# An Interview with
# FLORENCE ELLIS

*An Oral History conducted and edited by*
*Robert D. McCracken*

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada

Tonopah
1990

Florence Ellis
c. 1970

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

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

in preparing a text:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
1990

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Nye County residents. In all, more than 1,000 photos have been collected and carefully identified. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories.

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

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

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

--R.D.M.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Florence Ellis at her home in Las Vegas, Nevada, May 14, 1990.

## CHAPTER ONE

RM: Florence, could we start by you telling me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

FE: Luetta Florence Huffman.

RM: And when and where were you born?

FE: I was born in southeastern Oregon on a ranch about 10 miles out of Burns, Oregon. My grandmother delivered me because the doctor didn't get there in time.

RM: And what was your birthdate?

FE: April 10, 1911.

RM: And could you tell me your father's name?

FE: My father was William D. Huffman.

RM: And do you know when and where he was born?

FE: I think my father was born in Green Castle, Missouri.

RM: What was your mother's given name.

FE: My mother's given name was Mary Swartout.

RM: And where was she born?

FE: She was born in Michigan - Marshall, Michigan - and I'm not sure of the date.

RM: How did your parents happen to end up in Oregon?

FE: My mother was a teacher for 20 years in Michigan. She moved to Tacoma, Washington, to teach. My grandmother had crossed the plains in 1849, with a wagon train. They came to California; I think they were up around Sonora, California, Jim Town and in that area. (I had one uncle

born in that area.) Then they moved to Mason Valley, south of Yerington. When my mother was 8 she was sent back east to her father's people in Michigan. Her father died before she was born. She was sent back to her father's people and educated [there]. She graduated from Albian College, Michigan. That school is still operating. When she moved to Tacoma she went to visit my grandmother, who lived on a ranch out of Burns, Oregon, and there she met my father. They were married there.

RM: Did you grow up in Burns?

FE: No, I grew up on a ranch in southeastern Oregon about 110 miles south of Burns in the Steens Mountain area. When my brother was ready for high school, for the rest of my schooling, through my junior year of high school, I went to school in Reno (my mother taught out of Reno at Huffakers). I graduated from high school in Payette, Idaho (I lived with an aunt that year). I went back to the University of Nevada in Reno and graduated from there in the normal course in education.

RM: Are there any high points that stick out in your memory about growing up in Reno?

FE: No. It was just going to school. We would be there all winter, then go back to the ranch in the summer, which I enjoyed very much. I'm glad I had the privilege of growing up on a ranch.

RM: Why do you say that?

FE: It's particularly because we worked. We weren't exposed to all the stuff that young people are today, and we never had time to be bored. When we did get together we really had very good times. It was a completely different world than young people grow up in today.

RM: What were some of the things you did when you got together?

FE: Oh, dancing, mostly.

RM: To live music?

FE: Mostly. There was always somebody who could play - usually there were 3 instruments.

RM: What did you do when you graduated from college?

FE: Those were Depression days, you know, and jobs were hard to find.

RM: Now what year was it you graduated?

FE: It was 1930. At that time, the university had a placement bureau. Because of my background they felt that I would do well in the country, so they sent me to Ione for my first school.

RM: What did you think about going down to Ione before you actually left?

FE: I can tell you, I was glad to have a job. Anybody who had a job was lucky in those days.

RM: Did a lot of your classmates get jobs?

FE: I think most of them did. Of course, in those days, to graduate in elementary education, the requirement was that you had to teach 2 years in the country someplace. They didn't hire the young women in the town schools without a little experience.

RM: Oh, so you got your experience out in the country schools?

FE: Yes. Then I stayed with it. As long as I taught, I taught in the country.

RM: Was that a general requirement around the country, or just in Nevada?

FE: I don't think so. It was in Nevada but I think, partially, it was because jobs were so scarce. Most young people didn't want to go out to those isolated areas. But because I had the background I did, I didn't mind. As I said, I was glad to have a job.

RM: I've talked to a number of people who said that it was mostly young women who taught in the country schools.

FE: Very few men taught elementary, period, in those days the way they do today. They were either college professors or they taught high school.

RM: Did you have classroom experience before you went out?

FE: We had practice teaching. I taught at Southside in Reno and McKinley Park, I think, was the other school. We had 2 semesters, if I remember correctly, of practice teaching.

RM: How did you get down to Ione your first time?

FE: A friend drove me.

RM: Was it difficult to get to?

FE: Oh, of course it was. We went through Eastgate. It was Eastgate, Middlegate and I've forgotten what the other was. There was a road from Eastgate through what they call the Ione Valley where the Ichthyosaur [Park is]. Then you went down into Ione.

RM: Gabbs was not even a thought in those days, was it?

FE: Oh no. Gabbs came in when Basic Magnesium started. We came from Fallon across toward Austin. The only place between Austin and Fallon, in those days, was Frenchmans Station. There you paid 10 cents for a glass of water. The other thing that was kind of interesting was that Gull Gray had gone to school at the same time I did in Reno (he was 2 years ahead of me in my brother's class) but [later] he [became] deputy superintendent [of schools] in the northern part of the state. Occasionally I'd see Gull, and every time I think of Frenchmans Station I think of the time that we both ended up there buying water for 10 cents a glass.

RM: Were the roads all dirt?

FE: I think they were all the way down. I remember the one between here [Las Vegas] and Tonopah was terribly corduroyed. It was very rough.

RM: They had just built it, I think, because that was about . . . they built it on the old railroad grade between here and Tonopah.

FE: Yes. The Tonopah and Tidewater, I think, was still operating at that time.

RM: Yes. And the LV&T [Las Vegas and Tonopah] had been discontinued by then.

FE: I don't remember that one at all.

RM: It had stopped, I think, in 1918 or something like that. So a friend took you down to Ione. And could you describe Ione as it looked when you first got there?

FE: There was a working cinnabar mine [in Ione] at that time, and that was really the only activity there. I had a 2-room teacherage. We had electricity as long as the fellow who owned the store ran his electrical equipment, but I think he only ran it until about 12:00 at night and then you were out of electricity. That was the Cislini family. There were about 10 houses. The schoolhouse was up on the hill not far from where the teacherage was. The store belonged to this Cislini. One family lived under the hill and the husband was working at the mine. I don't know just what interest he had in it - but the mine was the economy of the town at that time. Then there were ranches down Reese River. Now they all [belong to] Indians. But at that time there were probably 8 ranches down in the valley.

RM: Did the ranchers' children go to school in Ione?

FE: There weren't any children. They were all old-timers in there.

However, one time I did board a little girl at the teacherage and she went to school with me for 6 months. I can't remember her first name now, but she was a Worthington.

RM: And they had a ranch over there?

FE: Yes. At the head of Indian Creek. You know, you went from Reese River, then followed down an area to Indian Creek . . . you'd know the place. It was the Seyler place and it was at the mouth of Indian Creek. But they made a living off of cattle.

RM: Could you describe the Cislinis' store at that time?

FE: They supplied everything anybody needed. The real owner was S. Lumpa - he was an old Italian fellow. But somewhere or other I think he was related to Billy Cislini. About once a month, or every 2 weeks, Cislini would take his truck to Fallon and load up. He would supply people with whatever they needed.

RM: And Cislini did that, not Lumpa?

FE: Yes. Lumpa was too old; Cislini was my age. He was the one who hired me - he was the clerk of the school board at that time. There wasn't any bath in the teacherage, so I had to go to Cislinis' to have my bath.

RM: Oh, they had a bathroom there?

FE: [chuckles] Yes. He had running water but an outside toilet.

RM: That was probably the only bathtub in town, wasn't it? [chuckles]

FE: It could have been - I don't know. [chuckles] That was a privilege the teacher had.

RM: What was your pay?

FE: I think I got $150 a month, which was very good money at that time. For nine months, that was one of the better salaries in rural schools.

The reason it was, was because they were so isolated. But I was there for 2 years and I never spent a weekend in Ione.

RM: Is that right - you would clear out?

FE: Someone always invited me down the valley to one of the ranches.

RM: Who ran the school? Was there a local school board in Ione?

FE: They had a school board. Usually there were 3 on the school board - Mr. Phillips and Billy Cislini and a man whose name I can't remember. The Phillips family had been in there during the period when Ione was the county seat.

RM: I see.

