An Interview with WILLIAM M. and FRANCES L. "DUTCH" TURNER

An Oral History conducted and edited by
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Nye County Town History Project
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Frances L. "Dutch" Turner
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William M. Turner
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PREFACE

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

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

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

in preparing a text:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

--R.D.M.

Robert McCracken interviewing Bill and Dutch Turner at their home in Pahrump Valley, Nevada - April 23, 1988

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Dutch, could you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

DT: Frances Lorene Ward.

RM: And when and where were you born?

DT: I was born March 5, 1923, in Chandler, Arizona. Actually, it was West Chandler - about 7 miles from the town of Chandler in Maricopa County.

RM: And what was your father's name?

DT: Tom F. Ward.

RM: Was he from Arizona?

DT: He was from Texas, but I really don't know what part.

RM: And what was your mother's name?

DT: My mother's name was Frances Emeline Anderson. She, too, came from Texas.

RM: What was your father's occupation?

DT: He was a farmer.

RM: What kind of farming did he do?

DT: He was a sharecropper. He farmed cotton in the Salt River Valley and then farmed around there all during my early childhood.

RM: Did you grown up there?

DT: Yes; and I went to school there, but I didn't graduate - I went through the 11th grade.

RM: And Bill, could you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

BT: William Maurice Turner.

RM: And when and where were you born?

BT: In Tempe, Arizona, in 1919 - June 27th.

RM: What was your father's name?

BT: Charles William Turner. He was from Pecos, Texas.

RM: And what was his occupation?

BT: Farmer.

RM: And what kind of farming did he do?

BT: Just general farming; mostly cotton.

RM: And what was your mother's name?

BT: Lottie Lee Wilson Turner.

RM: Where was she from?

BT: She was from Sweetwater, Texas.

RM: Where did you go to school?

BT: I went to grammar school at Tempe and then Union High School at Tempe.

RM: And what did you do after you got out of school?

BT: I went into the service and from the service I went to work in Las Vegas.

RM: Were you in World War II? Where did you serve?

BT: I served in Stockton, California, and Deming, New Mexico, and Las Vegas, Nevada.

RM: You were at the air base in Las Vegas?

BT: I came here June the 16th, 1943.

RM: What were your duties here?

BT: I was a mess sergeant.

RM: What did you do after you got out of school, Dutch?

BT: We were married in '43.

RM: You met in Arizona?

BT: We got married August 30, 1943. I came out here on the 16th, and then she came out in '43 and on the 30th of August we got married here in Las Vegas.

RM: Did you live here, then?

DT: Yes. We lived in Las Vegas until Bill was discharged from the service, and then he worked for Roberts Roofing in Las Vegas. This probably throws us up to about '46, and a friend, Charles Eisenburg in Las Vegas, brought us to Pahrump just to show it to us.

BT: We were building a home in Las Vegas at that time.

RM: Where were you building the home?

BT: On 2222 Ash. That's right off Stewart, just this side of 25th Street, back this way from 25th Street. Well, it used to be 25th Street; now I don't know what it's called.

RM: It was probably kind of out in the country, then.

DT: Yes, it was.

BT: One reason we liked it was that they have their school buses and things parked on 25th Street, and there used to be a grammar school there. We could watch our boy walk out across the sagebrush to school.

DT: He was 5 years old, and he went over there to kindergarten.

RM: And you were working as a roofer?

BT: I worked as a roofer, and a floor-layer, for Roberts Roofing. I started the floor-covering business for Roberts Roofing.

RM: Was there a lot of activity in Vegas at that time?

BT: You bet. It was always busy - has never been anything but busy. There are always good working conditions here.

RM: Yes. It's amazing, isn't it, how it just always stayed good.

BT: It's been a working man's paradise.

RM: So a friend brought you over to Pahrump to show it to you?

BT: C. B. Eisenburg.

RM: What was he going to show you?

BT: Well, he had been in Pahrump and he and his wife were retired. They had a cafe, and then they were semi-retired.

RM: Was the cafe in Vegas?

BT: Yes. My wife worked for them while I was in the service. We were really close friends, and one Sunday he asked us if we'd like to go see a little valley he'd been to years before. He said he would show it to us; he said it was a pretty place. We took a drive - they had a big old Cadillac and we drove out over Johnnie Road and had a flat tire and we pulled up on top there - what we used to call Johnnie Town.

An old fellow by the name of Matusic lived there. He had a bunch of goats, and he kept the water lines from the mine down to Johnnie patched. You could always stop and get water there in those days. Any time he'd see a car coming, he'd always get out in the road and stop it and visit with you. He never met a stranger. We stopped and visited with him, and then came on up and stopped before we dropped off into the valley - Johnnie - where we could see out across the valley pretty well. I told my wife, [chuckles] "We're going to move out here."

She said, "Bill, you're out of your damn mind." [laughter] And she meant it, too. Because there wasn't anything but some sagebrush, and I could see a couple of well rigs working . . . Pounders were drilling the well up on the 88, and there was another well being drilled which I think was for Ray Van Horn, and I think there was another well being drilled down for Simkin - or for Shurtliff.

RM: Now, what year was this?

BT: It had to be in '46.

RM: What was the 88?

DT: That was the Dorothy Dorothy place. In the beginning it was Van Horn's residence.

BT: Yes, Stringfellow and Van Horn first had that.

RM: Do you know Stringfellow's first name?

