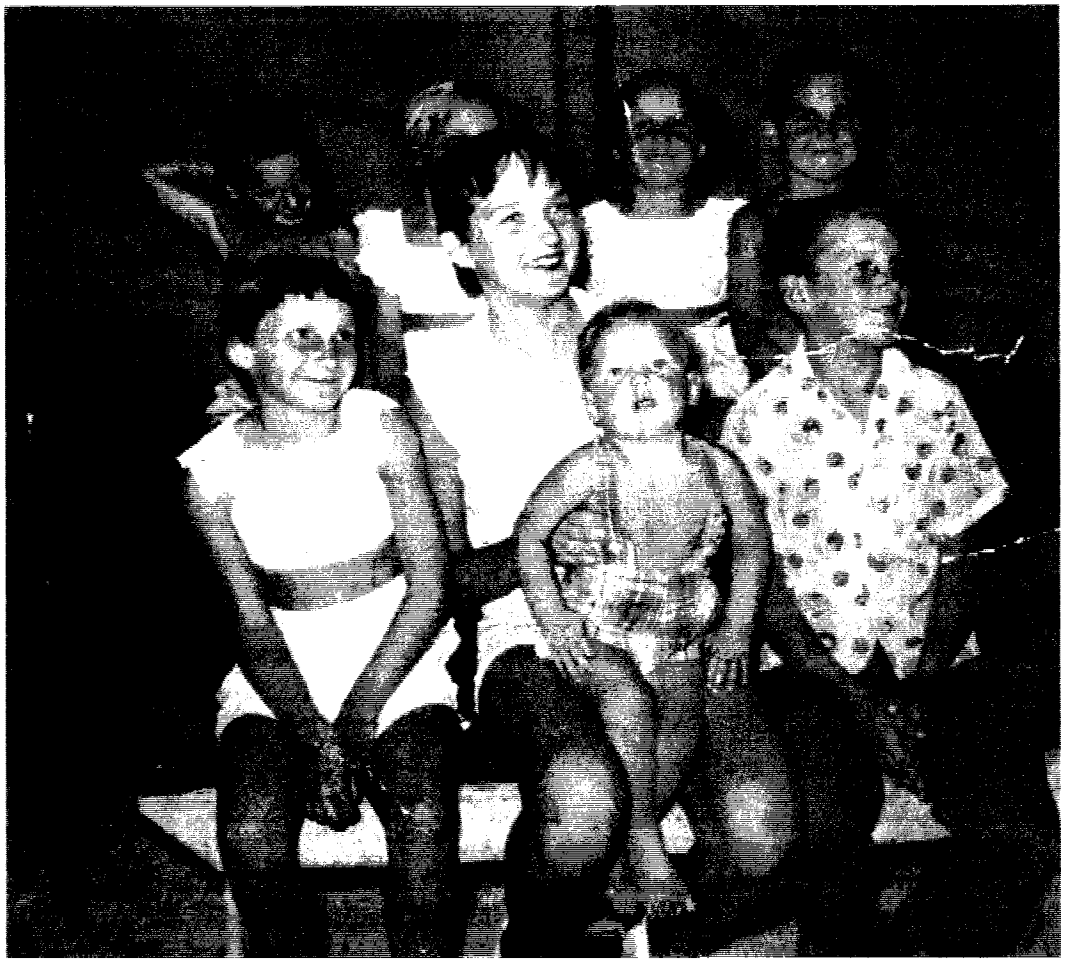
From left: Georgie Ann Bell and unidentified woman picking cotton. Pahrump Ranch, Pahrump, Nevada, 1937.

Red Schoolhouse, Pahrump, Nevada. From left: Norma Steve, Ben Spencer (his mother was Pahrump's postmistress), Don Ward, Marie Hughes (DeAnna's aunt), DeAnna Hughes (fifth grade), Okemah Spencer (Ben Spencer's sister), 1952.

From left: Leon Hughes, DeAnna Hughes, Larry Hughes, Gwendolyn Hughes, 1945.

Cabin at Lost Lobo Mine, west side of Charleston Mountains above Pahrump Valley, Nevada, 1990.

Portal of Lost Lobo Mine, west side of Charleston Mountains, Nevada, 1990.



Children of Gwendolyn and Leon Hughes, 1954. Back row, from left: Leonard, Pam, Oneta, Michael. Front row, from left: Sharon, DeAnna (holding Raymond), and Larry.

Children of John and Beryl Hughes, 1942. Standing, from left: Maxine Hughes, Betty Hughes, Byron Hughes, Bea Hughes, Leon Hughes and wife Gwendolyn. Sitting, from left: Baby DeAnna Hughes, John Hughes (DeAnna's grandfather), Kenneth Hughes, Beryl Hughes (DeAnna's grandmother), and Marie Hughes.

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PREFACE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As project director, I would like to express my deep appreciation to those who participated in the Nye County Town History Project (NCTHP). It was an honor and a privilege to have the opportunity to obtain oral histories from so many wonderful individuals. I was welcomed into many homes—in many cases as a stranger—and was allowed to share in the recollection of local history. In a number of cases I had the opportunity to interview Nye County residents whom I have long known and admired; these experiences were especially gratifying. I thank the residents throughout Nye County and 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 in 1987. Subsequently, Commissioners Richard L. Carver, Dave Hannigan, and Barbara J. Raper provided support. In this current round of interviews, Nye County Commissioners Andrew Borasky, Roberta "Midge" Carver, Joni Eastley, Gary Hollis, and Peter Liakopoulos provided unyielding support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the program within Nye County in its first years. More recently, Darrell Lacy, Director, Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Project Office, gave his unwavering support. The United States Department of Energy, through Mr. Lacy's office, provided funds for this round of interviews. Thanks are extended to Commissioner Eastley, Gary Hollis, and Mr. Lacy for their input regarding the conduct of this research and for serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. These interviews would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Lacy.

Jean Charney served as editor and administrative assistant throughout the project; her services have been indispensable. Kimberley Dickey provided considerable assistance in transcribing many of the oral histories; Jean Charney, Julie Lancaster, and Darlene Morse also transcribed a number of interviews. Proofreading, editing, and indexing were provided at various times by Marilyn Anderson, Joni Eastley, Julie Lancaster, Teri Jurgens Lefever, and Darlene Morse. Joni Eastley proofed all the manuscripts and often double-checked, as best as possible, the spelling of people's names and the names of their children and other relatives. Jeanne Sharp Howerton provided digital services and consultation. Long-time Pahrump resident Harry Ford, founder and director of the Pahrump Valley Museum, served as a consultant throughout the project; his participation was essential. Much deserved thanks are extended to all these persons.

All material for the NCTHP was prepared with the support of the Nye County Nuclear Waste Repository Office, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author and the interviewees and do not necessarily reflect the views of Nye County or the U.S. DOE.

—Robert D. McCracken
2009

INTRODUCTION

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

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

The spectacular mining booms at Tonopah (1900), Goldfield (1902), Rhyolite (1904), Manhattan (1905), and Round Mountain (1906) represent the last major flowering of what might be called the Old West in the United States. Consequently, southcentral Nevada, notably Nye County, remains close to the American frontier; closer, perhaps, than any other region of the American West. In a real sense, a significant part of the frontier can still be found in southcentral Nevada. It exists in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area also is visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, much of it essentially untouched by humans.

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known

about the early days of 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. The *Rhyolite Herald*, longest surviving of Rhyolite/Bullfrog's three newspapers, lasted from 1905 to 1912. The *Beatty Bullfrog Miner* was in business from 1905 to 1906. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All these communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities once their own newspapers folded, although Beatty was served by the *Beatty Bulletin*, published as part of the *Goldfield News* between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 resides 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) in 1987. 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 Lied Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada. The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite picture of each community's life and development. The collection of interviews for each community

can be compared to a bouquet: Each flower in the bouquet is unique—some are large, others are small—yet each adds to the total image. In sum, the interviews provide a composite view of community and county history, revealing the flow of life and events for a part of Nevada that has heretofore been largely neglected by historians.

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

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

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impact of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, 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 the repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for a long time and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided at the site. And in the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

—R.D.M.

Interview with DeAnna Brown and Robert McCracken at Ms. Brown's home in Pahrump, Nevada, November 9, 2008.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: DeAnna, tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate.

DB: DeAnna Beryl Brown.

RM: And when and where were you born?

DB: Porterville, California, June 5, 1941.

RM: What is your mother's name as it would read on her birth certificate?

DB: Gwendolyn Mae Maddux; she was born December 7, 1919.

RM: Do you know when and where she was born?

DB: Madill, Oklahoma. It doesn't exist anymore. It's covered up by a lake now.

RM: And what was your father's name as it would read on his birth certificate?

DB: Leon D. Hughes.

RM: When and where was he born?

DB: Fort Worth, Texas, February 1, 1918.

RM: What did your mother's family do for a living?

DB: They were farmers in Oklahoma. Well, my grandmother was a schoolteacher. But when things got rough, I understand from my mother that my grandfather was also a moonshine person. And then, when things got really bad during the Dust Bowl, they moved to California.

RM: Do you remember stories about that?

DB: I remember my mother talking about it but I don't remember any particular stories about the move; just how hard it was.

RM: It was a hardship move?

DB: What they told me it was like what you'd read about in *The Grapes of Wrath.*

RM: Really, it was that bad?

DB: Yes, they were very poor.

RM: And where did they land in California?

DB: In Porterville. That's about 50 miles north of Bakersfield, in the San Joaquin Valley.

RM: And so they worked in the fields there, just like in *The Grapes of Wrath.*

DB: Yes. Cotton, asparagus, peaches, whatever was available.

RM: And that was during The Depression. And what did they do there? I mean, how did they pull themselves out of that? Or did they?

DB: Yes, they did. I don't remember them ever being poor. I don't know exactly what their status was, but they weren't poor. They both worked. My grandmother worked as a nurse and she worked in the packing sheds, packing oranges and things like that. My grandfather worked and at times even had a little bit of land and farmed also.

RM: And then what was your dad's family?

DB: They were definitely ranchers and farmers. They had cattle and cotton. Almost always, in my life, I can remember cotton. [Laughs]

RM: How many siblings did your mother have?

DB: My mother had two, a brother and a sister.

RM: Were you close to them?

DB: Yes.

RM: You were? The family was all centered there? And then, how many siblings did your

father have?

DB: He had seven.

RM: Were they all close, or did they kind of go their separate ways?

DB: They were close for a while, but then they did kind of spread out and go their separate ways.

RM: Now, your grandfather on your father's side was named John R. Hughes. Tell me about him—he's an important figure in Pahrump history.