FE: They had a movie house in Ione at one time. Mr. Phillips had old newspapers that showed where the movie house was. They had a little newspaper and they had a drugstore. How many people were there at that time, I don't know, but there were quite a few. But, of course, outside of this cinnabar it was absolutely dead [when I was there].

RM: Were the old abandoned buildings still there?

FE: Not too many.

RM: Were there a lot of old foundations that the buildings had sat on?

FE: Not particularly.

RM: It wasn't evident that it was kind of a semi-abandoned town, in other words?

FE: No. Of course, in a place like that, there will always be a bunch of old miners. They had a big old stove in the back of the store and the old miners would sit around and play 15-2 and spit tobacco into the spittoon. [chuckles]

RM: So it was the old potbelly stove type thing?

FE: Yes. That was also what we had in the schoolhouse. At that time

the teachers did their own janitor work and hauled in the wood. We did it all.

RM: Did you chop your own wood?

FE: Oh, no. They chopped it and furnished it for the teacherage, too.

RM: Did you cook your own meals?

FE: Oh sure.

RM: You didn't board with somebody?

FE: No, not there.

RM: Was your place comfortable?

FE: Very comfortable. As long as I was warm I was comfortable.

RM: Could you describe the interior of your teacherage?

FE: It was just 2 rooms. My kitchen was really where I lived and worked. I had a nice big stove to keep me good and warm and then I had a bedroom, and that was it.

RM: Did you bring your own household supplies with you or did they furnish them?

FE: I think they furnished them. I don't remember having any.

RM: And you had lights till midnight, or whatever.

FE: Till midnight I had electric. They were on when I'd be up [in the morning]. I'd get up because I was too cold to stay in bed.

RM: You were cold in the bed?

FE: I was cold about half the time. It was cold up there.

RM: Did you wear long underwear or anything like that?

FE: Oh, no.

RM: Teachers wore dresses, didn't they?

FE: Definitely.

RM: Long dresses?

FE: No. Just skirts and sweaters and things like that.

RM: And the school was near where you lived?

FE: Yes. I would say a half a block.

RM: So you didn't have to wade through a lot of snow or anything.

FE: Well, sometimes we did. And of course, we were up on the hill. My little teacherage was . . . you know where the store is - the old store is still there. I think my old school register is still in that store somewhere. Someone went through and they [told me they'd seen it]. But my little teacherage was up on the hill - I don't know whether it's still there or not. Cislinis were there on the hill and what the heck was the other family - an Italian family. They were good kids. I had 17 youngsters in 8 grades.

RM: Was it a one-room schoolhouse?

FE: Yes.

RM: Tell me how you arranged 17 children in eight grades.

FE: You had to make out lesson plans. The main thing was to allot your time, because there are a lot of subjects. I will say, children in those days would work. That was no problem. They would get their lessons. And you knew how much time you had for each period. The point was, you had so many pages to cover in the year's time and you had to divide the time so that you would cover those pages. There was no way that they couldn't get their lessons because there were about 2 [kids] to a class. They couldn't go home till they had their lesson.

RM: So they couldn't fake it or hide, could they?

FE: No. They couldn't fake it, they had to have it. The deputy superintendent came about twice a year. At that time they gave the examinations to the seventh and eighth grade; the teacher didn't even get

to see the tests beforehand. If the children didn't know [their lessons], you didn't have a job.

RM: I see. You would lose your job if they didn't do well on the test.

FE: If you didn't produce, somebody else would have your job.

RM: Did you give the children homework?

FE: Oh, sure they had homework.

RM: They didn't do it all in class?

FE: No, they had homework. They had to do a lot at home because with that many youngsters we worked all day. There wasn't a lot of foolishness.

RM: I went to a school that had 4 grades in one room - there were 4 rows and each grade was a row. But I've wondered how you do it with 8 grades.

FE: You have to allot the time. There's so much material to cover and you have to figure out a way to get that covered.

RM: Did grades one and two sit in one row, or how did you do that?

FE: Oh no. It was just according to the size of the desks and the size of the children.

RM: I see. So if you were going to work with the third grade, let's say, you would take them over into one corner?

FE: Yes. You usually had your chairs in a circle. It's amazing - the children would concentrate. They were used to that. So they didn't pay any attention to anybody else.

RM: What were some of the subjects that you covered?

FE: Oh goodness. We didn't have as many in those days, but we had English, history, math, spelling, biology and civics, and then we had to teach drawing and music, such as it amounted to. You were trained to teach enough to teach the requirements. And the same with art - there

were certain requirements that you had to fulfill.

We used to have a teacher's guide. They don't have them anymore. The guide [specified] that you were supposed to cover this much. The children were supposed to know this much when they started their eighth grade exam.

RM: Did you have discipline problems?

FE: None. Never. They were good kids, all of them.

RM: What was the ethnic composition of the school?

FE: I can't remember. There were about 3 Indians - all from the same family.

RM: Is that right?

FE: And the others were all white. Most of them were from this family that . . . I had one Italian, Mary [Manzini]. I had just one eighth grader then. The others were from a family that was working at the mine. A little fourth grader from that family was promoted - allowed to skip a grade - when the family moved to Salt Lake. So we did a good job.

RM: Yes, it sounds like it. Do you recall any of the textbooks you used?

FE: Oh, not really. You know that's a long time to remember back.

RM: Yes. It's 57 years ago or so.

FE: I really don't remember it all. We had geography. And we had to teach a certain amount of hygiene. Sometimes I get mixed up now with what I had to do in Oregon in the country schools. But usually it was civics and history and the hygiene that were in the state test. And I think they had English, too.

RM: And there were only 3 Indian children in your classroom?

FE: The district got more money for the Indian children so it was good

to have the Indian children - the district could collect more money from the state.

RM: And you taught there . . .

FE: Two years.

RM: And it was run by Ione?

FE: That's right, but it was always supervised by the deputy superintendent; it was under state supervision.

RM: Yes. But it was under a local school board - it wasn't Nye County or anything like that?

FE: No. Every little school had its school board.

RM: Do you recall what the school district was called?

FE: Ione, I guess.

RM: Were you paid monthly or . . . ?

FE: Monthly.

RM: And how did you get your mail?

FE: At the post office, which was in the store. I think we had mail 3 times a week. The stage came down Reese River from Austin.

RM: Did you have mail boxes?

FE: No. We'd go to the store and get our mail.

RM: Who was the postmaster?

FE: Oh, probably Billy Cislini.

RM: And did he have stamps and everything there?

FE: As far as I remember. I know we depended on him for everything.

RM: Did you get newspapers there?

FE: Oh sure. They would come in the mail.

RM: Did you have a feeling of isolation living there?

FE: I'll tell you, you were so busy all day you didn't have time to be

isolated. I had a lot of homework to do too, it seemed.

RM: Your homework consisted of what now?

FE: Correcting papers and being sure that I knew what was in the lesson for the next day.

RM: You had to be an educational jack-of-all-trades there, didn't you?

FE: That's right. We used to have the Sunday school when the traveling missionary would come through.

RM: Oh, you had Sunday school too?

FE: Not all the time, but when the traveling missionary would come through.

RM: And that was on Sunday?

FE: No. We'd have services whenever he could come through.

RM: So you had religious instruction right there in the school?

FE: Yes. But it would be in the evening so everybody could come.

RM: Oh, I see. Did most of the children attend?

FE: Sure. The Indians did too. And then we had to have programs for Christmas and Thanksgiving that the children would put on.

RM: And what kind of programs did they consist of?

FE: Something pertaining to the occasion. You'd have plays, recitals, singing - whatever they could do. Whatever you could put together, we did.

RM: Is there anything that stands out in your mind about the kind of clothing that the children wore?

FE: They were just like any other youngsters in the country - Levi's, shirts, sweaters . . . of course, the girls wore dresses in those days. They didn't come to school in shorts and Levi's.

RM: Did all the children live in town or were they bused in?

FE: Oh heavens no, not then. Nobody had heard of busing kids around then.

RM: So you either lived near the school or you didn't go.

FE: That's right. People would move in. For instance, I had 2 little girls from Berlin where the Ichthyosaur Park is and they boarded or had one of the houses - the grandmother stayed with those 2 little youngsters.

FE: Any schoolteacher of that same vintage would tell you the same thing. There are not many of them around yet.

RM: Yes. But I've interviewed a couple and they don't always give me as much detail as you do - and particularly pertaining to that locality. You burned wood, not coal, right?

FE: Yes, we burned wood.