BT: I don't know his first name, but he worked [for] Everett. Everett and Ray Van Horn were brothers; Ray was the one who lived here. He was a promoter. At one time he bought the Pahrump Ranch.

DT: Mr. and Mrs. Ray Van Horn were ranchers and large land owners.

RM: OK.

BT: Everett married Harriet - she was a real estate woman in Las Vegas.

RM: Was the 88 a large place at that time?

BT: Well, it wasn't . . . before Dorothys had it, C. B. Dickey had it. When Stringfellow and Van Horn folded up they started selling out and Mr. Dickey bought it.

RM: What year would that have been?

BT: It was in the early '50s.

DT: It would've been in the '50s, because we lived on that ranch. You were foreman for Mr. Dickey.

BT: Yes. When Dickey bought the place I went up there and ran it.

RM: You came into the valley, and they were just drilling a well at the Dorothy place?

DT: That was it.

BT: All there was was a well rig sitting there; that was all.

RM: Then, coming on down the road, what else was there?

BT: The next place we came to was Shurtliff's. That's where Simkins is

now.

RM: And what did that place look like?

BT: They had just cleared off some sagebrush and I met Paul and Allen Simkins that day. They came out and they had a well and they were testing the water. I met Paul and Allen and I met Lynn Shurtliff and we visited for a little bit. They'd just got out of the service and were coming out there. There were 3 or 4 boys coming out who had formed a co-op, to develop that land, but these 2 are the only 2 that stayed - Paul and Allen.

RM: Was it a big property?

BT: It had a lot of acreage; Shurtliff bought a lot of acreage.

RM: Who did he buy it from?

BT: He bought it from the state.

RM: You could buy Pahrump land from the state?

BT: Most of this land at that time was state land that Pahrump didn't own or that Manse didn't own or Pop Buol didn't own; the state owned the rest of it.

RM: How was it the state owned it, and it wasn't federal land?

BT: I learned this by talking with Pop Buol over the years. The state had a lot of land on Mount Charleston up here - on the Green Mountain Range - and the federal government had a lot of land scattered through the valley. They got together and exchanged this land for this land, and that made the reserve so it all belonged to one unit. And that made the valley all state land. Then they sold the state land.

RM: When do you think that was? Was it in this century?

BT: Oh, yes.

BT: I'm sure it was.

BT: Because Frank Buol was a surveyor first. And didn't he end up as an

assemblyman, or something?

BT: Yes, Frank was in the assembly and all, but when he came in here he came in as a surveyor.

RM: Did Buol have interests in Las Vegas?

DT: I'm sure he did.

BT: He may have. He had a lot of interests all over the state. Pop Buol was very knowledgeable. Remember, he was the one who put in the winery, and he had a trading post and he had the mail delivery. He used to go off across the mountain and pick up the mail at Indian Springs and bring it back over.

RM: He'd go over Wheeler Pass?

BT: Over Wheeler Pass and bring the mail in. He was quite a pioneer.

RM: Now, when you came in that first day, what was the next place after the Simkins' place?

BT: From there, the next stop was down at the store. That was the trading post. And at that time Brooks had the trading post.

DT: They were just building it; it was not finished when we came at that time.

RM: Is that the picture of the old Pahrump store that you see?

BT: The old store was over on the Pahrump Ranch, and it had been discontinued. That store was in there long before our time. That was when the stagecoach used to come through and they had the store and things for it.

RM: Do you know where the stagecoach ran when it came through here?

BT: There are so many roads, and they have changed, but we have been down over several of them. I think Tim Hafen may have a sign or two. But you need to be able to find the ruts of the old road down through the Sandy

Valley, coming in from Goodsprings and right up through Sandy and through Pahrump and out that . . . But they'd run out of road for awhile, and that land didn't cost, and nobody said anything; when the ruts got too deep, they just moved over, and here came another road.

RM: Now, who had that store again?

DT: Pawford and Johnnie Brooks.

RM: Do you know where they came from?

DT: No, I don't. I know that they sold it to my brother Vernon Ward and his partner, Guy Pennell. Then it became Pennell and Ward's Trading Post.

RM: And what year did they sell it?

DT: It had to have been in 1947, because that's when I came out. My brother said, "We have to have help, because I can't run a post office [chuckles] and work in the store."

RM: And where was it located?

BT: Right behind the B & B Market.

DT: Right where the B & B Market is now, only it was uphill from the B & B Market; the B & B Market is all a new addition. In back of it is the old, original trading post.

RM: What was sold at the trading post?

DT: Everything that anybody wanted. The truck went to town once a week and if the neighbors were out of seed for their garden they'd come and tell us, and I'd write it down and the big truck would pick it up. It was groceries and things like that.

RM: It was a general store?

DT: [Yes, but] we didn't go into the clothing.

BT: Or hardware.

DT: Yes, but if they had to have a hoe or something like that we would buy

it for them in town.

RM: How big was the interior of the store?

BT: The market part - the store part itself - was probably as big as this room - about 15 x 20. The post office was on the end of it and then the living quarters were on the other end, and the bar.

RM: Oh, I see. There was a bar there, too?

BT: On the north side of the building.

RM: And what was the bar called?

BT: I think they probably called it Brooks', or something like that.

RM: Were there any other businesses in town at that time?

DT: Not at that time.