DB: He was around a lot for most of my life. He was a rancher, a farmer, and he was in love with Pahrump. He was like my father. Pahrump was in his blood, definitely. He lived here in Pahrump and had the ranch in the 1930s and they had all different enterprises.

They had horses that they raised. And a lot of the wild horses that you see, that were around here a lot, were horses that my grandfather would winter here; and then every year he'd lose a few. And some of those horses I believe, and my father, I think, told me, were from some of those horses that they lost. And they bought a lot of pigs, hogs, and they got cholera and died.

RM: That basically broke him, didn't it?

DB: Yes, it did. I believe they moved back to California then. My life is from Pahrump to California. They would go and get a grubstake. They would farm, do whatever, grubstake, come back and try to farm cotton here again—cotton and alfalfa.

RM: Why did your grandfather leave the Fort Worth area to go to California?

DB: I'm not sure why they left there. I believe it was in the Depression times.

RM: So maybe it was kind of a "Grapes of Wrath" thing with them.

DB: Probably they weren't able to make the kind of living that they wanted to in that area.

RM: And where in California did they settle?

DB: In Porterville.

RM: So both sides of your family came from Porterville. How big was Porterville at that time? Do you have any idea?

DB: I don't know.

RM: Did you spend any of your youth in Porterville?

DB: I was born there and all of my brothers and sisters were born in Porterville. Even if we were living in Pahrump at the time, there were no doctors here and no roads good enough at that time to get to Vegas, so my mother would go and stay with my grandparents in Porterville. We all had the same doctor, same hospital and everything.

RM: How did you mother and father meet, do you know? In Porterville?

DB: I'm not sure.

RM: But she'd accompany him to Pahrump, whenever . . . ?

DB: Most of the time we all moved. We would move to Pahrump and try again. My earliest recollection of living in Pahrump was one of the times that my father moved to here. He leased some land from the Bowmans. I believe down on the Bowman Ranch, to try to grow cotton there. He was convinced that cotton would grow here and we lived in two tents during the cotton-growing season while he was trying to do that. There were only probably about four or five of my brothers and sisters at that time. It was probably around 1947; that's the earliest I can remember being here. And then that failed, I believe, and we moved back to California until my father felt like he had enough money to come back to Pahrump. That

happened several times. [Laughs]

RM: So he was here for a couple years or so after the war, World War II, and then went back to Porterville. And then when did he give it another shot in Pahrump?

DB: I believe it was, like, 1952 or '53 that we moved back. I was in the fifth grade and we moved here and I went to school in the little red schoolhouse. And that first year, there were my brother and I, he was in the first grade, and altogether, on a good day, there might be 10 children that went to school in the little red schoolhouse.

And then in the middle of the year they started working on the highway—Highway 160—and a lot of people moved in that had children, so they had to have a bigger schoolroom. They got two long buildings that they put where the Manse School is now, right at that same site, and the size of the school more than doubled. There were 25, maybe 30 children at that time and we still had one teacher. And then, when the road was finished, those children moved on but by that time other people had started moving in, probably because the road was paved.

RM: How were those people earning a living, the ones that came in after the road?

DB: They were mostly farming. By this time, there was a lot of cotton. They found how to make it work in this soil here in Pahrump.

RM: Let's back up a bit. It was your grandfather, John Hughes, who really, as far as we know, gave cotton the first try in Pahrump.

DB: He and my dad together, but I don't know too much about that.

RM: When I interviewed him years ago, your dad told me cotton would not grow on virgin land.

DB: Right. They didn't know why, it just would not grow.

RM: But if alfalfa had been growing there or something else, then it would do fine.

DB: Right, something with the deep taproots that would leach out the alkali.

RM: And on the original try of your grandfather Hughes on the Pahrump Ranch, it was on virgin ground and so it didn't do well.

DB: Right.

RM: Can you elaborate on that at all?

DB: All I know about that is what I've heard my father say, that they just knew that the weather [was right for cotton] and that it had to work somehow, they just weren't finding the right thing to do. I don't know exactly what happened, if they had alfalfa or something that they disked up and decided to plant cotton where the alfalfa had been, but it did great. Finally they found that if something else had been planted, it would grow.

RM: So when your grandfather came here in the '30s to try it on the Pahrump Ranch, your father was with him and he was a young man then.

DB: Right, he was 18, 19 years old.

RM: And then it went bust so they went back to Porterville. Did your grandfather ever come back again?

DB: Oh yes. He came back several times. When I first lived here, sometimes my grandfather and grandmother lived with us. And then they moved up to the mine—you know the mine, where the cabin is?

RM: I don't know about that.

DB: It's up on the side of the mountain and my grandparents lived up there. It's probably a

12- or 13-mile drive up that dirt road.

RM: Does the road have a name?

DB: I don't know the actual name, but it's the same one the Indians that live right up here take, only you go farther. You don't turn off and go over to the Indians' place, you go up and around.

RM: And it was a mine and a cabin then?

DB: They were mining.

RM: So your grandfather was a miner, too.

DB: Oh, yes. That was my grandfather's big passion, mining.

RM: Even more than farming?

DB: More than farming. He loved the mining. [Laughs] Oh, yes.

RM: Did he mine anywhere else besides here?

DB: I don't know that he ever did mine anyplace else. But he definitely had the bug here and, as long as he was alive, he tried to. . . .

RM: Really! What mine was it?

DB: The Lost Lobo Mine. And we kept it up, my father did, and even my brothers and sisters and I for a long time, until it got so hard . . . I mean, you know, we weren't making any money in it and when the Forestry [US Forest Service] took over and increased the assessments and all of the qualifications for having a mine, we just let it go.

RM: So it was a staked-out mine? It wasn't a patented claim?

DB: No, it never did get patented. My father was going to patent it, but I don't know what happened.

RM: Did he find it or was it an existing mine?

DB: No, they found it. There's still a big tunnel back up in there; it's caving in and everything.

RM: Your grandfather drove the tunnel?

DB: Yes, they did. They blasted it out. There were tracks in there. Harry Ford at the museum has some tracks and ore cars from that mine.

RM: Oh, how interesting. So your grandfather was an original locator of the deposit? That's wonderful.

DB: Yes. And it was mostly lead and there was a little bit of gold in it. You can still go up there and find a little bit of copper and silver.

RM: Was it in a vein?

DB: Yes, he hit veins. They were big enough to keep him believing he was going to hit the big one. All of his life he believed he was one blast away from the "big" one.

RM: And it's about 13 miles up into the Spring Mountains?

DB: Just right straight up east.

RM: Describe the workings there, what was there when it was at its peak.

DB: The tunnel would go in one way and then they would branch off and go another way. I don't know exactly how far they actually did go, but they spent a lot of time there. And my brothers, even after I was married and moved away, were still up there with my dad, working the mine.

RM: So he was a rancher and a miner.

DB: Oh, yes. That was his big passion.

RM: What kind of a cabin was there?

DB: First there was just a tent with a wooden floor. They put a wooden floor with sides and the top was a tent. Then they finished it off and made a cabin. It was a two-room cabin and then when we moved, the last time that we moved from over Porterville, my dad had built a little playhouse-type cabin for me, and it was big enough for a bedroom. They moved that up there and it was put next to the cabin, a little way from it. And that was the bedroom for my aunt, who is just three years older than I am. And I even lived up there. When I went to high school we were living up there in the cabin and that was my bedroom.

And at that time my father wasn't farming, he was working at Blue Diamond. For my first year of high school, we would get up about 3:00 in the morning and drive down and go to Blue Diamond. He'd go to work at 6:00 and I'd wait in the car for the bus to come out from Las Vegas to pick up the Blue Diamond children, then I would go in with the Blue Diamond kids to high school. I'd come back, wait for my dad to get off, and then we'd drive home and drive all the way up into the mountains. [Laughs]

RM: That's an incredible story. So you went to high school in Las Vegas.

DB: Yes, my freshman year. It was the first year that Rancho High was open. It was a brand new school.

RM: And where did you go your other three years of high school?

DB: I went another year, sophomore year. there. By then we weren't living at the mine. We had moved back down into the valley, thank goodness, and that year there were several families that moved in. Some of them had teenagers and instead of me being the only teenager going to high school, there was a senior boy and his name was Duane McGowan.

The county purchased a Ford station wagon and let him pick up the other high school students, there were about four or five of us then, and drive us into Vegas to go to school and back.

RM: What a commute!

DB: Yes, it was.

RM: And the road was paved then? What year would that have been?

DB: The road was finished in '53 or '54 so this was probably about '56.

RM: Some of the kids went to high school in Shoshone, didn't they? What was the reason you went to Las Vegas?

DB: I'm not really sure. None of the kids were going to Shoshone at that time and I was the only high school student when I graduated from the eighth grade here. When I graduated from the eighth grade here in Pahrump I was the only one in the eighth grade. So I don't think it was a big thing with the county at that time and my father just decided that, while he was working at Blue Diamond, I would go to school in Las Vegas.

RM: Was he still working at Blue Diamond your second year?

DB: No. By that time he was farming again. He was working on the Mizpah Ranch.

RM: Is that here in the valley? Where is it located?

DB: You know where Homestead takes off? Well, the house where we lived is probably somewhere in the area where the Community Bank is.

RM: Really? Right there off of 160?

DB: Yes, there. Because where the house was. I could see where people would take off on Homestead Road. It was just a dirt road at that time, and bordered the west of our property.

We were closer to 160. That house burned down, so it's hard to tell where it might have actually been at the time.

RM: So which years did you go to school here or in Vegas, and which years in Porterville?

DB: I went from the first grade to the fourth grade in Porterville. We were there constantly at that time.

RM: So your dad was not involved here in Pahrump; was your grandfather?

DB: No, he was in Porterville, too.

RM: And they were farming there.

DB: Right. And they were getting together enough money to come back to Pahrump. Finally, I guess, they got enough together and we migrated back to Pahrump. I was in the fifth grade, and I went from the fifth grade to the eighth grade here in Pahrump. We all had one teacher that first year. Then the second year it was a different teacher but she was still teaching all eight grades in the one-room school. And then the next year we still had one teacher.

When I was in the eighth grade, they brought in two teachers. They were a married couple, Mr. and Mrs. Binkley. He was the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grade teacher; she taught first through the fourth. And they had two separate buildings then.

RM: And that was when they had built the new school.

DB: Right.

RM: What year did they build that, do you recall?

DB: They didn't actually build it. Those were buildings that they moved in—big, long, narrow buildings.

RM: When did you switch from the little red school?