RM: So there was a road coming over the mountains leading to Reese River, and then there was another one going down, like to the Ichthyosaur Park and then up toward Highway 50?

FE: . . . Fallon. I mean, you'd go over the mountain. You'd go west and then turn north and head north.

RM: It was probably the present road to Gabbs, wasn't it?

FE: I haven't been on that road so I don't know. I haven't been back there since . . . I'd like to go someday, too.

RM: There was probably not even a prospect hole at Gabbs, was there?

FE: There wasn't anything, to my knowledge, at Gabbs. That all started in the late 1930s.

RM: And the cinnabar mine was the only mine you recall that was working there?

FE: Yes, that was operating. Of course now, they're supposed to have discovered gold up in that area and so . . .

RM: Yes. Do you recall the winters as being difficult for you there?

FE: They were cold, but I didn't know any better then. I didn't know there was a place like southern Nevada. Weekends there were young people in the valley - along Reese River; they'd come over in the sleigh and

pick me up.

RM: They'd come over in a horse-drawn sleigh?

FE: Yes - if the road was too bad, they'd come over in a sleigh and take me down to the ranches.

RM: Could you tell me about your weekends at the ranches?

FE: Sometimes we loaded hay, sometimes we worked around the house, or whatever. We made bread, fruitcakes, etc.

RM: So you just pitched right in and did whatever they were doing?

FE: That's right. That's why they asked me back. [laughs] Oh, it was fun. We had a good time.

RM: What were some of the ranches that you went to?

FE: There was the Worthington place and the Bowlers and the Schmallings.

RM: Who all was there at the Worthington place?

FE: There was a young fellow - about 25, I guess - and then his sister and his sister's husband and there was a younger girl. There were 2 younger ones and one of them was one who came over to go to school.

RM: And these were relatively small ranches, weren't they? I mean, they didn't have a lot of cattle, did they?

FE: I really don't know. They had enough to make a living, that's all I can say.

RM: So the Worthingtons' was one of the ranches you went to . . .

FE: And the Schmallings'. There was a young married couple and the mother - she used to make fruit cakes in a washtub. We'd help her make fruitcakes. (She made a lot of fruitcakes.) Below that was the Derringer place - there were 2 old bachelors living there. The next one down was the Bowler place. The daughter, Gladys, was 4 years older than I. I have just seen her within the last month, after 40 years of not

seeing her.

RM: Is that right? What's her name?

FE: Gladys Bowler. I was 19 and she was 24. We used to go to all the dances together. She played the piano.

RM: Where were the dances held?

FE: Austin, Smoky Valley, at the springs where I taught for 2 years [later on], and Goldfield, Tonopah . . . we went all over.

RM: How did you get to all these places?

FE: Somebody always had a car.

RM: You never had car trouble or anything?

FE: Oh yes. One night we had flat tires all night long. We got to the dance when it was practically over. [laughs]

RM: [laughs] The roads were all dirt, weren't they?

FE: Oh sure. And there would always would be a carload of us - there would always be a bunch of us going.

RM: Coming from Reese River and Ione?

FE: I was the only one from Ione. One time there was a young fellow whose nieces and nephews I taught, and he used to go with us. There were the ones from the Worthingtons' and Gladys and me.

RM: And you'd stay all night down at the site?

FE: Oh, you'd dance all night. You'd dance till daylight. They'd have a midnight supper and then they'd have breakfast.

RM: What did you do for music?

FE: Back then it was the Acrees. If you know anything about Austin . . .

RM: Their name comes up every time, doesn't it?

FE: Oh yes. Somebody's always saying, "Milly and Bert." Their 2 sons

played, too.

RM: And they played instruments, too?

FE: Yes. They would play all night long.

RM: And the 2 boys were the Acrees' sons?

FE: Yes. One was Dale, and I can't remember the other fellow's name anymore - it seems to me it was Tom. Dale and his mother and dad always played. She would play until her fingers would get so worn she'd have to wrap them with tape. They were great.

RM: And they were good musicians, weren't they?

FE: Yes, they really were. They were very well-educated people and they were nice people.

RM: Why do you say they were very well-educated?

FE: Well, a lot of people in that day and age didn't go on to college, but Millie and Bert had been to college.

RM: Did you ever stay at their house in Austin?

FE: No. I stayed, sometimes, with a woman whose family came from Smoky Valley - the McClouds - which was another old-time family. Normally we'd drive home after the dance.

RM: Oh, I see. And then sleep all the next day?

FE: Well, I don't know. I never could sleep after a dance. I'd sleep that night till I'd get there. I had so much fun it carried me along.

RM: Did they drink much at these dances?

FE: No. If anyone did, I didn't know it. In those days I didn't take a drink, period. But if anyone got the least bit out of line they were taken out of the dance hall.

RM: How many people would you say were at one of those dances?

FE: As many people as there were around. Everybody went.

RM: Would that be about 50 or 100 or 200 or . . . ?

FE: Oh, I'd say 100 to 150. Of course in Tonopah and Goldfield, we would have more. But their conduct had to be above reproach or they got out.

RM: What did the suppers consist of that they served?

FE: Sandwiches and cakes and salads.

RM: And who would bring all that?

FE: The Darroughs used to furnish it in [Smoky Valley because] they made money off of the dances.

RM: Did they have dances in Reese River or Ione?

FE: No.

RM: There wasn't any place to have it, was there?

FE: No. And there weren't enough people. In Austin it was in the old International Hotel, but I don't know who put it on.

RM: Where were they held in Tonopah?

FE: In the Masonic Hall on the opposite corner from the Mizpah.

RM: Oh, where the drugstore later was?

FE: No, it was across from the drugstore, upstairs.

RM: Oh, really? Where were they held in Goldfield?

FE: Sometimes in the old Goldfield Hotel and sometimes in a new Masonic building. That was on the opposite side of the street and back a little way from the main street.

RM: Who sponsored the dances?

FE: I guess they had them to make money. I think it was $2 or $2.50, something like that, to go. That would pay for the music and so on. The Elks charity ball was the outstanding event.

RM: You lived in the teacherage all the time you were at Ione?

FE: Yes.

RM: Did you go home to Reno much?

FE: Usually for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

RM: You didn't have your own car when you were there, did you?

FE: I did the second year. That was my first expense. [chuckles]

RM: What kind of car did you buy?

FE: A Model-A Ford with a rumble seat. It was a good little car - I covered a lot of ground.

RM: Did you buy it new?

FE: No, I bought it from a car dealer whose children I had known from going to school in Reno.

RM: What did you pay for it?

FE: I think $500.

RM: Four months pay? Well, you were able to save quite a bit of money there, weren't you?

FE: Sure - practically all of it. My food was the only expense, and I paid for the teacherage; I think I paid $30 a month.

RM: Well, that was a lot.

FE: It was. But then, the people on the school board depended on that, too. I don't know whether it went into the school funds or what.

RM: Yes, that was part of the economics of it.

FE: The rent included lights and wood.

RM: Do you recall what kinds of meals you prepared for yourself there?

FE: I have always cooked for myself.

RM: Did you make fancy meals?

FE: Oh no. But I like to cook so I've always cooked.

RM: Did you have guests over very often or anything like that?

FE: No. I'll tell you, in those days the country schoolteacher walked the straight and narrow.

RM: You had to be above any kind of suspicion, didn't you?

FE: Absolutely. Absolutely above reproach.

RM: They expected the teacher to adhere to a higher moral standard than anybody, didn't they?

FE: Absolutely.

RM: What would happen if there was any kind of gossip about you?

FE: You'd lose your certificate.

RM: Oh, you wouldn't just lose your job?

FE: No, you'd lose your certificate. I think maybe that would be a good thing today. I think people would do a better job if they had some of those restrictions on them today.

RM: Now, what other ranchers did you see?

FE: We'd see them all any time there was a gathering. Even if they didn't dance, everybody went because it was a community gathering and that's about the only time that people had any social life. For instance, I don't think those 2 old bachelors ever did dance. There were the O'Toole boys and then somebody at Welches' Ranch. That was the last one down the valley before you got into Austin. But I don't recall their ever taking any part in anything that the community did.

RM: The Welches or the O'Tooles?

FE: The Welches. No, the O'Tooles came some - not too much, but they came some.

RM: Is there anything that stands out in your mind about the social life of the ranchers in the valley?