BT: They had a gas pump there; they served gas. We've got pictures of the gas pump with our little boy standing in front of them; he was 2 years old.

RM: What did they do for services before they built this?

BT: They either went to Shoshone or Beatty or they went to Las Vegas. There were no other services available. You had to be self-sufficient. You depended on your neighbor for help and he depended on you.

RM: You said that when you came out that first time, they were just building the trading post?

BT: Well, they had a store . . .

DT: It was there, and Pawford and Johnnie were building it.

BT: Yes; it was open for business, but they were still working on it.

RM: Then it hadn't been open very long?

DT: Not very long; no.

RM: So could we say that it started in about 1946?

DT: I think you'd be safe in saying that.

BT: You bet. Because the first time we were here they hadn't even got

the bar cleaned up. They'd gone over to - was it Ash Meadows - and got a bar out of that old chicken house and brought it over. Because it was still all dirty and they were cleaning the bar. They had it set in place, but . . .

DT: When my folks bought the trading post, they got rid of the bar because they didn't want to have a bar in there.

RM: What did they do with the space that the bar had occupied?

DT: That was the kitchen and the little restaurant part and the business part. There was a counter there and they cooked and served meals. Everything was rather compact.

RM: Now, coming on down the road, what was next?

BT: That's as far as we went the first time we came in; right to the store. And then we went back up, and back out through Johnnie. It was a long [trip] - it was over 100 miles back to Vegas. It was quite a while before we came back out again.

RM: Now, this was all dirt road from the Tonopah highway?

DT: Yes.

BT: And very little maintenance was ever done on it at that time.

RM: It was a rough road, then?

BT: Yes. They were getting mail delivery in here. Was Johnnie Brooks the postmaster?

DT: She was the postmaster.

BT: And Stan Ford would get mail once a week. And when Stan would go out, the road was so bad he couldn't drive over it, so he'd pull the maintainer up and pull the maintainer back. [chuckles]

DT: And that helped everyone.

BT: [laughs] It helped everybody, so nobody complained. Sometimes if the

county had some money they'd pay Stan. If they didn't have money, well, Stan just did it for nothing.

DT: His son Button Ford is still here - he works for the county.

RM: You went back to Las Vegas, but meanwhile you had said, "We're going to move here?"

BT: Yes. When we came up there and stopped up at Johnnie I told my wife, "We're going to move out here."

And she said, "Bill, you're out of your mind."

RM: What made you say that?

BT: Something about the valley appealed to me; I liked it. It was just a nice day, and you looked out across that valley with the mountains up there and all . . . Hell, and I still get a lump in my throat when I come in the valley and look at it. It still is a good place to live.

RM: What time of year was it when you made that first trip?

BT: I have no idea, but it was sure a pretty day - there was no wind blowing. If the wind had been blowing, I probably never would've been here.

DT: I think it was probably in September, because it was a real pretty day and it wasn't too hot. And it was when we had no air in the car.

RM: So you went back to Las Vegas, and then what happened?

BT: Her brother came out later on and went to work for Mulhall. He was the fellow who owned the Pahrump Ranch. Or, he was buying the Pahrump Ranch. I don't remember the name of the doctor he was buying it from, but Mulhall had the Pahrump Ranch and Vernon worked for him driving a truck, hauling hay out of here. They had those little International K-6 semis pulling the hay.

RM: Where were they hauling it to?

BT: They hauled it to Vegas, they hauled it to California, they hauled it wherever they had it sold. They went out to Shoshone over that dirt road, and they went back to Vegas . . . they just went wherever they needed to go.

RM: Were they baling the hay?

BT: It was baled hay.

RM: Was the road paved from Shoshone on to Baker?

BT: Yes. When they went to Vegas they went out through Johnnie and that way.

RM: And if they went down through Baker they'd take it to . . .

BT: It went to northern California.

DT: But that young Mulhall man was killed. He was landing his plane and had a plane accident and was killed. His sister decided to sell the holdings.

BT: Yes; she just couldn't handle it.

DT: And that's when C. B. Dickey, from Arvin, California, bought the old Pahrump Ranch.

RM: Did you ever meet Mulhall?

BT: I think we met him once or twice over at the Pahrump Ranch. He was awfully busy. A young fellow, but he had lots on the ball.

RM: Was he growing mainly hay?

BT: That's about all Pahrump had; hay and grain and cattle were the main . . .

RM: What was on the Pahrump Ranch at that time? Can you describe . . .?

DT: Yes.

RM: It's in your book, here?

DT: Yes; it's right here.

BT: I remember the first time I walked over there. Walt Williams took out those big old palm trees, the walnut trees and . . . He transplanted most of them along the main drive up there and most of them died.

RM: Were there any fancy buildings or anything?

BT: Yes, there were 3 buildings on the Pahrump Ranch that were fairly nice buildings as buildings go. The Raycraft building was a pretty nice home at that time.

RM: Now, Raycraft was a different ranch, wasn't it?

BT: Yes, but they weren't farming or anything.

RM: Was the Raycraft ranch here the first time you came here?

BT: Yes. It was right back of the store where . . . Bollings live over there now.

DT: In fact, the Bolling place was the Raycraft place.

BT: Because the Bollings bought it.

RM: Was it a working ranch when you came here?

BT: No, I wouldn't call it a working ranch. They weren't farming anything. They had lots of land under fence, but nothing was ever harvested there until . . .