DB: That was about the middle of the first year, my fifth grade, because all those other children were coming in and I think they decided they had to have more room.

RM: Yes, because they were building the road.

DB: Right. At that time it was a lot different than it is now. I don't think people can even imagine what it was like. You know, there were only a hundred, a hundred and fifty people in the valley at that time and the schoolhouse that housed the upper grades was also a community building. We'd have potlucks and Harry Ford and his sisters would play. They all played musical instruments and his father, I believe, would call square dances. We had square dances and functions like that for the whole community. We all participated and those were really fun times.

RM: How often did they have the square dances, do you think?

DB: Oh, sometimes once a month, depending on what was going on. If it was time to harvest the cotton, well, school even got set aside. I mean, we were taken out of school to pick cotton.

RM: Oh, so you picked cotton.

DB: Oh, gosh. I chopped cotton. I picked cotton. [Laughs] Yes.

RM: What does "chopping cotton" mean?

DB: "Chopping cotton" means, that, whenever the cotton is really small, about six inches high, the weeds start to come in and you have to go and chop out the weeds and sometimes if the cotton's too thick, you even thin it a little bit.

RM: So you did your share of that.

DB: Oh, yes. [Laughs]

RM: So people put the kids to work in the fields. Did you also pick cotton?

DB: Oh, yes.

RM: By hand and dragging a sack?

DB: Dragging a sack.

RM: Would they just shut down the school?

DB: No, they didn't shut down the school, but they knew that some of us were going to have to catch up our schoolwork later.

RM: Now talk about where you lived, from when you first came in in the fifth grade.

DB: We lived out at the north end of the valley, on a place that my father was farming at that time. It was called the Dollar Sign Ranch.

RM: Was that Dorothy Dorothy ?

DB: Dorothy Dorothy lived just a little way from us, but it wasn't the same ranch.

RM: Did your dad own that ranch?

DB: I don't know if he actually owned it or he was working with Vern Schwartz and some other men that were backing him, I believe; I don't know that he actually owned it. Being the age that I was, I wasn't aware of that but I know that it wasn't just his.

RM: How many acres was he farming then?

DB: It was several hundred acres, but I don't recall how many.

RM: And he was using mechanized equipment, plows and things like that?

DB: Plows and things like that. And they learned to get it baled when it came time to pick the cotton and get it hauled into Bakersfield or Arvin. They tried hauling it loose and they lost

so much that it wasn't feasible because you couldn't get enough in a load. It ate up all your profits. So my father contrived a hay baler. And as we would pick it, he would dump it into this hay baler, compress it into bales the size of a hay bale, and haul it that way. You could haul a lot more because you didn't lose it; it didn't blow away and everything.

RM: And that was his invention?

DB: Yes, that was his. [Laughs] We helped with that.

DB: During that year down at the Dollar Sign, my mother got really, really sick and they had to take her to California. It was just about Christmas time, after we had harvested the cotton. And they really didn't expect her to live because she had anthrax. She had contracted anthrax somehow. There were six of us children at that time and she was pregnant with the seventh one, and they didn't even realize that when she first went there. They were just trying to keep her alive and had told my father to make some arrangements for us children because they didn't expect her to live at all.

Then when she started getting better, they found that she had been too sick to even tell them that she was pregnant. She went through all those high fevers and all of that, and didn't lose my brother, and the doctors were just astounded when they found out that she was pregnant, "No, you can't be!"

But she said, "Yes, I am."

RM: Was she a very hardy woman ?

DB: Yes, oh yes. Anybody that could survive out here had to be hardy.

RM: How many kids did she have?

DB: Eight children.

RM: Did they ever figure out how she got anthrax?

DB: They didn't ever know, for sure, how she contracted it.

RM: How did they treat her?

DB: Well, they had antibiotics, they had penicillin.

RM: Did she have a long recovery?

DB: It took quite a while, yes. She was gone for at least a month, and that was during Christmas. That's one of the things I wanted to tell you about Pahrump at that time.

My younger brothers and sisters didn't realize how serious it was, but it was Christmastime and all the people here in Pahrump got together and made sure that we had a Christmas. It was so nice. Of all of the Christmases that I can remember in my childhood, that one stands out, and the doll that they gave me. I was only probably ten and a half, eleven at that time, and I know it was a used doll, but it was the most beautiful doll to me. When I talk to my sisters, we all remember that Christmas, the dolls and toys we got. It was just amazing, what the people of Pahrump did for our family.

RM: The whole town just got together.

DB: The town. There were no names on it or anything, they just got together and made sure that all of these poor little children, with their mother in the hospital—at the time, we thought, dying—had a nice Christmas.

RM: Were the gifts under the Christmas tree, or how did they work it?

DB: I don't even know who brought it or anything, I just know that Christmas morning there were wrapped presents for us under the tree.

RM: So it made your Christmas, and for your brothers and sisters, too.

DB: Oh, yes, yes. My grandfather John and my grandmother were staying here taking care of us at the time, because my father was gone. too.

RM: Did John ever farm in Pahrump again after the '30s?

DB: He did. He homesteaded. And we moved away from the Dollar Sign, and Dad went to

work on the Pahrump Ranch again. He was the foreman there, so we were back on the Pahrump Ranch again.

We lived there on the Pahrump Ranch and at that time my grandfather homesteaded way out Homestead Road. I think that's why they called it Homestead Road, because it was the access out for all the people that were homesteading; that's how they got out to the homesteads. He was doing some kind of farming out there then; I'm sure it was probably cotton.

RM: And did he make a go of it there?

DB: No, he didn't. Right after he moved from the homestead, he moved up to the mine.

RM: Was that was his first time to live at the mine?

DB: Over the years they had been back and forth, but they never lived there. He moved up there permanently, and he lived there until he got very ill. He had cancer and he had to go to Porterville. He passed away in the hospital there.

RM: What year was that, do you recall?

DB: That was almost the same time that my youngest brother was born, he's 13 years younger than I am so that would be probably about '54, '55.

RM: How did he find the mine?

DB: I don't know. But he and my uncles. my dad's brothers, all took turns up there, working. I remember one time, I don't even know how they got it up there because it's such an awful road, you have to have a four-wheel drive now to get up to that place. The road washes out and everything, but they got this shaker table that vibrated the ore. The heavy stuff went down. That great big thing was up there.

RM: So they had their own mill there? They must have been grinding it or straining it.

DB: They must have been. And there was no water up there and no electricity. I mean, we had to haul the water up. So everybody in my family, my dad's brothers, worked up there at times, and would try to help my grandfather. And then it was just my dad. My father never gave up hope that he was going to strike it rich with that mine.

RM: So Leon thought he was going to hit it there, too, along with John.

DB: Oh, yes. He didn't talk to you about that?

RM: No. He did not tell me anything about a mine. It was all farming that he told me about.

DB: That was in his blood also and after he quit farming he was always trying to think of a way to process that ore or to get it out. . . .

RM: Do you know where they were shipping their ore?

DB: That I don't know.

RM: It sounds like they were concentrating it there.

DB: They were trying. I don't think they were ever really successful at it, and maybe they never did really get enough to even worry about shipping it.

RM: Yes. So to repeat, your grandfather John was here in the '30s, then he left and then he came back when you were in the fifth grade?

DB: Yes. He and my father kind of stuck together in their efforts, whether they were farming or mining or both.

RM: While your father is credited with proving that cotton would grow here, it sounds as if your grandfather was in on it, too.

DB: Yes.

RM: And he did it on land that he had leased from Bowman?

DB: The first time I remember, when I was old enough, that he was trying to do it there and I'm assuming that he grew cotton, but I'm not sure what the end result was.

RM: I think it was: "proved it." I think he proved it.

DB: Yes, he proved it, but then he didn't have the money to go on and do anything else. We had to go back to California and we were there for about four years and then came back.

RM: Was your grandfather involved in "proving it" on the Bowman land there?

DB: No, at that time I think my grandfather was still in California. It was just my dad and my mother, my brothers and sisters.

RM: And when your dad came back here, was that in '51?

DB: Yes, as a matter of fact it was '51.

RM: How long were you at the Dollar Sign?

DB: I think we only lived there about a year, and then we moved to the Pahrump Ranch . . .

RM: Okay, tell me about that. What was that like? What was your dad doing there?

DB: He was the foreman and they were growing cotton and alfalfa and there were cattle.

RM: That was when Walt Williams owned the ranch, or before?

DB: I don't remember Walt Williams. C. B. Dickey, I believe, owned the ranch at that time.

RM: How long was your dad the foreman?

DB: I had to be about 11 when we moved there and 13 when we moved from there. Where

did we go? Out by Jim's Bar, I believe.

RM: Where is Jim's Bar?

DB: If you take 372, it's the last place before you get to the California line. At that time, I don't know if my father was working for somebody else—maybe he had even started working at Blue Diamond at that time—but we moved into this house next to the bar. The bar was called Jim's Bar. And the house that we moved into was actually an abandoned house of ill repute. [Laughs]

RM: A brothel!

DB: Yes. And we still had no electricity, no phones. We had a hand pump out in the back. We had to carry the water in buckets and laundry was done outside in the washtubs. Baths were in the washtubs.

RM: And did you heat water on the stove?

DB: Oh, yes.

RM: What was it like, living in an old brothel? Of course, you were so young, you probably don't even. . . .

DB: It didn't mean a thing to me at that time, except that it was nice. There were four big bedrooms, you know. [Laughs] It was hard; there was a lot of hardship. It wasn't a time that I really look back and cherish. But I was going to school at the Pahrump School. The Irwins lived . . . I don't even know who lives there now, but if you walked north from where we lived there on 372 . . . I would walk about three or four miles and my girlfriend lived there and I would walk and spend time with her.

RM: You would walk three or four miles to see your girlfriend!

DB: If I wanted to visit with her or do something besides just being at home. Her father would take her in the morning to go to school and he would drive over and pick us up and stop and pick up two other little girls that went to school—they were related to Harry Ford, his sister's girls. He would take us to school and pick us up and take us home, so they took turns busing.

Then we moved from there to behind the trading post.

RM: Where was that?

DB: Back by where the school is now, the Manse School. Up on the hill was the trading post. There was a gas pump, the store, our post office; everything was right there.

RM: Who owned that, you recall?

DB: At the time it was Katy Burkett that owned it, the Burketts. Back behind there was a little cabin and we moved in there.

RM: What year did you move in there?

DB: I was in the eighth grade, and it was just before we moved up to the mine. I'm sure we were experiencing really rough times because of my dad's work and whatever, but we lived there for a very short period of time.

[end tape 1, side 1]

RM: We're talking about your Christmas story some more.