FE: No. Really, about all we did when we'd get together was dance, or

play cards. We played 500 in Ione. The women fixed it up some way or another so you'd have a mirror behind [chuckles] so you could see the men's cards. I think we played the women against the men.

RM: And the women had it rigged so you could see the guys' cards?

FE: Yes, that's what we'd do. But we had a lot of fun.

RM: What were some of the other card games you played?

FE: I think 500 was the one we played the most. And we used to have taffy pulls and things like that. Of course, when we had snow we had the hill - we'd slide down the hill.

RM: Was Valentine's Day a big day in the schools in those days?

FE: You made valentines and so on, but they didn't make any big deal of it.

RM: How about Halloween? Was that a big school day?

FE: I don't remember doing anything, particularly. We'd make pumpkins, but I don't remember any trick-or-treating.

RM: Was Easter a big day? Did you go home on Easter?

FE: No. We colored eggs and had an Easter egg hunt.

RM: And the communities were not what you would describe as religious communities, were they? That is, they didn't have churches, did they?

FE: No. The man who started our Presbyterian [church] on Charleston [Street in Las Vegas] was our missionary then. He lived in Carson City and about once a month he would come and we'd have services, but that was about it.

RM: Would you describe the people as religious?

FE: I think they were all good people. I think they lived very ethical lives and that's my idea of religion.

RM: But as far as being believers in the Christian faith and all

that . . .

FE: They were all Christians. But living out like that you don't have the time for a lot of extra things, you know. Growing up as a child it was the same way. The missionaries used to come out from Baker, Oregon, and whenever they came, we'd have services.

RM: Do you think people were more ethical then than they are now?

FE: I think they were. If they told you they were going to do something, they did it.

RM: And now that's not the case, is it?

FE: [chuckles] I'm not saying that, but I know then that people were very honest.

RM: I interviewed a fellow [Frank Brockman] who used to live in Beatty. He had moved there from California and he said a person's word in Beatty was worth more than a contract in California.

FE: That's right. Of course, I think Tonopah has changed now, because you've got a lot of outsiders. But most of those families were third generation people, and it makes a difference when people have lived in the same place for so long.

RM: Why did you leave Ione after 2 years?

FE: Because they didn't hire me back. I can't remember what . . . I think, maybe, I had an offer from [Darrough's Hot] Springs. I would rather be at the springs than I would at Ione.

RM: Why did you prefer the springs?

FE: It was nicer, and I liked the Darroughs. I knew all the people in Smoky Valley. And actually, the Darroughs were like family to me. I boarded with them.

RM: When did you go to the Darroughs'? Was it in '33?

FE: Let's see, I was there 2 years then, too. Then's when they closed the schools because of closing the bank.

RM: I didn't know they closed the schools when they closed the banks.

FE: I was a month short. I had to get my work done in 8 months instead of 9 months.

RM: This was at Ione?

FE: No, this was at Darrough's. They didn't have money enough to pay anymore and we took I.O.U.s. With the banks closed, that's where our money was. So we had to wait until they got that straightened out.

RM: How long did that take?

FE: About 2 or 3 months, as I remember. Of course I roomed and boarded with the Darroughs, so it didn't make any difference.

RM: And what year did you go to Darrough's?

FE: I came in the fall of '32.

RM: How long did you teach at Darrough's?

FE: Two years - in '32 and '33.

RM: And you went there because you preferred it?

FE: Yes. It was warmer and nicer there, and Round Mountain was close.

RM: You taught at Darrough's right after Miss Holts, didn't you?

FE: I don't know whether I was there right after Betty or not. Betty has been one of my best friends for all these years. But we are very different people. Betty never liked to wash dishes or do one thing, and I always enjoyed being part of the family. But [before] Betty was up at Round Mountain, she'd been at Millett. I can't remember whether there was somebody between when I went to the springs and when [she did, or not]. I think there was one teacher in between but I can't remember who it was.

RM: Where did you live when you went to Darrough's?

FE: With the family.

RM: And you lived in that big building there?

FE: Yes, the old hotel.

RM: And the school was in there too, wasn't it?

FE: No, it was up not quite as far as the road - the building was on the south side. There was Pasquale, an old bachelor who lived on the other lot in a little house. I don't know whether it's still there or not.

RM: Grandma [Laura] Darrough didn't live in the hotel, did she?

FE: No. She had her own little house. She made these for me.

RM: Is that right? You're showing me some doilies that Grandma Darrough made. Those are beautiful.

FE: Yes. They were little. She made me little ones. Those were for plates and then one for a glass and then some for serving.

RM: These were made quite a while ago, weren't they?

FE: Over 50 years.

RM: They're gorgeous.

FE: The fact she made them for me was what gives them importance.

RM: Sure. [Now, you were telling me that you're in] touch with, what's her name?

FE: Dale?

RM: Adelle Eiker. Is that who's doing it?

FE: No, it's Dale. Adelle is Arlene's sister, but Arlene's dead now. Dale Rodrique is her name. She was married but she's getting a divorce and I don't know whether she is keeping her own name

RM: And she's doing a history of the Darroughs?

FE: Well, she wants to do it on her family. There's something she

wanted me to help her find. You might know something about that - Centennial Magazine or something? There was a story about Grandma Darrough?

RM: I don't know about that.

FE: I don't, either.

RM: There was a story about the Darroughs in the Nevadan in the Review-Journal 2 years ago. I have that - in fact, I got it from Betty [Holts].

FE: Does it say that Grandma Darrough found the first gold nugget in Round Mountain?

RM: I think it might mention that.

FE: Well, she'd give anything to have a copy of that.

RM: I could let her have one of mine. I made copies of Betty's copy. But it was 1988 - it's pretty recent.

FE: I think Dale would love to have that if it gives any of the spring's history.

RM: I've been collecting a lot of information on that. I don't know if you knew Curly Coombs up there - Norman Coombs. He's told me a lot about the history of Round Mountain.

FE: Is Norman still in Round Mountain?

RM: No, he's in Tonopah. I have a lengthy interview with him. He knows a lot about mining and he knew all those people in Round Mountain.

FE: He was there at the same time I was, and Bill Hammond and Bobby Coombs.

RM: I didn't know Bill.

FE: Bill died - both Old Bill and the son. They were all there at the same time I was.

RM: Who were your students at Darrough's?

FE: I had the 2 Darrough kids, Lee and Arlene, and then Indian children. Then I had some of the Darrough youngsters that belonged to another Darrough family. I can't remember his name now - they lived up in Millett. I think they didn't have a school at Millett then. I didn't have as many youngsters. I've forgotten how many I had there now.

RM: So your class wasn't as big as it was over at Ione?

FE: No. And I didn't have as many grades.

RM: So it was actually easier, wasn't it?

FE: It was much easier.

RM: What did they pay you?

FE: Gosh, about the same - probably $135 or something.

RM: Did you pay them room and board?

FE: I paid room and board, yes. I think it was $30 a month.

RM: So you were saving more money down at Darrough's?

FE: Oh sure. Of course there, too, they depended on that for part of their income. Times were tough in those days. If you didn't live through it you don't realize it.

RM: I've heard about it from my father but I know we can't really . . .

FE: Yes. You have no idea how scarce money was. For instance, the banks closed when my mother had died, but I didn't know it at the time. Betty had a car and some way she had an in with the Bergs in Round Mountain. She wanted me to go into Reno with her for Thanksgiving. So I said, "Well, if you can furnish the car and the money . . . " I said, "I don't have any money." That was after the banks closed and we just didn't have any money. We didn't have any money at all.

She borrowed enough. Anyway, we got into Reno for Thanksgiving. I think she got the gas at Bergs' in Round Mountain on credit. Of course,

we paid it later.

RM: You still had your car though, but you didn't drive it because you had no gas?

FE: You'd drive a little, but you didn't take a trip. You didn't do anything extra.

RM: When was it that the banks closed? Was that after Roosevelt was elected or before?

FE: It must have been '32 or '33. It was in the spring.

RM: And they were closed for several months?

FE: We didn't get any money for several months. I don't remember whether the banks were open but we couldn't get any money.

RM: So you weren't getting paid and any money you had in the bank you couldn't get out.

FE: No. I lost money in the bank in Reno.

RM: You never got it back?

FE: No.

RM: How much did you lose?

FE: Not much, [because] I didn't have much.

RM: Was it one of George Wingfield's banks?