RM: So the 2 working ranches when you came here were the Manse and the Pahrump?

DT: Yes.

RM: Who owned the Manse Ranch?

DT: Mr. Bowman.

RM: Who did Bowman get it from?

BT: It was Dr. Cornell.

RM: So you went back to Vegas, and when did you come back out again?

DT: When [my brother and his partner] bought the store. We came out

because they needed me to help. We brought our 2 little boys, and here we came. In about January, 1948, Johnnie and Pawford Brooks were ready to move away, because they'd sold their trading post. She swore me in as assistant in the post office, and when they left I took over the post office.

RM: What year was it that you moved here?

DT: The latter part of '47.

RM: Where did you live?

BT: There was a little tie and tarpaper shack [chuckles] right in back of the store. She and I lived in that and . . .

DT: With our little boys.

BT: She helped work in the kitchen in the store, and we ate there together.

DT: He's very handy at building things, and he added on living quarters up there so we could move into . . .

BT: I built a tie house there right next to the trading post. It's still sitting up there. They've plastered it, and you'd never know it was what I built to start with.

RM: Where did you get the ties?

BT: From the old railroad tracks. The Pahrump Ranch had [chuckles] lots of ties piled up there. You could get those ties for a nickel apiece. For 20 ties you could put up a pretty good-sized chunk of wall. And you laid them up with mortar; it went up in just a hurry.

RM: Did you offset them just like bricks?

BT: Well, yes. You don't have any joints . . .

RM: How much mortar did you use?

BT: I made a brick mortar just like . . .

RM: Just an inch or so?

BT: Oh, probably. Just enough so it'd go in. It would scootch out and you - psssht. Hell, a dollar was a dollar.

RM: Did you wet the tie first?

BT: No, because you mix that mortar, and by the time you set it on there it would soak up and stiffen up to where the next layer, then, would hold that tie and you could . . . but it still would be stiff enough that you could tap it out and level it up.

RM: And was it solid?

BT: You bet it was solid. And you always put a 2-by-8 up for door finishing. And you always lapped the corners . . . everything was tied together. The Bowmans' tie house is still standing. They built one just like I built mine. That's a regular good-looking house today. Just drive in there and go down where the big cottonwood trees are, past the horses, and you can see that tie house sitting there.

RM: Your children weren't school-age when you came, were they?

DT: No.

RM: Was there a school in Pahrump at that time?

DT: Yes. It was right across from where the Valley Bank is now.

BT: And back down towards Shoshone a little.

CHAPTER TWO

DT: I think there were 13 children in the little school at that time.

RM: Were they mainly white children or were there a lot of Indians?

BT: It was about half and half; it might have been leaning a little bit

toward the Indians.

RM: And did it go to the 8th grade?

DT: From the 1st to the 8th grade.

RM: What did the kids do who wanted to go on to high school?

BT: Their parents took them and sent them out to live somewhere, or something like that. But later on, we made arrangements - took them to Shoshone.

DT: They went to Death Valley High School, California.

BT: And then we hauled them into Vegas. But that was in later years.

DT: And they used to bring my mail out - it would come out early in the morning on the high school bus, and then it would take our children back in to Las Vegas. But it was not called a school bus, because it was a regular bus.

RM: Like a Greyhound bus?

BT: Like LTR.

RM: That was more comfortable for the kids, wasn't it?

BT: Yes, but it didn't work out, so then we got a station wagon and the county hired somebody to drive it. The school kids drove it for a while, and we got them educated, but God, it was a struggle. Kids would get on [chuckles] - girls would have their hair up in curlers and in their bathrobe, and boys would be asleep. They picked our boy up at 5:00 in the morning.

BT: And he was the last one to get off that bus in the evening.

DT: Yes, but you're back up into the '60s now.

RM: Dutch, you worked at the post office, in the store, helping your family and living in the house in back. And what did you do, Bill?

BT: I worked in Vegas a lot.

RM: You commuted to Vegas?

BT: Well, I stayed there for a while and then I'd commute. I didn't commute right at first. I worked on the Pahrump Ranch for a while and then I worked with a well driller out here for a while, drilling wells. After Dickey took the Pahrump Ranch over, I went to work for a fellow by the name of Garland Emery. He was the foreman for Dickey. He got caught in a bind - he fired his cook and he had about 15 men working over there on the ranch. He said, "Bill, they tell me you can cook a bit?"

I said, "Yes.

He said, "You just come over for a couple or 3 days and help me out here, till I get a cook here."

And you know, it was damn near a year before he got that cook up there. [laughter]

DT: The old mess sergeant doing it again. [laughter]

BT: But we were all good friends. Garland and I were good friends.

RM: He had about 15 men there? Was that a year-around force?

BT: Usually in the wintertime they'd close down, but there were quite a bunch of cattle. Now, her dad was working on the ranch at the time, and he was taking care of cattle quite a bit; helping with the cattle. They had some pretty nice cattle.

RM: What were they - Herefords?

BT: Yes.

RM: Were they feeding them the alfalfa?

BT: Yes, and there was pasture for them to pasture in.

RM: Was it irrigated pasture?

BT: It was all irrigated; sure.

RM: Do you have any idea how many head they had?

BT: Not anymore I don't; no. I would say there were probably 150 mother cows at the peak when I was there. But they would fluctuate up and down. They'd sell off . . . and then they got in a bunch of Brahmas.

RM: Were they using the hands mainly with alfalfa?