DB: I was old enough to know, from the way they were talking, that my mother probably wasn't going to survive the anthrax. And we were very poor right then, I don't know if we would have had a Christmas because things were so hard. Everyone in the valley got together and made sure that we had a nice Christmas, and delivered the packages. I didn't see

anybody, I can't give you a name of who did it. just that the gifts were there Christmas morning, and all my brothers and sisters and I had lovely gifts. The doll that I remember is the *only* doll that I remember. I know I had other dolls at different times in my life, but I remember that doll with such fondness.

RM: Do you still have it?

DB: No. Because being in a poor family and being the oldest of eight, everything was handed down, you know? I have very few things from that time. But she had a useful life. [Laughs] She was a used doll, but that did not make one bit of difference. I loved that doll. It was so wonderful to see my brothers and sisters have something. I was pretty sure that we probably wouldn't have anything, and wasn't really even worried about it; I was much more worried about losing my mother. But thankfully we found out she was going to be all right and that we were going to have another new brother. [Laughs]

There's something else I remember, when I see what it's like for girls and teenagers now. It was so different then. I go back, digress, to a time when there were only maybe four or five of us teenagers here in the valley, and Harry Ford was one of them. He was three or four years older than I was. But there was Harry and Billy Hathaway and Richard Burkett—his parents owned the trading post—and there was another girl who had moved in. Her father or her stepfather was working on the highway.

RM: That would be Highway 160, over Mountain Springs?

DB: Yes, when they were paving it. There was not much for us teenagers to do, but on Friday nights we would all get together and ride over to Shoshone. Shoshone was a bigger place than Pahrump was so there were more people and more teenagers. And on Friday

nights, they would show a movie on the end of the store that they have in Shoshone. On the north end, they would set up chairs and show a movie. We'd go over there and watch the movie and visit with the other teenagers, and sometimes they would have dances over there and we'd get together and go. Not necessarily were we ever really boyfriend and girlfriend here in Pahrump, but we'd go over and mingle with the other teenagers.

After growing up and seeing how the world has digressed, in my feeling, morally and in so many ways, one of the things that sticks out in my memory is the respect and the friendship of those boys at that time. The worst one, the "bad boy," the Brad Pitt-type bad boy, would have been Richard Burkett. Our parents said you had to be careful with Richard because he was thought to have smoked marijuana. You know [laughs], that type. I'm sure that those boys drank once in a while, but never, ever . . . when I was with them, I never *ever* saw them take a drink or do anything like that. They were so thoughtful and respectful of us girls. We just hung together and went to whatever function was going on, if it was a dance or whatever. I feel so fortunate that I had that time because it's so different for the children now.

RM: Talk in more detail about your childhood, and what it was like to be a kid in Pahrump, all the way from the Dollar Ranch to down here at the Pahrump Ranch, and even living up in the mine.

DB: Up in the mine? Oh, that was really hard because, at that time, it was really sometimes embarrassing to me, because we didn't have the facilities to be as clean as I would like to have been, and going from here to a high school in Las Vegas, and going there and the girls— that was at the time when they wore the cashmere sweaters and the matching skirts and shoes and everything, and the clothes that I had were clothes that my mom made for me.

RM: Oh, my gosh, talk about bad: that's really living in two different worlds!

DB: It is. It was embarrassing at times. At first I didn't think about it, I was so proud of my clothes that my mom made for me. But kids can be cruel and there were some that would kind of make fun of the way I dressed.

RM: What kind of clothes did you have. versus what they would wear?

DB: Well, they were nice. My mom didn't even have patterns. However, she could scrimp and save and get material, and she would create. I'd tell her what kind of thing I wanted, and she would make my clothes for high school. I had a catalog of Sears or J.C. Penneys and I'd say, "Oh, I'd really like. . . . " When boat-neck blouses were in, she figured out how to do that. To this day, I think about that, that she would make those clothes that I wanted, and not even have a pattern, just look at the picture and figure out how to do it. And today I can barely do it with a pattern.

RM: And you would wear those clothes to school and sometimes the kids would make fun of you. What would they say, or do?

DB: Just kind of turn their nose up. But not very many. Most of them were nice. My teachers were especially nice because they knew what I was going through just to try to get to school, getting up at 3:00 in the morning and then waiting at Blue Diamond in the car until 7:00, probably. I don't know what time the bus came from Vegas to pick us up, and it was still a long bus ride to Vegas. There were some children that were dropped off at Gorman High School and Las Vegas High School, and for whatever reason, I went to the new high school, Rancho, the first year it was open. It was a brand new school.

RM: Where is Rancho?

DB: It's out in north Las Vegas. Now, I think it's considered a bad neighborhood, but at the time it was nice. But whenever it came time for P.E., I was so excited because you got to take showers! I could never take a shower at home. [Laughs]

RM: What did you have to—basically take a sponge bath?

DB: Yes, or a bath. And you can imagine hauling water all the way from Pahrump to there . . .

RM: And then heating it on the stove. I've lived like that. I know what you're talking about.

DB: Yes. So it was a true luxury to take a bath and, my goodness, to get to take a shower. I just could not understand the girls at the school. Of course, they all had running hot water and bathed anytime they wanted, and they hated taking the showers. But I made the most of them. I used those showers. [Laughs]

RM: How did you do it? What time would you get home at night?

DB: It depended. My dad worked a 12-hour shift, so he didn't get off till 5:00 or 6:00. And then if you've met my dad, you know that he liked to have a beer or two with the guys at the little country store after he got off so it would be different times. Sometimes, even though I didn't have a driver's license or anything, I would have to drive us over Mountain Springs Pass and home. [Laughs]

RM: Too many beers.

DB: Yes, he would say, "you'd better drive." [Laughs]

RM: So you would get to Pahrump and then you still had to drive up into the mountains.

DB: We still had to drive up the mountain. Sometimes I didn't get home until 9:00 or

10:00 at night, and still had to get up at 3:00 in the morning and go to school.

RM: How did you do it?

DB: I had to do my homework in the car. Mr. Chichester was my general science teacher. It was kind of a lecture class, and it was the first class after lunch, and I don't know how many times, sitting there in that warm classroom, that I dozed off. And do you know that that man never, ever embarrassed me. I know that he had looked right at me, knowing that I was sleeping sometimes during the class. But he was so kind, he never did embarrass me. [Laughs]

And my teachers, most of them knew the struggle that I had just to try to get to school and they were really, really nice to me. The next year wasn't quite so bad, because by that time some other families had moved in with teenagers.

RM: And you had moved from the mine?

DB: Yes, we moved to the Mizpah in a fairly nice house, and it wasn't nearly as bad. And it was fun, going with other teenagers, and all of us being trusted to go all that way to school. But doing that, it wasn't possible to go to any of the school dances or school games or anything like that. The county wasn't going to pay to haul you back in to a game or a dance.

RM: You didn't participate in all the social activities and so on. And you went there two years. Then where did you go your junior year?

DB: My sophomore year, I got married. I was still 15 and I got married. [Laughs] I married a man from Overton; he was about 11 years older than I was, and he had already been in the Navy and was working at Northrop in California. He came out here to help his father. His father was a building contractor from Overton. Waymire was their name. The Waymires still live in Overton. He was just here visiting and helping his dad because he'd broken his foot or leg—I can't remember. I met him on one of our trips to Shoshone. Then he came over and talked to my dad, and I was allowed to go out with him, double date and everything.

RM: The age difference and the fact it would have been illegal but that wasn't the way things were back then.

DB: That's not the way things were then, but he had a really nice car [laughs], and I really never had dated much before that. I was really impressed with him and his car, and he was the type of person who had a really good gift of gab, and my dad liked him, and I wasn't worried. He was getting serious, and I wasn't too worried about this because I just thought, well, there's no way my parents are going to let me get married.

And when he asked me to marry him, I said, "Oh, yeah, yeah." I mean, I was mostly having a good time, experiencing things and doing things that I had never had the opportunity to do before. I was a very impressionable and fickle teenager. I mean, what you'd expect from a 15-year-old as to what was important. I just knew that when he asked my parents, they'd say no. Well, I talked to my mom years later and she was so concerned about what my future might be, and they felt like he was a nice man and had a career and would help me finish

school, and so they said yes! [Laughs]

RM: What did you think?

DB: It scared me to death, but I felt like I was in a spot. I went ahead and I married him and moved away, moved to Los Angeles. and went to school.

RM: Where did you live in Los Angeles?

DB: In Englewood. And school wasn't fun. because of the stigma. It wasn't like it is now. Again, I was banned from any of the extra-curricular activities; this time, because I was married. And I didn't have that many friends in high school; my friends were my husband's age, and anything I did for fun was with people older than me. I did that for my junior year. By the time of my senior year, we had moved from Englewood to Morgan Hill, California.

RM: Where's that?

DB: Do you know Gilroy? Morgan Hill is between San Jose and Gilroy. We bought a prune and walnut orchard, and I went to school and worked in the orchard.

RM: So how far were you from Porterville?

DB: It's probably about 200 or 300 miles. It's over close to the coast, and I didn't have that much family living there.

RM: So you left Pahrump then when you were 15.

DB: I left when I was 15. After my sophomore year.

RM: Did you come back to visit at all?

DB: Oh yes, we came back and forth to Pahrump, and in the meantime while I was gone, they opened up the cotton gin, they got electricity, they got telephones and everything. And my mom was still here. My father and mother were divorced by that time and my father had

remarried.

RM: And he continued in the valley?

DB: Yes, he went to work for Preferred Equities on whatever Calvada opened—it's the one that helped develop and put in the roads.

RM: Yes, he operated heavy equipment and all that. And what did your mom do?

DB: After I was gone, they bought a station wagon that the kids rode to school, and she drove the bus because the senior boy who had been driving wasn't there anymore, so she took over driving the bus. She drove the kids in to high school, worked at the snack bar at Rancho High, and then picked up the kids and brought them home. She did that for two or three years after she was divorced.

RM: Did she continue to live in the valley?

DB: Yes, and she worked at different places.

RM: Did she remain in the valley the rest of her life?

DB: She was in Vegas for a while. She actually dealt poker for a while in Las Vegas at the Nugget out in north Las Vegas. Then she moved back to Pahrump.

RM: We've talked a lot about your dad and a little bit of a male perspective of life during these years. Let's talk about the woman's perspective, what an incredible life she lived.

DB: Oh, my, I can't even imagine how hardy—and the perseverance that my mom had to have to live here and raise eight children, and no doctors. It had to be a constant worry if something happened. And the times that things did happen, you'd have to get all the children clear to Vegas to get medical help. And then my dad drank.