FE: That's right. And I'll stick up for George Wingfield. My father was a cattleman and sheepman and I know that [Wingfield] loaned people money to buy all those cattle and sheep when things were high. Well, the next day the bottom fell out of things. If Wingfield didn't loan money to those people to feed their stock, he would never get his money back. I really feel, if they hadn't caught up with him, nobody would have lost a nickel. They caught up with him in Tonopah, by the way.

FE: Ralph Denton remembers this too; he's an attorney here. He had asked me, "What did you think about Wingfield?" and I said the same things to him.

And he said, "I know that's true, too." Because he was just starting out his practice in Elko at that time. He said that the bank in Reno, First National (which wasn't a Wingfield bank) was going to foreclose on all those people around Elko. Mr. Sewell, who had grocery stores in Reno (I didn't know he had a bank at that time), came up and picked up all these mortgages. And nobody lost. You had to know a little bit about this background to feel that they were remiss in closing Wingfield out. I'm sure nobody would have lost anything and he would have paid out. It was another period.

RM: It was. So you cut the school term short?

FE: A month short.

RM: Did you get your money before you left?

FE: It seems to me it went into the summer. I don't know, I always went home every summer.

RM: It sounds like it happened in your second year at the springs.

FE: Oh yes. It was my second year and then I don't think the school ever operated after that. I think that was the end of the school.

RM: And did you use the same textbooks at Darrough's that you used at Ione?

FE: Yes. I think it was every 7 years that they changed the books. So it would be the same books.

RM: Is there anything that stands out in your mind about the classroom?

FE: It was a one-room school. I don't think it was as well-equipped or as nice as the one in Ione. That one was a nice building. And whatever you needed to work with, they would get for you.

RM: And did the school at Ione have electricity?

FE: Well, just at night. When we had our programs I think we did. When we had our school . . . well, you went from 9:00 till 4:00 in those days.

RM: So they did have it?

FE: I think they did. I don't remember, really. But we had to have some kind of light when we did our school program, so they probably had it in the schoolhouse.

RM: You didn't have lights at Darrough's, did you?

FE: No. We had carbide lights. They had those at the Bowler place too. It came from tanks some way or another.

RM: Oh, it was acetylene?

FE: Yes, that type of system.

RM: I'll be darned. Did it work pretty well?

FE: Yes. It was fine.

RM: That's the first I've heard of them.

FE: It was fine, but not as good as electricity. You had gasoline lanterns and lamps, and they were good. In my day, I don't remember having to use the kerosene lamp.

RM: You never did use those?

FE: We did on the ranch, some, but to read and generally speaking, we used gasoline lamps.

RM: And you just had a room at Darrough's, didn't you? You didn't have a cookstove and all that?

FE: No, I lived with the family.

RM: What family members were there at Darrough's?

FE: Kate was the mother and Ray was the father and then there was Dewey, who was not a normal person, really.

RM: He was retarded, wasn't he?

FE: Well, something was wrong. He had a big head. He was certainly not a harmful person. He lived with his mother - Grandma Darrough. There was an old fellow they called Pasquale (I can't remember what his real name was). He cooked for himself, I think - I don't think he ever ate with us.

RM: Did they have children?

FE: Arlene and Lee were their children.

RM: How old were they then?

FE: Lee was about a second grader and Arlene was in the seventh grade. There were 2 or 3 Darroughs from the other family . . . funny, I can't think of his name to save my soul. He was up at Millett and it seems to me his wife came down and lived in a little house right by Pasquale and had their children there in school.

RM: And the swimming pool was there at that time, wasn't it?

FE: Oh yes. And it had a roof on it then.

RM: The roof burned down, didn't it?

FE: I think it burned. That was long after I had gone.

RM: Was the bathhouse there then?

FE: Yes.

RM: So you could take baths and everything right there?

FE: Oh sure. It was a good swimming pool. The water was warm; it was nice.

RM: You could swim there any time, couldn't you - I mean, in the middle

of the winter?

FE: Sure. It was really good. The one hot spring north of the house was the one that was so hot. Now that still spouts way up. It was very, very hot - it would scald you. Then there was the spring where we had our drinking water, and that was very cold. That was on the west of the house. I don't know what they do now [for water]. I think Luther has water in the house now. In fact, I think they heat with that hot water now.

RM: I think I've heard that, yes.

FE: I think he fixed that up in Ray and Kate's place when they went into Tonopah.

RM: Where was Luther at this time?

FE: He was there but he lived with his mother.

RM: He wasn't married to Lillian then?

FE: No, [not until] long after this.

RM: Would you tell me a little bit about Grandma Darrough?

FE: Oh, she was a nice person. I always got along with her.

RM: How old was she when you were there?

FE: She was an old lady - really quite old. I don't think she lived too much longer after I left.

RM: Do you recall her telling stories about the old days or anything?

FE: Oh, a little.

RM: Do you recall any of the stories?

FE: Not particularly. You know, the Farringtons were there, and Rogers' was the place just below the springs.

RM: Did you know Emma Rogers?

FE: Emma was just below McClouds. But they were 2 separate families.

RM: Right, but they were all related. Tell me some more about Grandma Darrough. Do you recall any anecdotes about her?

FE: Not especially. I started to say that Ben Rogers died and left Grace and Pete and Rene. Sometimes when we'd all be gathered around the stove at the hotel, Grandma would start to talk and she would figure that Ben Rogers was sitting right over there, and he'd been dead for a good many years.

RM: Is that right? But she was a little bit out of it?

FE: Yes, she was a little out of it.

RM: So she was a little out of it when you knew her?

FE: Yes. But not to the extent that anybody realized . . . That's the only thing I ever thought was kind of funny. No, she was nice. They all got along well. I never heard any problems.

RM: And she was doing her crocheting and everything?

FE: Oh sure. And reading. She read a lot and she took care of the boys. She did all the laundry and cooking - everything for the boys. Luther never ate with us.

RM: Why?

FE: I think because Grandma Darrough took care of him over at her place.

RM: Oh, I see. So Grandma didn't take her meals with you folks over in the house?

FE: No, she ran her own house. She was still able to do that.

RM: Luther was a grown man then, wasn't he?

FE: Yes. My feeling was that they always got along very well.

RM: What do you recall about Emma Rogers?

FE: I didn't know Emma that well, but everybody always went to all the social functions. I can't remember whether there was anybody living up

there with Emma at that time or not. I'm sure she wasn't there alone - she must have had somebody around. There wasn't too much difference in age between me and Pete and Rene.

RM: Yes, you were all about the same age. I interviewed both Pete and Rene.

FE: Do you know Mary, Pete's wife?

RM: Yes.

FE: She was my eighth grader in Ione - Manzini was her maiden name.

RM: Is that right?

FE: I haven't seen them in a long time. One time I stopped at Carver's and Pete and Mary were there, and I hadn't seen them since she was in school.

RM: Isn't that something?

FE: We had a good visit.

RM: They live in Fallon - I was over at their house.

FE: She was a very bright girl. Not that she isn't happy, but she was a girl who could have done a lot.

RM: Is that right? She had a very high intelligence?

FE: She had the work skills to combine with it. She was a very nice youngster.

RM: Were there any other Manzini children in your class?

FE: I think there was just one boy - Mary and this brother. Jocko was the father's name. I think he worked in the Mercury Mine.

RM: Was the Mercury Mine a pretty big operation?

FE: Not really, but apparently they were making a living. It seems to me it must have closed, even when I was there, because another family moved to Salt Lake. Mansfield, I think their name was. My aunt had

taught in Imlay and she had had one of their family when she was teaching in Imlay years before.

RM: Where's Imlay?

FE: In northern Nevada, south of Winnemucca. It's a railroad town.

RM: Tell me about one of the dances at Darrough's.

FE: You started in about 8:00 and you danced all night. The Acrees were there with the music, and sometimes we had little dance cards that you filled out and sometimes you just danced. You never missed a dance then.

RM: What kind of dances did you do?

FE: Waltzes and fox trots and the varsoviennes. We didn't do square dancing. I think about it now, but we never did do any square dancing.

RM: How much did it cost to go to a dance at Darrough's?

FE: I think it was $1 or $2.50. I think that included the midnight supper, but I don't remember. Charlie McCloud was the one who always squired the schoolteachers around. And Charlie was . . . let's see, I was 19 or 20, and I guess by that time Charlie was 41. He was very much of a gentleman and a fine escort.

RM: You mean you were his date?