BT: When Dickey bought it, they did a lot of experimenting. They were really going toward cotton because Dickey was a cotton and potato farmer. In fact, when he bought the upper part of the Dorothy Dorothy place - the 88 - I went up there and ran it for him.

RM: Did he buy that before or after he bought the Pahrump Ranch?

BT: After he bought the Pahrump Ranch. He bought it from Stringfellow and Van Horn; when they sold out Dickey bought it. I went up there and ran the place for him. He wanted to try potatoes and I planted 27 acres of white potatoes in there. Those were, I guess, the first commercial potatoes grown in the Pahrump Valley.

RM: How did it go?

BT: We had a good yield, but I don't know how it happened - we got some bad seed potato. What they called fusarian rot was in the seed potatoes. It was supposed to have been certified potato seed, but it was . . . And it had fusarian rot in it, and every potato you dug out of the ground had to have the end cut off. They went as Number 2 potato. It was just too bad.

RM: Do you remember what year that was?

BT: No, I don't. It was in the early '50s, though.

RM: So they didn't make any money on it?

BT: No. We just planted them the one year. The yield was good, but for another thing, the growing season is bad in here for timing. You couldn't bring your crop off ahead of anywhere else. Potatoes would hit the market, and then you'd come in in the middle of the market when the prices were

back down. It just wasn't a place to grow vegetables. I never did think it was too good. It would produce some good vegetables, but not for the market.

RM: You don't get in here earlier than other places?

BT: No, this area is very marginal. We have a late . . . like, this year. We'd have been ruined with cotton if we'd been growing cotton here this year, because of this cold weather and the rain. You've got to have the cotton coming out of the ground between the 15th and 20th of April. If you don't have that cotton in and sprouting, you're not going to make a cotton crop.

RM: What else did you grow besides potatoes?

BT: Our allotment for that year was 211 acres of cotton, and I had in potatoes, and I'd put in some sudan grass.

RM: What is a sudan grass?

BT: It's a feed, but just to see it growing, you'd think it was a field of Johnson grass. Johnson grass is tall; that grass down there was 6, 7-foot high.

RM: What were they growing that for?

BT: Seed.

RM: What did they do with the seeds?

BT: They threshed and sold the seed to buyers; trucked it out to California to a seed outfit. Sudan grass is used for feed, mostly.

RM: I see. Do they cut it, or do they just let them graze on it?

BT: They cut it and bale it, or you can get quite a bit of pasture off it; it's just one of the numerous legumes for feed.

RM: Why did they call the Dorothy Dorothy place 88?

DT: Dorothy Dorothy called it the 88.

BT: I don't know why they named it the 88. I never did know why . . . I called it the 88 because it was easier to say than the Dorothy place. It's just like down from there - 2 young boys bought Ray Van Horn out and they made a sign for a brand. I was driving down the road and I saw the sign, and I said, "That looks like dollar sign." Well, for years that place was known as the Dollar Sign. Everybody referred to it [that way] because their names were odd. After they lost the place, and it reverted back to Ray Van Horn, it was still known as the Dollar Sign for years. I was watching those boys put that sign up, and I [called it a dollar sign], and they said, "Oh, no." They told me what the brand was supposed to be, but what it was supposed to be and what it looked like were 2 different things. It looked like a dollar sign, and that's what people called it.

RM: Dutch, what was going on at the post office and at the store at this time?

DT: Not much. People were coming in to work on the . . .

BT: It has been steady growth that has never slacked down one day.

DT: We had 78 people - now, this was everybody and their cousins - that got their mail in Pahrump in 1948. March, 1948 is when I postmarked this, and it had my name on it, so I know that was . . . I was really replacing Mrs. Brooks in the very last month, so it would've been December of '47.

RM: Is there anything that stands out in your mind about being a postmaster during this period?

DT: Oh, everyone was very friendly and nobody asked for anything special. If they needed anything and I was home I would go and open up the post office and get whatever they needed. For instance, if they had been to Las Vegas or someplace and couldn't get there before the office closed, I'd go in and get it for them. Our mail came in on Tuesday morning, and many

times on a Tuesday night we had a big dance right around the groceries. My brother played the guitar and I played the fiddle and we'd dance in there. Everybody came after their mail and stayed and danced.

RM: Did they bring food and . . .?

DT: No. It was just for fun - something different.

BT: To break the monotony.

DT: Stan Ford went and picked the mail up at the Tonopah highway and brought it back by way of Johnnie.

RM: And then you put it up that day?

DT: Right. I only had to work 4 hours a week.

RM: And that's all you got paid for?

DT: Oh, yes. But I didn't have to go to work every day. Of course, if somebody came in requested their mail, I'd run up and get it, as I said.

RM: Were you also working in the store?

DT: You bet. It was all right.

RM: Was there a lot of credit in those days?

DT: There was lot of credit; yes.

BT: Everything was credit till payday.

DT: Because the ranches or farms around had their regular paydays. Their people would come up and buy their groceries and we'd put it on a tab and everything was fine; we never lost a dime.

RM: You probably knew everybody, didn't you, because of the mail?

DT: Oh, sure; you bet.

RM: Could you describe what social life was like in the valley then?