RM: A lot?

DB: Yes, he drank a lot.

RM: How did she do it?

DB: I don't know. But she was always there for us. I can't tell you what a strong person she was, and she basically raised all eight of us. And I am so proud of my brothers and sisters, because my father being the alcoholic and the way that he was, I was afraid that my four brothers wouldn't know how to be fathers; they had no role model for how to be a good dad. But I only have one brother that is kind of a renegade, and the rest of them are all such good dads. And I give my mom credit for all of that, because she's the one that held us together and made sure that we had the upbringing that instilled the values that we have.

RM: What about your sisters?

DB: I had three sisters. There was actually another brother who was born right after me, but he only lived a couple of years.

RM: So actually she delivered. . . .

DB: Nine children.

RM: Well, how does a woman do that? She would have all that work, with all the other kids, and being pregnant, and probably not having an A-1 diet. How does she do it?

DB: I still don't know for sure how she survived some of that, but when we moved here to the Dollar Sign—we moved in June, and in May my youngest sister had been born in California. I was only 10 years old, but I was taking care of my baby sister and my other brothers and sisters while my mom was out in the field working with my dad. Probably the reason she contracted the anthrax is that she was run down, and then doing all the hard work, and, as you say, the diet wasn't good. I mean. just living in Pahrump at that time, you didn't

have access to fresh vegetables unless you grew them. I don't know how she survived.

RM: How did she even deal with the laundry? I mean, she's got babies in diapers and kids that are getting their clothes dirty. Did she scrub on the board?

DB: Well, she counted on me a lot. Yes, we scrubbed on the board. We washed on the scrub board, and my sisters and I would go out, even into the irrigation ditch if the windmill wasn't working, to pump water into our tank so we had water for the house. There was a great big well, and the irrigation ditch came from the well and went right in front of the house and out to the cotton field.

And [laughs] my mom would be out working so I tried to help with the laundry one time, and I thought, "I know how I'm going to do this," and I got my brother, and I stationed him down by the house, and I said, "Now, when those clothes come down, you pull them out and put them in this tub." So I took them up and put them where the water was coming out and dumped them in, and thought surely by the time they got around to there, they'd be clean! [Laughter] I don't know how many clothes got lost, and I wasn't only in trouble with my mom, but my dad was irrigating with siphon hoses. He'd dip them down and put them in to irrigate the rows of cotton. Well, when those little socks and panties came down and clogged up the siphon hoses, he wasn't happy, either. [Laughs]

RM: What a wonderful story.

DB: But then after that I got a little bit older. we had the hand pump, and I'd build the fire outside, and I had water that I heated over the fire, and then I had two tubs, my washtub and my rinse tub. And the sisters that were old enough to help me would help me. But it was basically scrub and wring, and rinse and wring. and then hang out.

RM: How old were you at this time?

DB: I was about 12 then, 12, 13. My mom counted on me a lot. We counted on each other, and we had a different relationship than my other sisters. There were times when they, I think, were a little bit jealous; they felt like maybe Mom loved me more, but they just didn't realize the things that my mom and I had been through together, and that she had to count on me. I mean, she had to always work to help supplement. If she wasn't working out in the fields, she was working wherever. If it was cleaning for somebody, if it was working in the stores or whatever; she was always working. She had to have somebody to help her.

RM: You said that your mother and you had been through things together, that you had with her that the other kids didn't.

DB: Like my dad, when he was drinking, I was old enough to know what was going on, and then after she and my father separated, she would even come and live with me at times. One time after we moved to Morgan Hill, my mother and all my brothers and sisters came and stayed with me because just at that time they didn't have anyplace else to go. And that was interesting. [Laughs]

RM: How did that go over with your husband? [Laughs]

DB: He was good about it. My mom ended up getting a job and her own place and everything. She lived over there for a little while, and then they came back to Pahrump.

RM: Did that marriage end?

DB: Yes, I was married to him for about nine years, and I had three children by him, and then I married my husband that I have now, Darryll Brown.

RM: Is he from Pahrump?

DB: No, I introduced him to Pahrump. We were married in California and at one time we were having a really hard time. We had moved from California to Rifle, Colorado, and we lived there for quite a few years.

RM: Working in the oil there?

DB: We didn't actually work at the oil shale, but everything was related to the oil shale. I was an interior decorator for Valley Paint and Decorating out of Glenwood Springs, and my husband was a batch manager for the concrete company. It was a boom time, because they were working on the oil shale really heavily.

RM: What year was this?

DB: That was from '79 to probably about '82. Then in '81 or '82, Exxon shut down the oil, just overnight. I mean, all of these people had moved in, and the banks had loaned so much money on homes and everything, and people just had to walk away from their homes, their jobs. They went to work Monday morning and it was locked up. So it was a very sad time. It was an exodus. You would see people just leaving with a little trailer.

RM: Wow, almost like the days people moved from Oklahoma and Texas.

DB: It was a lot like that. It eventually affected my husband and our work, so we ended up having to leave. There wasn't work for us there, so we went to Idaho for a while, Pocatello, Idaho. He got on with the county and I worked for J.C. Penneys as a decorator.

And I don't know, we just didn't connect. We were there for two or three years, and all of a sudden I just decided that I wanted to be, needed to be, in Pahrump and see my mom and my dad; they were getting older. I just asked my husband, "What do you think about going to Pahrump?" And we did the most irresponsible thing. We just packed up and came to

Pahrump, and we both found jobs right away. We were lucky.

RM: What did you get jobs?

DB: He went to work for the Bullfrog Gold Mine over at Beatty at first and I worked at the school as a janitor.

RM: At the Pahrump School?

DB: Yes. Then when the Bullfrog Mine shut down, Darryll went to work for Wulfenstein Construction and I got a job as an escrow officer with Markem Escrow that had just opened up, and I have worked for him for about 20 years.

Right now because of the economy and the way things have shut down, I'm semi-retired and I'm only working one or two days a week. My husband got on with the county road department, and he retired from that.

RM: What was it like to come back to Pahrump, from the time you had left to what it has become? Describe the difference.

DB: It was a big difference. There were a lot of people; I think they thought maybe there were 10,000, 15,000 people here in Pahrump at that time. This was around 1988, and the cotton gin had already shut down and there was no more farming, just small farming, Tim Hafen was still doing some alfalfa, but there was no cotton farming at all. And they had several grade schools and a high school, and telephones.

RM: Because when you left, there were no telephones.

DB: When I left there were no telephones, there was no electricity, no power. The only thing we had was that Highway 160 was paved over Mountain Springs to Las Vegas. That was the extent of the new things.

RM: Well, talk some more—your recollections of growing up here are extremely rich. You know what you're reminding me of? The Dolly Parton song, "Coat of Many Colors." Her mother made a coat of patches, and she was very proud of it, and then she got to school and the other kids were making fun of her.

DB: Oh, yes. I'd forgotten all about it.

RM: I think it's one of the best Country songs and I think it was true, because it comes from her experience. But your situation, it's your mother making your clothes, and they don't quite meet the other kids' standards. Which is extremely touching.

DB: Oh, yes, because that was the era of all the petticoats, and the circle skirts with the poodles on them, and matching sweaters and straight skirts and then the same color shoes and everything. And I was envious. I would have liked to have had it. Starting out, I was so excited about the couple of outfits that my mom had made, and then to go in and these girls have all of these clothes and matching shoes.

When I was in the eighth grade, I was the valley babysitter. If anybody needed a babysitter, I was the only one. So I babysat for a lot of these people that are here now, like Phyllis Pike, she was Anderson, and I used to baby-sit for her when her parents had to go do something.

There were a lot of things that we did get to experience. We had 4-H; different families in the valley would make sure that we had our 4-H projects, and we got to go to 4-H camp up in Lee's Canyon.

RM: Was it a 4-H from here, or was it Clark County?

DB: It was Nye County, but it was mostly handled out of Clark County, I'm sure.

RM: And what did you do?

DB: Cooking, and I think one time I had rabbits.

RM: Did you cook for the family?

DB: Yes, I could cook.

RM: At what age did you start being a cook for the family?

DB: When I was 10 and my mother had to go out and work, I had to feed my brothers and sisters. It wasn't anything real exciting, but I knew how to cook a pot of beans, and I learned basic things like making biscuits.

Another thing—there wasn't a lot to do. My brother and I, when I was 12 or 13 (he's four years younger than I am) each had a 4-10 shotgun, and we had a .22, and we had a deer rifle. I had a .32 and I think he had a .25/35. These are small deer rifles—they're not even legal for hunting deer now. But hunting was a big part of our life because it made the difference a lot of times in whether we had meat or just had beans and that kind of thing in our diet.

RM: What would you hunt?

DB: We hunted rabbits.

RM: Did you worry about tularemia or anything like that?

DB: Yes, we did. We had to cook it really good.

RM: Like getting rabbit in certain months was okay?

DB: Yes, my dad told us when we could. and he checked them out. I know that it was a concern, and there were a lot of times we weren't allowed to hunt them.

RM: What other game did you get?

DB: We hunted dove, quail, pheasant, ducks—on the Pahrump Ranch there were all those ponds, and we'd go down there and hunt ducks. My dad would let us hunt. He would send us out, give us 10 shotgun shells apiece, and he'd say, "Get your limit," and we did. We would get our limit, and sometimes when we'd come home, we'd have our limit and have shells left if we could catch two birds sitting in a tree. So for my brother and me, hunting has always been a part of our lives. If we didn't have anything else to do, we'd go out and shoot rabbits or whatever.

RM: Did you ever take down a buck?

DB: I didn't. I always went, but I never was fortunate enough to kill a deer. My dad did. He liked to hunt, and he always did; even after we were older, we'd go on hunting trips together; he'd come to Colorado and hunt. But it wasn't a passion with him like it was with my brother and me, because we'd grown up with it and we liked it. With him, it was a survival thing, a necessity.

RM: Did you ever fish?

DB: There was no place to fish here in Pahrump. [Laughs]

RM: How much did you supplement with hunting? Was it a significant thing in the family budget?

DB: It was significant. Yes. My father, I know, went up and poached, killed deer out of season to feed us. And it made a big difference in whether we had meat or not because there were times when we just had beans, maybe.

RM: And you, as a 13-year-old, were dressing these fowl out and everything, weren't you?

DB: Oh, yes. And then helping cook them and everything.

RM: What other kinds of things were you doing at 13 to help your mother?

DB: I was always taking care of the children and washing clothes.

RM: Did you do diapers and things?