FE: Oh yes. Charlie would always take me to the dances. He followed all the schoolteachers - I just happened to be the schoolteacher at that time. He was a good dancer and very much of a gentleman. You could go places with Charlie and know that your reputation wasn't at stake - you wouldn't be questioned. His sister usually went along, too. I think she just died recently - Gladys told me that in California. We'd come back and stay at the McClouds' then, and he'd take me back to Darrough's the next day.

RM: Oh, you mean when you were at Ione?

FE: Well, not at Ione, but when I was down at the Springs. This was when we'd go to Austin for a dance. His sister Hattie would always be along, and his mother was alive then.

RM: And their ranch was called the McCloud Ranch?

FE: Some people who lived here had it and then they sold it. Of course, the old road was so different. I'm trying to think of the first ranch up there. It was about the third ranch coming in from Austin and it had a nice red brick house on it.

RM: Was he the owner, or did it belong to his family?

FE: There was Clarence; I didn't know the father. The mother was still living when I was there and then Clarence was Charlie's brother, and then Hattie. There were the 3 of them that I knew. I think Clarence is dead now. Charlie's dead now, too. He married a woman in Austin - someone his own age - when he finally married.

RM: I see. But before that he preferred the younger girls?

FE: Well, I think he enjoyed going, and as I say, he was a perfect gentleman. We had a lot of fun, you know. It was nice to go with somebody. And usually we'd have a carload. It wasn't one of these sentimental things - everyone got together and went. It was fun.

RM: When you danced at Darrough's, was liquor served there?

FE: I think they had a bar. But as I say, you did not leave the dance hall.

RM: Yes, they controlled it.

FE: If anybody who came into the hall showed that they'd had anything to drink . . . I'm sure they probably all drank, but I didn't.

RM: Did they go swimming at Darrough's at the dances?

FE: No, I don't think so. At that time, the mine at Round Mountain was

working. There were 3 mines - Jefferson and Nevada Porphyry . . .

RM: (It's Round Mountain Gold now.)

FE: There were a lot of fellows that I knew from school out there, young engineers.

RM: Oh, there were? Guys that you'd known at the university?

FE: Yes. We had a lot of fun. There were a lot of young people and they were all nice kids and we really had good times.

RM: Did you go into Tonopah much?

FE: Whenever there was a dance.

RM: That's the only time you went?

FE: Occasionally we'd go otherwise. But there really wasn't much reason to go to Tonopah. Once in a while you'd go in to a show, but that was about it.

RM: And Goldfield was even harder to get to?

FE: Well, Goldfield really didn't have much at that time. They still had the dances and we'd go to them. Their charity ball was before my time, when they used to get music in from San Francisco. They were really elegant affairs, and the ones in Tonopah were, too. Even during my day everybody had special evening dresses and those were the big occasions - particularly the charity ball.

RM: Is that right? Did you have a radio when you were at Ione?

FE: No, and never a TV. My first TV was when I came to Sloan.

RM: You taught at Sloan?

FE: Yes. That's where I met my husband.

RM: So you didn't have a radio at Round Mountain either.

FE: No. It seems to me that Darrough's had a battery set. But I don't remember it being any particular part of our life. When we were there,

we'd play cards - 500 - more than anything. Round Mountain was the stopping place for anybody who couldn't get on home, so there would always be somebody to play cards with.

RM: When you just had spare time what did you do?

FE: Ride horseback. And we used to swim.

RM: Did you have Indian children in your class at Darrough's?

FE: I think I had 2. All those ranches had an Indian family, and they would work when they needed extra help. That was true on Reese River, too.

RM: What sticks in your mind about the community of Round Mountain when you were at Darrough's?

FE: It was a nice community, too. Of course, as I say, country entertainment was dancing. We had a bridge club in Round Mountain. I think we had 12 tables. It was different than it is today. People lived in houses, they didn't live in those trailers. And they didn't have the camp all torn up with mine dumps and so forth. It's a shame, I think - it was a nice little mining camp then.

Happy Gibson was a teacher there. He played the piano but he couldn't carry a tune in a basket. It was funny, when he'd ask you to dance he'd say, "Now you count and get me started." Then he could count the steps. A waltz was 1, 2, 3. He could play anything because he could read music, but he had no feeling for music at all. It's funny Betty didn't tell you about him. She kept in touch with him for years. He finally went back to Washington, D.C.

RM: Did you know the Bergs very well?

FE: Yes. Will was still alive, and so was Lillian. We spent a lot of time at their house - that was our center of entertainment. Getta was

their daughter and Dan was their son. Dan and Rene and I were very close to the same age (I was a little older than they were). We used to get around . . . and Getta played the piano very well. So we'd sing around the piano. [We did] all the things that you do in the country that make for entertainment.

RM: How would you describe Lillian?

FE: I liked Lillian. Will was a lot older than Lillian and I think that he just kind of treated her like a child.

RM: In what sense?

FE: I don't think Lillian ever paid a bill or was quite sure just what they were going to have to eat or anything else. I think Will just handled everything. He was a very nice person. But he never entered [in] . . . he'd go to bed. Lillian was so much younger that she'd just join in with the young folks.

RM: They had a store - the Berg Mercantile.

FE: No, I don't think they had anything to do with that. There was another Berg [who also] had a garage. I can't think of his name right now. Betty knew all of that. She knew more about Round Mountain than I did, because she lived there for so long.

RM: You didn't know Blackjack Raymond, did you?

FE: I probably knew who he was, but I don't know anything about him.

RM: Did you get to Manhattan very often?

FE: Oh, when they had a dance.

RM: Where did you have your bridge?

FE: We had a community hall in Round Mountain. It was just across the street south from the Bergs'. I don't think anything is left there like it was. Last time I was through I just was appalled.

RM: When were you through the last time?

FE: Oh, Betty and I went, maybe 3 or 4 years ago. Shook [Berg] was there and they were living in the old house.

RM: Do you remember Shirley Ann Berg [Lofthouse]?

FE: Shirley Ann was a baby when I was there.

RM: Did you know a man named Little Kelsay?

FE: He was a great friend of the Bergs'. He lived at their ranch.

RM: What stands out in your mind about Manhattan?

FE: Always the dances. [laughs] I was young then.

RM: How about Belmont - did you ever get over there?

FE: I was over there, but not during that period. I guess Belmont was quite a camp in its day. One of the Rogers' relatives lived with the Rogers and she was from Belmont.

RM: There was an Anderson who was from Belmont.

FE: That could have been it. But anyway, when she died I was almost slated to do the funeral service, and I can't remember what happened. I think the traveling minister came through or something so I didn't have to do that. You know, the country schoolteacher did everything.

RM: Oh, is that right?

FE: You had to do whatever they asked you to do.

RM: What were some of the things they would ask you to do?

FE: Well, the Sunday school and things like that. I remember that funeral in particular because I wasn't quite sure what I was going to do, but I was saved by the bell.

RM: What are some other things that they might have called on a teacher to do?

FE: Another thing was to measure hay.

RM: Measure hay?

FE: Do you know how to figure measuring hay? [chuckles]

RM: I have no idea.

FE: I don't remember anymore, but when I left home I had the formula for measuring hay because a lot of those farmers would give you the measurements for the stack and you were supposed to figure out how many tons they had in it.

RM: Is that right? Well, you were the educated person in the community, and you were expected to be able to do those things.

FE: Yes.

RM: What other things would the teacher . . . ?

FE: Practically anything that they asked you to do, if it was within reason, you did. You were supposed to be qualified to do these things, so . . .

RM: And men never made improper advances toward the teacher, did they?

FE: Oh no. If you behaved yourself men didn't make improper advances toward any young woman in those days. That was up to you. You set the standards and then they knew where they stood with you. There was a very different moral ethic in those days than there is today.

Bambi McCracken: I wanted to ask you - in Ione when you would order from the store, you'd get goods. What kinds of things did people order?

FE: It would be your food.

BM: Could you get books or anything like that?

FE: Not particularly. I think you might have through the library in Fallon if you'd ever tried to.

BM: And you would get soaps and . . .

FE: Yes, whatever you needed. He had a general store.

BM: So people really got just the necessities.

FE: That's right. Of course we used to go in once in a while - once in a while I'd ride into Fallon with Billie [Cislini]. And if you wanted stuff, you'd get it then.

BM: How did you decide to go into education? Did you know as a child that that was what you wanted to go into?