BT: Generally everyone had a light plant, but we were so damn hard up we didn't run those light plants around the clock; we'd run them when we needed them. If you drove into the valley at night and saw a light on at

somebody's house you always went there. [One of] 2 things was happening - either somebody was sick, or they were having a party. And you knew that they would like for you to be there for whatever. [laughter] That's the way the people were in this valley when we came here.

RM: People were very close and friendly?

BT: Oh, they were.

DT: Everyone helped.

RM: When a new person came in, was he readily accepted into the group?

DT: Yes.

BT: You took him at face value. You didn't ask him what he'd done before, or what he was going to do tomorrow - it's what he did today, and that's the way he was accepted.

RM: What about any church activity, or religious activities in the valley at this period?

BT: LDS had the only services - up at the Manse Ranch.

RM: Were there many LDS people here at that time?

BT: Bowmans and Shurtliffs and Simkins were LDS. I'd say over 50 percent of the people were LDS.

RM: Were there any people who held services for other denominations that you know of?

DT: Not at that time. Later the missionaries came in and they did church work.

RM: What role did the radio play in the valley?

BT: Everything.

RM: Did everybody have a radio in those days?

BT: Sure. We had a battery-operated radio, because it was the most efficient. You could pick up stations all over the country with a good

one. But you didn't run it just anywhere; [you ran it] for the news, and sometimes for entertainment. I got an old wind-up Victrola for the kids to play records on; that's what they learned to dance to.

RM: Did the women get together for social activities like sewing, or making quilts or anything like that?

DT: I'm sure that some of the women did, that weren't busy; the LDS women did.

BT: That's one nice thing about the LDS religion - they've always built their religion on family life and the home. It's great.

To back up, Pop Buol said there was very little cash money. [chuckles] Now, this little Indian basket was made by Louie Sharpe's mother when she was a young girl, here in the valley. When she was an old woman I took the basket down there and was going to get her to sign it before she died. But she wasn't able to. I couldn't get through to her what I wanted her to do, so I just brought it back. Pop Buol gave me that basket. I was drinking wine with him one day, and he said, "I'll give you a basket that . . ." and he called her by name - Annie Beck. She was then married to a white fellow - Beck was a white man. When she was a young girl here, she brought that basket up and traded it to Pop Buol for supplies at the store. He had it sitting on the shelf and he gave it to me when he was over here.

I used to like to go and have a glass of wine and get Pop to talking about the valley, and why he came here. He lived back east and came out here when he was a young fellow. He read an article in the paper advertising . . . After the state and government made this exchange on land they opened the state land up for purchase and there was no surveyor or anything in, so Pop Buol came here at that time. The way they surveyed [was by] putting a mark on a wagon wheel. You measured the distance around

the wagon wheel and you drove down the road with the team and counted the revolutions, and when a mile came up, you dropped a chunk of wood down or put up a pile of rock or bent over a sagebrush or something. He said he surveyed out the land that bought. That's about when Pop Buol came to Pahrump Valley.

RM: Do you know when that was?

BT: Oh, I have no earthly idea; I wouldn't even say.

RM: But he came here because he had heard about the land?

BT: Well, being a surveyor, and in that kind of environment, news of this land exchange, when it became public, was available to him, and he came in here and did the work.

RM: What was his background, besides surveying?

BT: He was a politician and a rancher and promoter.

RM: How many acres did he have?

BT: Oh, my gosh, I don't know. Pop Buol sold land to a lot of people; he had lots of land interests.

RM: Could you tell me some of the things he was doing with his land?

BT: The only thing he had at his place was a grape vineyard. The winery had closed down but he still made a lot of wine, and he grew a lot of nuts. He had the only place in the state that had pistachios at that time. He had 5 trees, and then he had a male tree planted in the middle, and they all just [chuckles] loaded up like you can't believe.

RM: And nobody's ever tried to grow them since?

BT: Not that I know of. But he had a unique situation there. Coming off this mountain, we get lots of different air currents in the valley. I got really educated on these air currents. Pop Buol's place would be the first to become green in the spring, and the last place to freeze in the fall.

Pop probably had the longest growing season on that little area of anyplace in the valley that I ever noticed.

RM: Tell me again where Pop Buol's place was?

BT: Do you know where Wilson Street is?

RM: Yes.

BT: Right where all those tamarac trees are - off to the right as you go west on Wilson - was Pop Buol's place. He sold it to Doby Doc Caudil.

DT: Well, who bought the old tie house down there - was that Pop's? Because that's where Helen Cayton had the post office for a while, at the time we came out here - in '45 and '46.

BT: Yes, before Brooks moved it up to the store.

DT: That's right. Now, who has that . . .

BT: It never did have a floor in it, or anything. They built the walls up and never did finish the inside.

DT: But who has the old tie house now?

BT: I don't know who has it now.

DT: Does it have a name?

BT: It doesn't have a name; there are some trailer houses parked . . .

RM: So Buol initially got a lot of land, and then sold it over the years?

DT: Yes, he did.

RM: Did he start his winery after Prohibition ended?

BT: I guess so, because it was a bonded and licensed distillery. He used to ship out wine to friends around the state. It was good wine; that old man made the best wine. After he discontinued his winery, [but when] Pop was real active and took care of his grapes, the sugar content was so high in his grapes that they would come from California every year and pick up all of his grapes in a truck and haul them back down and use them. That

was when I first came out here.

RM: Did he have a lot of vines?