DB: Oh, gosh, yes. One of the things that I remember about being at the brothel place—as I told you, if I wanted to visit with somebody who was closer to my age and not a sibling, I had to walk three miles to her house and three miles home. The lady who was living with the man that owned Jim's Bar was named Jean. And she subscribed to the Zane Grey books, the Westerns. She's the one who got me started reading novels. And whenever she'd get a new shipment of books, she would let me read them.

I didn't have too much solitude. I was the trainer. From the crib, the kids went to my bed and slept with me, and then they went to their own bed. I always had somebody else with me so I didn't really have a place of solitude. There was this great big mesquite tree out behind our house, and I climbed up in that tree and I would sit there and read Zane Grey mysteries. I think I read everything that Zane Grey wrote. And I loved them. It was a fantasy that I could live for a time.

RM: Did you grow up to be a reader?

DB: Oh, yes. I love to read. You can ask my husband. [Laughs]

RM: What do you read now?

DB: I read all kinds of different things. Right now, mysteries, but I like history and nonfiction.

RM: There must have been cramped sleeping quarters with all these children and small houses. Were there several beds in one room? Let's talk about that. People can't relate to that

now.

DB: When we lived in that little cabin behind the store, it was only two rooms. There was the cooking area, and I had a little couch thing that I slept on. There was a table and a sink and stove. And then, the rest of the family, my mother and father and all seven of the kids, slept in the other room on pallets or beds or whatever they had. And when we lived up at the cabin, it was pretty much the same thing, because the cabin was two rooms.

RM: And then the addition?

DB: Well, it was a separate little cabin, and that was mine and one of my sisters slept with me, or maybe even two. A double bed fit in there.

RM: But all the others in the family were in the other two rooms?

DB: Yes. I think there was a sofa-type bed that made out, in the front room, and somebody slept there but everybody else and my mom and dad slept in the other room.

RM: How did that affect family closeness and family bonding, being in close proximity to each other?

DB: Of course, there were times . . . as I say, I was so happy to go sit out in a tree, away from everybody, just to have some space for myself. We had to depend on each other, we needed each other. I had to take care of them; they depended on me.

One of the things I remember up at that mine, one of the things that I will always remember, was that Mom and Dad were gone someplace, and it got to nighttime and it was just me and my brothers and sisters, and we had no electricity, it was kerosene lamps and a wood stove.

RM: Not gas.

DB: No, not even a Coleman. And a big thunderstorm came through, and the lightning was so intense, and the thunder, and the kids were scared to death, and they were crying, and there was a fire that started right out there where you could see it; it had hit a tree and it was burning. I was real scared.

RM: Talk some more about how you experienced your world, growing up in Pahrump, or your life, or your mother's life.

DB: It was difficult. The picking cotton, and we always had to work. There weren't hired hands anyplace in the valley. The farmers who were here had to make use of family in order to get things done.

RM: So it wasn't hired Mexican labor, or anything like that.

DB: Later on, I remember that there were Mexicans who came in and worked for my father, but what I remember more, when I was chopping cotton, was that there my brothers and sisters that were old enough would all be out chopping cotton.

The Indians that lived here at that time still rode horses or had a cart, a wagon, pulled by horses. Some of them lived up on the mountain and they'd go up and down that mountain with their horses and their wagon. I remember going to school with them and working with the older ones in the field. The Indian kids were like us; sometimes they weren't allowed to just go to school all the time. Now if somebody doesn't go to school, they'd have the truant officer after them. But that wasn't the case then.

RM: Talk more about your mother.

DB: It was a very, very hard life for her. It was hard to have eight children and want things for your children that other children had and not be able to even feed us right a lot of times. We were hardly ever hungry; my mom made sure that we had something. It might just be corn bread and milk, or it might be beans—there were always beans—and when we were

fortunate, to have meat if we had a cow that we butchered. That was very rare, but sometimes we'd have the venison, or rabbit.

RM: Did you kids always have a lot of milk to drink?

DB: Most of the time we had a milk cow.

RM: Who milked the cow?

DB: We did, my brothers and sisters and I. After they got big enough, that was my brothers' role.

RM: Was that one of your jobs since you were the oldest?

DB: Yes. I think I didn't start really milking until I was 12, 13, something like that. My dad did most of the milking at the Dollar Sign, or my grandfather.

RM: But most of the time, you had a cow so the kids always had milk.

DB: We always had milk. I don't remember a time that we didn't have milk. But today I don't drink milk. The cows would get out into the green alfalfa or into the wild onions or something, and the milk smelled bad, and it was raw milk. And when we did have a refrigerator propane. . . .

RM: A Servel gas?

DB: Yes, and it usually didn't keep things really cold. So I don't drink milk today. [Laughs] But we always had it, for cooking and for the kids to drink. My brothers and sisters grew up not caring if it was warm, if we had just milked it right out of the cow, it was okay.

RM: Did you ever have pigs for butchering?

DB: Once in a while. Not very often. The main thing was the cow so that we had milk.

RM: Did you have ever have turkeys?

DB: We had chickens, a lot of times, to lay eggs, and then when times were good and my dad could get a bunch of chickens, we'd butcher them.

RM: It must have taken an enormous amount of food to feed eight kids, like feeding a small army. [Laughs]

DB: [Laughs] Right. And at the time, there was only the little trading post. There was no such thing as us going into Vegas and getting food.

RM: Tell me about what food you ate, and what food you made do with.

DB: Sometimes when we had the money, my mother would go to the store and get hamburger. I can remember her getting hamburger at the trading post. But that was kind of a treat. Most of the time, it was the wild meat, or if we were able to have ducks, or dove.

RM: So you didn't have meat that much. How were you getting your protein?

DB: Mostly beans, pinto beans. And we had potatoes, corn. And my dad was always big on planting gardens. So we would have summer squash when it was in season and tomatoes, big patches of tomatoes, and sometimes I'd help my mom can the tomatoes if there were any left over.

And when we'd butcher the chickens, she'd can them because we couldn't ever depend on having a refrigerator. We didn't have any electricity, so there was no such thing as having a freezer to keep things in. If you couldn't can it, you just didn't have it. We also had biscuits and gravy. . . .

RM: What kind of fat did you use for your cooking, or did you?

DB: My mom had lard a lot for her baking and everything. I don't remember us ever having Crisco or anything like that but we had lard.

RM: Did you ever have butter?

DB: Oh, yes. I churned butter, made butter. But that, sometimes, wasn't really good, too. If you don't wash it really well after you churn it, and if you don't wash all the old cream and milk out of it, and work it really well, then it turns rancid really fast and it's just a horrible smell and taste. If you cook or put it on something, you'd smell that.

RM: Did you bake bread a lot?

DB: We didn't. My mom did sourdough. We'd have sourdough pancakes and sourdough biscuits, but as far as making loaves of bread, she didn't do that much.

RM: Did you guys get treats, like down at the store?

DB: Once in a while we did, but not anything like kids have now. I mean, candy was a treat. A soda pop once in a while was a treat. Even cookies or anything like that . . . that reminds me of a story I'd like to tell you about Tim Hafen and his wife.

I was probably about 12 or 13, and I had gone with my dad over to where Tim Hafen was. He was very young and he hadn't been in the valley very long, he and his wife. I think they had two children, Greg and Vicky. They were living in a single-wide mobile home, and Dad and he were talking business and my brother and I were standing out there, and his wife was making chocolate chip cookies. And they smelled so heavenly. Oh, my gosh. I can't even tell you how good that smelled. And this lady came out and gave us a couple of fresh, hot, chocolate chip cookies.

And to this day, there is nothing that will ever compare to that taste that I had of those cookies. I think it was the first chocolate chip cookie I'd ever had, and it was *so good.* I'll never forget that lady. Things like that, that kids take for granted now . . . I would like to see

her and tell her how much that meant. Because these little rag-tag, dirty kids are there, and she made sure that she came out and gave us some cookies. It's just one of those memories that's vivid. I can still smell those cookies. [Laughs]

RM: Did your mother or you ever make pastries?

DB: Oh, we did—when it was good times, when there was enough. But there were a lot of times . . . I don't like to talk about it too much because he was my father, but sometimes, when he'd get his paycheck, he paid his bar bill first, and what was left was for groceries and clothes and whatever.

But my mom was a great cook. One of the things that I remember was orange chiffon cake, from scratch, that took, like, a dozen eggs to make, and was so good. It's a memory all of my brothers and sisters have, of when she would make that.

RM: Did she do that often?

DB: No, not often because it takes a dozen eggs to make a chiffon cake. But, yes, she did a lot of baking and cooking when times were good.

RM: Did you always have sugar in the house?

DB: There were times when we didn't have it, but most of the time it seemed like we did have sugar. It might be brown sugar, and sometimes honey for sweetening If we didn't have sugar, she kept cans of sweetened condensed milk, and that was a treat. She would take sweetened condensed milk, and I don't know how she did it—she left it in the can and boiled it and it would turn like a caramel and candy, and then she would let us eat it with a spoon as a treat.

RM: Did she make Eagle Brand pies out of that?

DB: I'm sure she probably did. [Laughs] Lemon meringue pies and things with the sweetened condensed milk.

RM: Did she make her own clothes?

DB: Most of the time, yes.

RM: Yes. For the boys, too?

DB: Yes, sure. Not jeans; she would buy jeans, and we did hand-me downs and were real happy when other people gave us clothes.

RM: Did the kids always have plenty of shoes?

DB: No. I can remember all of my brothers running around barefoot. When we went to school, we had shoes. And when I was in the little red schoolhouse, I remember one time going to school, and I had on a dress, but I had a pair of high-top sneakers, those black, high-top sneakers that the girls think are so cute now and I absolutely hated! [Laughs] I have a picture of the schoolhouse right after we moved to the new one.

RM: What's the date of that school picture?

DB: I think it's 1954. I was in the fifth grade, and at this time there are quite a few children here, I don't even know all of them. But six months prior to that, there were maybe 10 children in the little red schoolhouse, and this is the building that we moved to.

RM: And this is when the student body expanded because of the work on the road.

DB: For a short period because all of those families had moved in to work on the road.

RM: You're the girl with the white on your dress, on the third row on the left.

DB: Yes. And my brother is in this first row.

RM: Second from the left in the first row. What's his name?

DB: Larry. This must be when I was in the sixth grade.

RM: Harry Ford would be too old.

DB: I never did go to school with Harry Ford; he was older.

RM: There's a girl that looks older here, in back. Is that a teacher or a student?

DB: It's one of the students, I believe her name is Okeema Spencer. Her mother was the postmaster at the time. And that's her brother right behind her, with blonde hair; Benny Spencer. And then here is my cousin, right here in the first row.