FE: Well, in those days there was teaching and nursing and secretarial work. Those were about the choices that women had, and my whole family had been teachers. My aunt, my mother, my grandmother . . . everybody in the family had taught.

BM: So you knew that that's what you were going to go into.

FE: Yes, that was the choice. And teachers made more money than anybody else at that time. You always had a good standing. It was a good choice for a girl in those days.

RM: But for a man it wasn't, was it?

FE: No. I can't ever remember men in the lower grades at all. I can't even remember men principals.

RM: Is that right? Would that be true in high school, too?

FE: No, it wasn't in high school. Mr. Von was our principal in high school. But there were no men in the lower grades.

RM: Did you know Ert Moore?

FE: No.

RM: He taught in Beatty, but that was a few years later.

FE: Well, there have been tremendous changes over the last 50 years.

RM: What did you do after you left Darrough's?

FE: I came down here [to the Las Vegas area]. I worked up at the lake [Lake Tahoe] that summer and I planned on going back to the university - I was going to go back and take some more credits. But then this school came up at Sloan.

RM: How did you hear about it?

FE: Through the placement bureau at the university.

RM: Was there a town at Sloan?

FE: Yes. There were 50 kids out there. I had the first 4 grades and a man had the upper grades.

RM: So you came down here in 1934?

FE: Yes.

RM: Was it just a dirt road out to Sloan?

FE: Oh, it was a dirt road all the way from Tonopah. It seems to me it was paved to Austin, but I can't remember.

RM: No, it wasn't. They didn't pave that till the '50s.

FE: To Austin?

RM: Yes, from Tonopah to Austin.

FE: No, I'm thinking [about the road] from Tonopah to Reno.

RM: Oh, OK.

FE: I think it was paved then. There are 2 ways in . . . I think it was paved. But I can remember what a terrible road it was coming from Austin down here. It was awful.

RM: A lot of flat tires?

FE: Well, I didn't have them, but it was very corrugated. It was just a mess of a road to drive on.

RM: How long did you teach at Sloan?

FE: A year. I married at the end of the first year.

RM: Who did you marry?

FE: I married Bill Ellis.

RM: And where did you meet him?

FE: Out there. He was a mill superintendent.

RM: What were they milling there?

FE: Lime. That lime plant - including all their holdings - is now the biggest lime plant west of the Mississippi.

RM: Is that right? What do they do with the lime?

FE: They use it for stabilizing roads, making plaster, some medicinal purposes and fluxing steel.

RM: Is that right? Is it gypsum?

FE: No. There's a difference between lime and gypsum. I think they use gypsum more in wallboard and things like that. I don't know what else they do with it, but the plant (there was a plant at Sonora then) [production] was used for medicinal purposes, it was that pure. But most of the lime out here goes into building. This road stabilization came in about the time that my husband retired. But [some of the main uses are] plaster and wallboard and refining sugar. So there are lots of uses for it.

RM: Do they ship it out on the railroad?

FE: Yes.

RM: Did you teach after you married?

FE: No, I just finished the year.

RM: And that was the end of your teaching career?

FE: That was the end of my teaching career.

RM: And then did you live in Sloan?

FE: We lived in Sloan about 17 years.

RM: And then you moved to Las Vegas?

FE: They closed the camp. When we lived out there they furnished the housing and your water and your lights, and all you had to do was pay your grocery bill, so it was a good job and a good place to save.

RM: You could save a lot, yes. How many people were in the camp there?

FE: We had 312 sugar stamps [during World War II]. We had 3 tables of bridge out there.

RM: Where was the camp located?

FE: Right under the hill; there's nothing left there. The Sloan on the highway isn't the Sloan [I lived in]. They've taken all the houses away. I think there's just a watchman left down there but it's still producing very well.

RM: Is the mine that mountain they're taking the top off on the right as you go out?

FE: That's right. And the town was at the base of that mountain. We had a lot of Mexicans who helped. The Mexicans lived on one side of camp and we lived on the other. They were good kids, too. Gee, they were good youngsters - all of them.

BM: Did you miss teaching after you got married?

FE: No, not really. I enjoyed it when I was teaching. I like young people and I like children and I really enjoyed my work as long as I was doing it.

RM: How many children did you have?

FE: I had 2. My first baby died and then I have a daughter, Annette.

RM: And when was she born?

FE: In 1945. She was 3 when we moved into Las Vegas.

RM: So she went to school here in Las Vegas?

FE: Yes.

RM: And you say you bought property on Charleston and . . .

FE: Well, my husband and his father bought this 20 acres in 1921.

RM: And it was bounded on Charleston?

FE: Charleston and Ellis, as it is now, and down where the church is and then the trailer court.

RM: And Ellis is named after your family?

FE: Yes. We subdivided it.

RM: And when did you do that?

FE: Forty-four, I guess.

RM: Was it hard to do?

FE: Tom Campbell was the one who wanted to do it. I think we'd have made more money if we'd have waited.

RM: What size of lots did you make?

FE: They were 2-1/2-acre lots.

RM: And then somebody has subdivided them again, haven't they?

FE: They have. I still have the acre here - a commercial acre. It's a little bit short of an acre but it's a commercial acre. And you know, we couldn't cut them down. The original rules were that we weren't supposed

to cut them down but they certainly have changed things.

RM: This was out in the country when they bought it, wasn't it?

FE: There wasn't a thing on this side of the tracks except for an old house down in the middle of this 20 that Bill's father lived in.

RM: Is that right? When did his family come to Las Vegas?

FE: In 1905 the Younts came to Goodsprings. I think Bill's grandfather's people came to Pahrump in 1877.

RM: His people are the Younts?

FE: Yes.

RM: I didn't know that. I've been working on a book on the history of Pahrump.

FE: Oh, have you? His grandfather's people came in in 1877.

RM: Was his grandfather Joseph Yount?

FE: No, his grandfather was Sam Yount. And this was Bill's grandmother.

RM: Oh, what a nice picture! Now Sam Yount was Joseph Yount's son, wasn't he?

FE: That's right. And this is his wife. Bill's grandmother married Sam Yount.

RM: What was her name?

FE: Emma, [but I don't know her maiden name].

RM: Was she a local woman?

FE: I doubt it. The Younts came from around Pendleton, from Grand Round Valley.

RM: What I know about the Younts I've gotten out of the Fisk Collection at the San Bernardino County Museum from Della White's [writings].

FE: Jim and Della. Two of the nicest people that ever lived.

RM: Did your husband know his grandparents?

FE: Oh sure.

RM: Did you know Sam?

FE: Sure.

RM: Tell me about him.

FE: Well, he was an old retired man when I knew him, and he had remarried. Bill's grandmother died and he married a woman from around Moapa.

RM: What was her name?

FE: I can't think of what her maiden name was. There was quite a family of them.

RM: Did you know John Yount?

FE: Yes.

RM: Tell me about John Yount. He had the ranch that Roland Wiley bought, didn't he?

FE: John had Roland's place and Bill was in San Bernardino and then there was another one (I didn't know him). There were Bill and John and I think his name was Ed. Bill was the one who had the orange groves and really did . . .

RM: You mean down in San Bernardino?

FE: In San Bernardino.

RM: So he didn't stay in the area?

FE: I don't know . . . I didn't ever know him.

RM: But Sam and John stayed around here, didn't they?

FE: Oh, John died, I think, in Pahrump. And he had an Indian wife.

RM: Was her name Belle?

FE: I don't know what her name was.

RM: He had a common-law wife at the end of his life and there was a

dispute over ownership [of the ranch Roland Wiley bought].

FE: That was the Indian wife. I don't think he ever had any other wife. I never heard them talk about another wife.

RM: And Sam was quite a mining man, wasn't he?

FE: Yes. He was in the Goodsprings area with mining. I still have the Boss.

RM: You own the Boss Mine? What did they mine there?

FE: They mined platinum and copper, I think.

RM: Is that right? It was one of the few platinum mines in America, isn't it?

FE: There were 4 in the state of Nevada. And temporarily I have it leased, for the first time in 50 years. Whether I get any money this month or not, I don't know. [I have to get] caught up on all those back taxes. [chuckles]

RM: The Boss Mine was a pretty good mine, wasn't it?

FE: Yes, it was. It produced, I think, around $1 million in platinum. I don't know about it that far back, but Bill's grandfather owned it with the First Security Bank in Los Angeles. Now when that came about, I don't know. But when Pop Yount died, he willed his interest in the Boss to Bill. At the museum in Henderson there was an article posted that said some Indian located the Boss. I suppose he came into the store and made a deal with Sam Yount. Bill's grandfather had the store, the post office, the hotel and everything in Goodsprings. I kind of gathered from that that maybe some way through the store they made a deal.