BT: Oh, not too much; maybe 3 or 4 acres. But he had different varieties in; he really took care of them. He watched the water, and he'd bring that sugar content right up. That's what he got in trouble with on the winery - I think why he closed it . . . The government closed him because he had too much alcohol in his wine.

RM: What happened to his vines?

BT: People just let it deteriorate - you've got to take care of stuff.

RM: What happened to Pop Buol?

BT: He died in the hospital in Tonopah. He got too senile to take care of himself.

RM: Did he live to be pretty old?

BT: I think he was in his 80s.

RM: I wonder how old he was when he came here?

BT: In his 20s, I imagine.

RM: Really? He was here a long time.

BT: He was here quite a while.

DT: He was a very interesting person to listen to.

BT: Yes; very far-thinking. He was a good man. He had a little trading post of his own; it was Buol's trading post.

RM: It wasn't here when you got here, was it?

BT: No, but the artifact I showed you came out of the store. He was living in the building where he had had the store when I . . . He'd go into Vegas, or wherever he'd go, and bring out a wagonload of supplies. He'd have flour and beans and rice and condiments and things like that, and whatever anybody would order, he'd have for them. It was just a little

trading post, you know. But it had been out of business for years, I guess, before we came out. He never did say when he discontinued it.

RM: I want to make sure that I haven't cut you off on the social life here. Did you have any more to say about that?

BT: OK. [chuckles] One thing we had was a poker club. Many of us played poker; the Simkins, my wife and I, Garland Emery . . . there'd usually be about 2 tables - probably 10 to 15 people played. We had a $2 limit - that's all you could lose. Couldn't lose over $2.

DT: And when you lost your $2 you had to go and fix breakfast for everyone. [laughs] It was interesting.

BT: And at a certain time of night, we brought it to a halt, and win, lose or draw, that was the end of it. You had to have something to go to, and everybody looked forward to it.

RM: Did you do that on a weekly basis?

BT: I think it was about once a week.

DT: Probably about once a week; when you work all day in the fields, like Bill was doing, you didn't feel like sitting up and playing poker at night.

BT: In the early '50s I drove back and forth every day to Las Vegas to work. There was a a one-lane dirt road going out through Mountain Springs and down that way into Vegas. I could go faster that way than I could around by Johnnie. I'd leave here in the morning, and drive in and work and come back out that evening, and there wouldn't be another car track on that road all day long.

RM: How long did it take you to make that trip?

BT: If the car held together and I didn't have to stop and go to sleep, [chuckles] 2 hours.

RM: So you were on the road 4 hours a day?

BT: Four hours a day to work 8, 10 hours - 12 hours.

RM: What were you doing in Vegas?

BT: I was laying floors for Roberts Roofing.

DT: That was after we got our homestead; we homesteaded the 160 acres down there.

CHAPTER THREE

BT: We had some of the finest quail shooting in the country. Dickey had 3 partners when he bought the Pahrump Ranch - a group of fellows bought it originally - and when they first came up here, what sold the ranch was the quail shooting. It was fantastic.

RM: Where did the quail live?

BT: There's a big slough on the Pahrump Ranch - water runs through there. There were ponds down through there and lots of willows and high sagebrush and they had feed lots all down through there where we fed the cattle in the wintertime. There were thousands of quail. We had good duck hunting in the wintertime, and the fellows would come down from Tonopah on visits and stay at the Pahrump Ranch. We did lots of hunting. It was just a man's kind of country. There was a bunch of us who enjoyed that - the duck shooting and the quail hunting and the doves . . .

RM: There were a lot of doves here, too?

BT: In September in the dove season the doves would be thicker than the devil. There's always been a heavy migratory area - a nesting area up here for doves. I've seen them so thick in these fields it looked like - it blots - they were thick all over.

RM: How about deer and antelope hunting?

BT: Well, they had deer hunting up on the mountain. But, you know, you'd go out there on Mount Charleston and it was kind of like hunting in your own back yard. You'd rather get in the car and drive 300 or 400 miles to go deer hunting where it was probably not nearly as good a hunting area.

There used to be a lot of deer on Mount Charleston. Elmer Bowman ran cattle on the mountain; he had all that range. I've helped Elmer gather the cattle on the mountain up there. One morning we hauled the horses in the truck . . . There used to be a fellow by the name of Williams [who] homesteaded and put in a few fruit trees and built a house. He went up into what is now known as Trout Canyon, but in those days we called it the Upper Williams and the Lower Williams. He went up into the canyon to the spring and made a sluice, or flume, and brought the water down and irrigated his garden and his orchard and things there where his house was.

Well, we kept horses up there, and we'd unload, and that was as far as you could drive a car, anyway. From there we'd go horseback on up the mountain to get the cattle off. In the fall we'd have to bring them down out of there. Most of them would come down out, but there'd always be a bunch that would stay and we'd have to go in there and kick them out and run them off and bring them out. One morning, riding up to get out on top, to Upper Williams, going up past the head of the springs where you'd climb out on top, I counted 128 deer sitting there in different bunches - as I kicked them out of the brush going up. And I never went up there that an elk or 2 wouldn't jump out. Mountain lions, I think, are the biggest thing that causes the most damage to the game. They've just been let go loose.

RM: Are there a lot of lions up there?