RM: Yes, the white T-shirt.

DB: Yes, he's got his hands to his eyes like he's got binoculars. And then my sister, next to the end, on that same front row.

RM: Next to the blond boy on the right end.

DB: Right. So she would have been in the first grade, and Doug would have been in the first grade, and my brother would have been in the second grade. Then a lot of these older children, especially, moved away. They weren't here very long. Except for this period of time, I was always the oldest one in the school.

And when I graduated from the eighth grade—I haven't told you about the eighth grade. When I was in the eighth grade, we had two teachers then, a man and a woman, and they were husband and wife. She taught the lower grades; he taught the upper grades. When it came time for graduation, you wouldn't think anybody would make a big deal about a graduation with one student, but that was another time the whole valley—everybody that lived here—came to my graduation. They had a potluck dinner, and my teacher sent somebody to Las Vegas, and I had two dozen long-stemmed roses that he bought for me.

RM: Oh! Roses were expensive in those days! [Laughs]

DB: They were very expensive. But everybody in the valley came, and they brought gifts, and gave me money, and it was so nice. Some things about the community life at that time were wonderful.

RM: How many would you say were living in the valley then?

DB: There may have been 200 at that time.

RM: And they did that for an eighth-grade graduation for one kid.

DB: Yes, they did! But as I say, I had babysat for all of them. That was one of the most special days in my life. Everybody just treated it like you'd graduated from college or something [Laughs]. And the nice gifts that I got. . . .

RM: And were social relations kind of just like that? People treating each other nicely?

DB: Yes. If somebody was sick in the hospital, I remember times when my mom would go and help take care of the family. And at the same time my grandfather died, my youngest brother was born. My mom and dad had to be gone to California because they knew he was really sick and for my mom to have the baby. So Dutch and Bill Turner came and stayed with us, with their boys—there were seven of us kids, and I think they had three boys at the time. And they all came and stayed with us and cooked for us.

RM: And they weren't relatives.

DB: Well, they were like relatives, we ended up calling them Aunt Dutch and Uncle Bill. But those people were so nice. My father would never give us a bath or change a diaper. He didn't do things like that. So when Bill and Dutch came and took care of us, Bill was right there always helping her cook, or giving the kids baths. At that time, we were living on the

Pahrump Ranch, and we did have a house that had running water and electricity, in that we had a light plant, generators, and at nighttime he was in there helping bathe kids or change diapers, or whatever. And I was just dumbfounded. I thought, "Oh, my goodness," and I just about fell in love with him. He was my ideal dad. I treasured them. They died just a few years ago.

RM: Yes. I interviewed them years ago.

DB: Did you? Yes. They were wonderful. They just moved in and took care of us until my mom and dad got back home. But that's the way that it was.

My grandfather passed away, I believe, just a day or two either before or after my brother was born, I can't remember for sure. They were gone until Mom had the baby and was able to travel back home so Dutch and Bill stayed with us for a couple of weeks and took care of us.

RM: How do you get to Porterville from here?

DB: We go out through Shoshone, to Baker, and then go to Barstow. You go over Tehachapi to Bakersfield, and then Porterville is just 50 miles up 99 from Bakersfield.

RM: Talk about what the Pahrump Ranch was like when you lived there.

DB: There was a huge barn, and a lot of livestock. I would go out with my grandfather, he worked on the ranch, too, and we'd go out on horses to move the livestock around from one field to another. The shop said "Pahrump Store" on it, I believe, and when my grandfather lived on the Pahrump Ranch, it really was a store. When he was on the Pahrump Ranch, it was a store.

RM: And it operated as a store when he was there? Who ran it, do you know?

DB: My grandmother and my grandfather and my dad.

RM: Oh, really. So that was another business enterprise.

DB: Yes, it was part of the Pahrump Ranch and of what they did. There was a large house where I'm pretty sure the owners lived. C.B. Dickey or his son, Billy Dickey, I believe his name was, and his family lived there. Then there were three or four other houses, and there was a bunkhouse where the ranch hands lived, and my aunt was a cook at the ranch, my mom's sister.

RM: What was her name?

DB: Nadine Garlin, and Doug Garlin is her son, the one that's in the picture. There were the corrals and the barn, and there was a great big pecan tree. People think that pecan trees don't grow here, but there was a huge pecan tree on the ranch.

RM: Did it produce?

DB: Oh, yes. And they had Brahma bulls at that time. It was so hot in the summertime. We didn't have air conditioning of any kind so a lot of the times we slept outside. On the Pahrump Ranch, we had a screened-in porch, and we'd sleep there most of the time. But one time, I remember my sister and I took our little mat and were sleeping outside under a tree, and it wasn't a very big tree. During the night, we woke up, and I hear this noise, and look up, and one of the Brahma bulls is standing over us, eating leaves off of the tree. Scared us to death! [Laughs] We were really, really scared. We didn't sleep outside much after that. [Laughs]

But when we lived down on the Mizpah, the boys slept outside a lot. There was a semi-trailer outside, under the trees, and they put the mattresses out there and slept out there

at night. And there were a lot of times that my oldest brother, going out there, would have to take a flashlight, and it was nothing for him to come back in and get the shotgun and shoot a rattlesnake between the house and where they slept. That's one of the reasons why I say I can't imagine being my mother and always being worried—there were a lot of rattlesnakes at that time.

RM: On the ranch?

DB: Oh, yes, all over the place! You'd drive to town and it would be nothing to see three or four of them lying up on the pavement because, as it cooled off at night, they'd want to get up there where it was warm. Yes, there were a lot of rattlesnakes around here at that time.

RM: And you kids didn't worry about it that much?

DB: Nobody ever got bitten. We grew up with it, knowing that you've got to watch out. On the Mizpah, my youngest brother would go with me out to the garden. We had a huge garden, and we'd go out and pick the tomato worms, those green horned tomato worms, off the tomatoes because they'd destroy the tomatoes. We didn't have spray or powder or anything like that so it was our job to pick them off. We'd be picking them off, and I think he was about two-and-a-half or three, and he'd say, "DeAnna! Look at this one! Big one!" and I'd come and get it. And he was saying that to me, and, "DeAnna, come here," only he's bending over underneath this tomato bush, and "DeAnna, come look at this one!" I go over, and a sidewinder is over there, and he's poking his finger at it.

RM: Oh, my goodness.

DB: Yes. And scared me to death. But that was just part of the life.

RM: How did you deal with the heat in those years?

DB: Oh. my gosh. I can remember times when it was so hot—I mean, you know how hot it gets here. I think about it sometimes when I can't stand to not have my air-conditioning on. And we had to work. Chopping cotton was chopping out in that sun, and you're in the heat.

RM: How did you do it?

DB: I can remember times when my head would hurt so bad, and it would be so hot working out there that you just feel sick. I don't know how we survived that, but we did. But it was very uncomfortable.

RM: How did your mother deal with it? She wouldn't have had even a swamp cooler or anything.

DB: No, no swamp cooler. We never had any kind of a cooler and usually didn't even have the electricity to run a fan.

RM: Yes. So how did she deal with it?

DB: The same way that we did. You get acclimated to a point, but you never get to the point where it's not uncomfortable.

RM: Did you have trouble sleeping at night?

DB: Yes. That's why, most of the time, we would sleep outside, because at least if there's a little bit of breeze it makes it more bearable. But in the house, it doesn't cool off sometimes all night.

RM: What about cooking, too? Did you cook on a stove in the summer or did you cook in the morning, not in the afternoon?

DB: No, we cooked whenever we needed to.

RM: It must have really been hot then.

DB: Yes, it was. I don't remember my mother ever complaining about it but I know that she had to be horribly uncomfortable.

RM: Did you keep covered up in the sun? You don't appear to have any skin damage and you're pretty fair-complected.

DB: We'd wear hats, a lot of the time.

RM: Did you wear long sleeves?

DB: No, not as much—we were really tanned.

RM: But your skin doesn't show any sun damage.

DB: I don't know why.

RM: Probably just genetic, luck of the draw.

DB: I don't know why. I've often wondered.

RM: Yes. In fact, your skin shows very little aging. Was your mother like that?

DB: Yes.

RM: And your dad?

DB: He did because he drank.

RM: You probably inherited your mother's complexion. Do you look like her?

DB: Yes, I do.

RM: When you were on the Pahrump Ranch, did you ever play in the springs?

DB: Oh, gosh, yes! There was a big one that I don't think anybody around now even remembers except maybe Harry Ford.

RM: Where was it?

DB: Do you know where the Rebel station is? On the corner of the intersection of 372 and

160. The Rebel station and the Walgreen's? Probably not too far behind where the Rebel station is. there was a huge spring. It dropped down about eight feet at ground level; I don't know if somebody had dug it out or what. We had little walkways down to it, and then the water level was down there, and the spring, it was an area like this room.

RM: About 15 feet across?

DB: Yes. at least. At the time I was really young, and it seemed bigger than it probably was. But we used to go over there and swim. It was an artesian spring. And at the point where it originated. the source, it was so deep nobody even knew how deep it was, and then it gradually got shallow. That water went down and meandered to the sloughs and the ponds.

RM: Was that the big Pahrump spring or was that another one?

DB: I don't know what the "big Pahrump spring" was.

RM: Was it on the Pahrump Ranch?

DB: Yes, it was on the Pahrump Ranch. That was probably it, because it was a huge spring. It always had a ditch running full of water, and cattails and everything. It was a good swimming hole. I mean, an adult could swim in there.

RM: And you weren't afraid because it was kind of bottomless?

DB: You know how kids don't have enough sense to be afraid. [Laughs] The first times that I went in there, I didn't even really know how to swim.

RM: How many kids were you playing with at a time like that?

DB: There would be my brother that's next to me, and maybe my cousin, and the two Turner boys, Tom and Walter, that we'd go up and play with. There weren't too many kids around at that time but we'd go up, once in a while, and go swimming.

RM: Did you have horses and ride much?

DB: There were horses on the ranch. I never had my own horse or anything, but as I said, I helped my grandfather move the cattle from one place to another. Yes, I've ridden off and on most of my life.

RM: Did you ever get up on the Manse Ranch?

DB: Oh, yes.

RM: Tell me about that, because we're doing a history of the very early days, when the Younts were there back in the 1800s, John Yount and Margaret Yount.

DB: My grandfather actually met Johnny Yount, when he lived in California.

RM: Now, that's the original John Yount, an old man with a big beard?

DB: Old man, yes. I'm trying to think of the name of the place, up in the mountains.

RM: It's out of Redlands, or somewhere down in there.