RM: Oh, that's how they got the Boss?

FE: Yes. Maybe he got money from the Boss. But the big one that made the money for so long was the Yellow Pine.

RM: Where is that?

FE: The mill and everything are what's left in Goodsprings now.

RM: Oh, I see. Then where was the Yellow Pine Mine?

FE: I don't know where the mine was.

RM: I think it was on Mount Potosi.

FE: It could be.

RM: The Boss Mine looks down on Sandy Valley, doesn't it?

FE: Right. Jim and Della Fisk were up there; he was the boss over there for a long time. Aunt Della lived in a tent up at the Boss and had orange boxes for furniture.

RM: Is that right? Fisk was a mining man, and he did quite well, didn't he?

FE: Yes.

RM: There's a wing at the museum [in Redlands, California] that he donated money for.

FE: He was quite a collector, you know. He was very interested in history. Yes, I knew that they had done that.

RM: Did you know Fisk?

FE: Oh sure; very well.

RM: What was he like?

FE: He was a very intelligent person and always was interested in history. He would lecture to the Boy Scouts and do that sort of thing after he retired. But he worked with the mines here for as long as I can ever remember. I think that's where he met Aunt Della. Harsha White was her father.

RM: And what was her mother's name?

FE: Maude, I believe.

RM: Maude Yount. And what was Joseph Yount's wife's name - Margaret, I believe.

FE: That would be Sam's mother. I know there were Della and Sam and then it was Nellie and Fannie and John.

RM: What happened to the other kids? Did they stay in the area?

FE: No. Fannie and her husband had a saloon in Needles. And Nellie married a doctor and she was back east for a long time. Then when their husbands died, they lived together in L.A. I think Aunt Nellie was 90 the last time they came up here and they drove by themselves.

RM: Is that right? Amazing!

FE: They were amazing.

RM: That was a tough road, too.

FE: Well, the idea at 90 that you could do this. But they were very nice. I always enjoyed both of them. They were fun to . . . they kind of liked to drink. They never got drunk, I don't mean that, but they kind of liked a good stiff drink.

RM: How did Harsha White wind up with the Manse Ranch?

FE: Harsha married Maude.

RM: But why didn't Joseph Yount leave the ranch to the other kids, too? Or maybe he did and he bought them out or something.

FE: I don't know. They went into San Bernardino. That seemed to be the ultimate. San Bernardino was the place all these people went.

RM: That was where they sent their kids to school - it was the only school.

FE: That's right. And that's where they were headed when they got stalled in Pahrump.

RM: Yes. The story of how he landed in Pahrump is true, to your

knowledge? That the Indians killed his draft horses and he had to . . .

FE: They took all the stock. They'd gotten that far and then apparently it was a good place to land. Of course there was a lot of artesian water over there at that time.

RM: That's right. So he traded some stock, I think, to the Jordan brothers for the Manse Ranch.

FE: I don't know about that.

RM: One account I read said he was originally heading for Tombstone, Arizona, but then changed his mind when he got down this way and decided to go to . . .

FE: I always heard that he was headed for San Bernardino - that's the story that Bill always told me. Mrs. Fredericksons in Goodsprings did a thing on them.

RM: Are they still in Goodsprings?

FE: No. (They just had a reunion; we went over there yesterday.) I think she's someplace in Oregon now - the one who wrote this. The mother apparently wrote the account originally.

RM: Do you know Deke and Celesta Lowe?

FE: Well, I just know of them. Bill knew . . .

RM: They know a lot about the history of the area.

FE: Oh, they do. But they weren't always right either.

RM: No. I don't think anybody's always right.

FE: No. Because I know Bill and Leonard Fayle would read some of these things that they came up with and they would know [feel that] wherever they got their information, it wasn't exactly accurate.

RM: How would you describe Sam Yount?

FE: He just was a very nice person. Of course, when I knew him he was

an old man. He had rentals and property in L.A. They were very well off when they left Goodsprings, you see. They made money on the mines. He retired when he was about 45 or 50 and moved into L.A. I know he always had an office down on Hill Street and he had rental property around L.A.

RM: Is that right? Now that's Sam Yount?

FE: Yes.

RM: But John Yount stuck around, didn't he?

FE: He stayed out there in the desert.

RM: He was the only one of the children who stayed on the desert, wasn't he?

FE: As far as I know. Of course, he never had any family that I ever heard of. The brothers that were in San Bernardino had fruit. They raised apricots. I've heard Bill tell about how they dried apricots, and they were salable. They had oranges and I think Bill did the same thing. He raised oranges in those . . . but then the other brother worked for some big outfit that dealt with oranges. He was a plant supervisor.

RM: And you don't know where Sam Yount met his wife and where she was from?

FE: No, she was from around here. I don't know where Sam met her. She had been married a number of times.

RM: And then your husband was Sam's . . .

FE: No, he was really Emma's grandchild. She had been married to an Ellis - I think that was her first marriage. Bill and an Austin [Ellis] were the offspring of that marriage. Austin was a veterinarian. He used to take care of all the animals for the MGM Studios in L.A.

RM: Is that right? I'll be darned.

FE: Later he moved down into Texas and went into the pharmacy business.

In those days, I guess they didn't have to have the education they do today to do these things.

RM: So your husband was not a blood relative of the Younts.

FE: No.

RM: OK. His grandmother had married Sam later on.

FE: That's right. And then she married a Smithson and there was one child by that marriage. There were a lot of mines between Needles and Nipton at that time and I think she met this Smithson there some way. I think they ran boardinghouses and did things like that. I'm not sure where she met Pop Yount, but she was the worker. Sam was a good fellow but kind of a public relations person.

RM: Is that right? But they owned the hotel in Goodsprings?

FE: Yes. They had the store and a hotel and Emma did most of the work.

RM: And they got the Boss Mine from an Indian?

FE: I don't know that, but I was reading in that article out there that an Indian was the one that discovered it. Now how they came by it, I don't know. Bill would have known, but I don't. Sam had something to do with the Yellow Pine, because I've heard the members of the family say, "Well, the Yellow Pine put us through school."

RM: The Yellow Pine was a lead mine, wasn't it?

FE: Lead and zinc, I imagine. I think the Boss was the only one that had platinum.

RM: Was there a mine called the Columbia?

FE: Oh, there are a lot of them over there. Bill would know but I don't know about that. Anna might know most of those - I think Leonard hung onto all that stuff. Now his daughter and her husband are owners.

RM: And how many children did . . .

FE: Sam and Emma didn't have any, and John didn't have any. Bill, I think, had 2 girls and the other brother had some children - the one who worked with the oranges. He was the head of a packing house. Della never had any children.

RM: So they weren't a very fertile bunch, were they?

FE: No. Della and Jim were the type that should have had a big family because they really were wonderful people.

RM: Jim Fisk did quite well, didn't he?

FE: They all did pretty well. I guess the first time I ever went down there, I was about 24. It was right after Bill and I were married. They belonged to the Old-Timer's Club, so we went to this dance and tried to do the Shoddish and all these. He was a pretty good dancer. It was really a lot of fun, we had a great time. [chuckles] But they were just genuinely nice people; good people. They understood youngsters and they really were always active in the old-timers group.

RM: Did Sam and your husband buy this acreage out here?

FE: Not Sam. It was Bill's own father, Ellis. I think the first owners of this were Craigen and Pike. I'm not sure about Craigen, but Pike . . . I looked this up because of water more than anything. I think they took it up as homestead property a long way back.

RM: It's amazing. When you folks moved onto this property there was very little out here then?

FE: There wasn't anything on this side of the tracks. Mathis bought, I think, one of our first ones and then Purdy bought the lots over here and then there was Dr. Swank out here. I can't remember all of them. But that was along the front there. And then they started building.

RM: And then that was the beginning of the building out this way?

FE: This has only started to go within about the last 5 or 6 years.

RM: What do you mean "go"?

FE: Well, before development was working out toward Henderson and out towards the Strip.

RM: You mean all this development to the west.

FE: The whole area. All this development is very recent.

RM: What do you think of it?

FE: I think it's all right but I hope they aren't overdoing it. That's what I worry about. I mean, when you have all these vacant buildings around it's time to quit.