DB: And my grandfather met him there.

RM: Was it John Yount or Joseph Yount? Joseph and Margaret were the original people so John Yount would be his son.

DB: Oh, okay.

RM: Down at the Hidden Hills Ranch, did you know Roland Wiley at all, or, do you know where the Hidden Hills Ranch is?

DB: Yes.

RM: Yes. That was John Yount's ranch originally, in the '30s. I wonder if that's who he met.

DB: I'm sure my grandfather knew him, because I can remember my grandfather talking about Johnny Yount.

RM: Do you remember what he said?

DB: Just dealings that they had and things that they did together. I'm trying to think of the name of the place where John Yount also lived, up in the mountains in California, where we did, at one time and where my grandfather did—up above Madeira? But anyway, I remember hearing my grandfather talk about him.

RM: You mentioned that your dad was on the Bowmans' ranch?

DB: Yes, my dad came to the Manse Ranch.

RM: And got 200 acres from Elmer Bowman.

DB: I don't remember the exact amount.

RM: I think your dad told me it was 200.

DB: He leased it or rented it from him, or whatever he did and we lived there. Elmer Bowman was still alive. That was in '47, '48.

RM: So Elmer Bowman would have only been here a couple of years, because he came in in '46.

DB: OK. They lived up in the big house; we lived in little tents, so I wasn't really that familiar with them.

RM: So you were living in tents, down on the cotton acreage.

DB: Well, their house, where the main house is, wasn't that far away. There were trees there, and we had a wooden floor, I believe. My dad had constructed wooden floors; there were two of them. One was for sleeping, one was for cooking.

RM: How far from the main house were you, your tents?

DB: We were in the trees south of their house. Their house is here, and we were just . . .

RM: Oh, would that be across that road that's there now, that goes right by where the

Manse Ranch headquarters was?

DB: No, it was closer than that. There was I think another artesian spring, or ditch, that ran through there, right close, and probably their house, if you were to look at—see that house that's over there? It wasn't too much farther than that.

RM: OK, maybe 200 yards.

DB: Yes, two or three hundred yards from their main house. But there were a lot of trees in between, a lot more trees than there are now, even.

RM: And where were you getting your water? Was it by the slough that was coming out of the springs?

DB: I don't remember. I know that we probably had to carry it, but it was probably from the artesian well.

RM: And how long did you live there?

DB: Just that one season.

RM: And you didn't go to school.

DB: No, we didn't go to school there. When we went back to Porterville, how old would I have been? I must not even have started school yet, because when I went, I started the first grade in Porterville, and I went to the first, second, third, and fourth grades there.

RM: When is the picking season?

DB: The picking season is September, October.

RM: So you probably started late in Porterville.

DB: Probably did. But that may not be the case either, because there were times when my dad would go to Pahrump and if we were in school, he would go over and start whatever he

was doing and get it set up, then he'd come back and get us whenever school was out, or whenever things were right, and then we would all be there. I remember times that my dad would be gone and he was in Pahrump, and we were going to follow later.

RM: Do you have any feelings about living in the tents there, or of him trying to grow the cotton?

DB: We didn't even realize the struggles that he was going through. We were just playing in the spring, in the water. It was kind of an adventure, because instead of living in a house with electricity and having a radio—there was no television at that time—but we were camping out! A real long camping trip. It was kind of an adventure. I know I didn't think of it as anything else but an adventure.

RM: Speaking of radios, in your early days here, did you have radio, at all?

DB: Not here in Pahrump, except if we lived where there was a generator.

RM: You didn't have battery radio.

DB: No battery radios. And I loved the music.

RM: As a teenager, were you starting to get into the music?

DB: Oh, yes. "Sixteen Tons" [laughs] and Dean Martin.

RM: Do you remember a radio program called *Lucky Lager Dance Time*?

DB: There are so many programs that I can remember from when I lived in California. I don't remember that one for sure but I remember the Inner Sanctum, and the Squeaking Door, and Stella Dallas—the soap-opera types, I used to listen to soap operas. Cisco Kid, and all of those good old shows that I used to sit and just listen to. [Laughs] . . .

RM: It was better than today's TV because it's all in your mind.

DB: [Laughs] Yes, because you've created them. I mean, you hear the voices and you create the people.

RM: Yes, I would rather have the old dramas than TV, now, for the most part.

DB: I would, too. I'm not that much of a TV person. It's not wholesome for anybody. All of those were good shows.

RM: Am I leaving out anything? Your memories are so rich. Maybe I'll call you in a day or two and see if you have had any more recollections, because they are so rich and human.

DB: [Laughs] Oh, thank you.

RM: And a lot of it is just like a novel. Talk about the radio in your mind, I'm seeing all of this in my mind.

DB: At nighttime, this mountain . . . it's called Shadow Mountain now. I don't know if that was its name then. But there were no lights. This was, like, 1951. We would go outside at night if it was a warm night, and sometimes my dad and my grandfather would call us out to look at what he called the "mineral lights." It was light that would go up and down and back and forth on this mountain, moving like this, just like somebody was walking up there with a flashlight or something. My dad and grandfather said it had got to be something from the minerals at night causing this light. So I just took it for granted that that was mineral lights, and all my life I remembered about the mineral lights. We saw it more than one time; it wasn't just once. Sometimes it would be over here, but mostly it was over here.

RM: Let's explain where we are. We're down at the north end of the Pahrump Valley, and, this mountain. . . .

DB: It's called the Shadow Mountain. And the Dollar Sign Ranch where we lived would

have been up close to Highway 160.

RM: OK, at the north end of the valley.

DB: Yes, probably down someplace near where Simkins Road comes out, in that area; I can't pick it out exactly.

RM: Do you see those lights anymore?

DB: I don't see them anymore. I have looked. If they were caused by minerals, they'd still be there! [Laughs] I don't understand it.

RM: In the middle of the night when it was dark—and there were lights up there.

DB: And there's no road up there.

RM: Could that have been people up there?

DB: I don't know. I mean, it would go across the whole mountain and down and back. I mean, it moved. [Laughs] And sometimes it would just hover in one spot.

RM: Well, what do you make of it?

DB: I don't know what to make of it. I mentioned one time to a schoolteacher, after I was taking some college classes or something, and he said, "What are you talking about?" And I told him, and he kind of laughed at me. So I started thinking about it and, well, what was that? And after that I started reading different things, like *Chariots of the Gods*, by Däniken, von Däniken, and different things, so I don't know.

RM: You only saw it when he would call you out? But he wasn't playing a trick on you.

DB: Oh, no. Our whole family would go out.

RM: How often do you think this happened?

DB: Oh, I don't know. I remember at least a half a dozen times or more. At the same time,

I had another experience when I was in school. We would be sitting in school and we'd see a big flash of light and then a few minutes later, the windows would rattle and shake. We'd go outside, and look and coming up over the mountain would be a big mushroom cloud. That cloud would drift this way or that way. Most of the time it went that way, thank goodness. But sometimes it would drift this way. Inkish, ugly.

RM: And you remember it coming this way.

DB: Oh yes. We'd watch it. We'd be at school and see the flash, and then the next thing, this big, ugly mushroom. . . .

RM: Button Ford has a picture that he took of that. It was in the paper a couple of weeks ago.

DB: Yes. They figure that his brother-in-law, Donny Ward, died because of the cancer that he had because of that. Three or four years ago, I was at work and got a call from an attorney that Harry had put in touch with me, they were trying to verify that he was here during that time. They didn't have any pictures, didn't have proof that he was here during that time, and they were trying to prove that he had cancer caused by that. I don't know how that ever came out.

RM: Your mineral lights story almost sounds like a ghost story and I'm collecting ghost stories. Is there anybody else around who would have seen those lights or are you the only one left?

DB: I don't know, but it wasn't anything unusual. I heard other people talk about the mineral lights. But mostly my grandfather and my dad would see them and they'd always have us come out and look at it.

RM: Well, your brothers and sisters, would. . . .

DB: Oh, yes, they remember. We've discussed it several times.

RM: It raises an interesting question. Do you have any ghost stories?

DB: No, I don't. I always wanted to see a UFO and I wanted to see or have an experience with a ghost. Do you believe in guardian angels?

RM: Not really, but I've got an open mind! [Laughs]

DB: Well, my granddaughter that you met in there, we've adopted her and her brother. They're mine and Darryll's daughter's children. The parents were into drugs and we tried to keep track of the children. They lived through some bad experiences, I don't know what.

But even before they moved in with us, Brittany started talking to this imaginary friend. She'd be sitting and playing . . . it happened a lot of times, but one time, for instance, when was here, she was playing, and all of a sudden, she just dropped her doll or toys, and ran over, climbed up on the couch and looked out the window, and she said, "Oh, Grandma, come here!" she said, "You've got to go get Dorly!" One of them was Dorly and one was Gaga. And she wasn't even three; she was about two-and-a-half when she first started visiting with these little friends. And Brittany said, "You've got to get her. She's out in the road. She knows she's not supposed to be out in the road! She's gonna get run over!" That type of thing. Sometimes she'd be playing and just intent on what she's doing, and she'd swing her head around, and say, "No, sir!" like someone was talking to her. Darryll and I are just not geared to that kind of thing.

Anyway, finally we got custody of them and moved them in with us and she was still talking to them. After they'd been with us for six months or a year, one time we were all in

the car, Tyler was still in a car seat and Brittany was in the back seat. Something made me think of it, and I said, "Brittany, where's Dorly and Gaga?"

And she said, "Oh, they had to go away." She is only, like, three by then, three-and-a-half at the most.

And I said, "Where'd they go?" And she said, "Well, they had to go take care of little kids that are hurt and dead babies."

RM: Oh, my goodness.

DB: I know. And my husband and I both said, "What in the world?" And she was so matter-of-fact; I mean, she didn't stop and think about it or anything. She was, just, "They had to go away." And a year, two years later, I asked her something about Dorly and Gaga, she didn't know what I was talking about. She had no idea what I was talking about. [Laughs]

RM: Interesting.

DB: Yes. It is interesting. I have no idea what it means. I don't know if it's something she had just manifested, but it kind of made us rethink some of our attitudes.

RM: Thank you so much for talking with me. You said you wanted to make a final statement?

DB: I would like for the people that live here in Pahrump now to know what it was like, when there were only a few people, and how everyone took care of everyone, and the human compassion that they had for each other. We didn't have much, but we made fun together, and took care of each other. And I just feel really fortunate. Even though we were very poor, and sometimes didn't have a lot of the things that other people had, I had so much more than what some of the people that live here now have. And I'm very thankful for that.

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