BT: They'll come and go. If there's a lot of game then there'll be a lot

of lions. If there's not much game, there won't be many lions. You'd be up around the waterholes - springs, seeps - up on the mountain, and you'd find cat kills all along. Right along the trail going up you could find cat kills along the trail - they were quite plentiful. Around all the water holes over on Wheeler and all up in around Williams and this next canyon over - there's a big spring up in there - you'd always find a lot of cat kills. When we were running cattle up there and working it all the time, where you're riding like that, out in the woods, you notice things. It was too bad, but you can't hunt those cats. You can't run them with dogs because this country's too rough. There's no place you'd ride a horse to follow dogs. And you can't follow a cat afoot in that country; there are too many bluffs.

RM: How did they control them?

BT: They didn't control them; that's what happened to the game.

RM: So the game up there - the deer and everything - is not what it used to be?

BT: I don't think so. I haven't gone up there and hunted for years. I just kind of backed off of it. I never once applied for an elk tag up there - they were always too damn pretty. They only had a few, but they got too plentiful and they needed to have the olds culled out and to keep the herd to a certain level. The fish and game division have done - I think - one hell of a job on the regulation of their game up there.

RM: How about fishing up there, Bill?

BT: The only fishing . . . they used to stock over on the other side of the mountain - Cold Creek. I never did go over there - it was for Boy Scouts and things. They'd place them in there for them to fish.

RM: How about hunting on the mountains to the west, or out towards Sandy?

BT: Nothing; it's all too barren. I told you earlier about currents coming off the mountain - cold currents? This side of the valley is real green and pretty - the sagebrush is high and rich-looking. You go across on the west side of the valley and the sagebrush is stubby and there are no shrubs on the sides of the mountain or anything. That cold air comes right in off the mountain up there, and comes across the valley . . . We won't have any frost here, or the ground won't freeze, until you get over against that mountain over there, and it'll be frozen harder than hell and 10 to 15 degrees colder. This whole valley's that way - right down through here.

RM: Then the east side of the valley is warmer than on the west side?

BT: Yes. That cold comes right down off the mountain and sits right in against those mountains. You have 60 to 70 days less growing season on the west side of the valley than you have on the east side.

RM: Sixty to 70 days! Is it noticeable up closer to the road, versus out here?

BT: Yes. The farther you go that way, the shorter the season. It's the currents coming down off the mountain and settling in that low place.

RM: Bill, how in the world did you ever keep a vehicle together, making that round trip to Las Vegas every day?

BT: Well, I don't know. I didn't have too many breakdowns, as far as cars went, but I had lots of tire trouble.

RM: Did you have any secrets for keeping tires on it?

BT: No. Lots of air in your tires - I ran all the air that tire would hold; whatever the maximum pressure was.

RM: We used to do that up in Reveille Valley.

BT: It makes a lot rougher ride - oh, boy.

RM: Yes, it does. [laughs]

BT: One night I was coming home from work and coming up the mountain on the other side, and that old dirt road would get so corduroyed that you just bounced sideways over the old . . . I got about where that cave is on the side of the road, and I tore the whole . . . every gear, I think, went out on the rear end; [chuckles] it just stripped everything else. I backed down the hill and got that thing turned around and let it coast as far as it would coast. That was before the freeway or anything was built in there. I coasted as far as that car would coast and got out and then walked on down. Where the road came into the old L.A. highway on the right-hand side there was a little building and service station, and they had a telephone. I called my brother-in-law and he came out and got me about midnight. I went in and stayed all night with him and went to work next day, and got a car from my boss and came home the next day. This was in the early '50s. But I could drive back and forth to work in there. I was drawing good wages. I made good money and did better than I could working by the hour out here for $1 an hour.

RM: Is that what they were paying on the ranches - $1 a hour?

BT: $1 an hour; yes.

RM: What could you make in town - $2 or $3?

BT: Oh, more than that.

RM: Wages have always been good in Vegas, haven't they?

BT: It's been too damn good for . . . people flock in here from everywhere else in the wintertime; the climate was good, and then they'd begin to cut the prices. "We'll do this if you'll let us work for a little bit less; a little bit less." And it would take 2 or 3 months for people to get back again. They'd all move out; as soon as the hot weather comes, they're gone. But thank God for our unions.

RM: Did you ever work for the Test Site?

BT: Yes, I did. I put in 14 years with the Test Site; right at the gate and at Well 3.

RM: My dad worked at Area 12 for 15 years.

BT: I was up in Area 12, but I'd just go up to do a job and then come back.

RM: What were you doing?

BT: I was a combination welder/mechanic.

RM: Did you live out at Mercury, or did you commute?

BT: Oh, I commuted most of the time. But I kept a room there nearly all the time because when I got off work I hated to just go crawl in the car and head for home. If I'd go to the room and take a shower and change clothes and wait a little bit I was much better [able] to go home.

RM: How long did it take to make the commute to Mercury?

BT: From Vegas - I figured about 3 hours driving time a day, and from here we had dirt road for a long time when I was driving back and forth, before they paved that road.

RM: Do you mean the road to Johnnie?

BT: Yes, we went out that way. It was dirt road, and it was pretty rough. You could tear the cars up very [chuckles] . . .

RM: I believe it. [chuckles] What did that take you?

BT: An hour and a half to drive to Mercury, or 2 hours.

RM: When did you folks take up your homestead?

BT: We came to get this homestead because I was over at Pop Buol's drinking wine one day with him, and talking property. I was always digging Pop about things. He told me, "You know, Bill, when they made this exchange back and forth on this land, down here on the . . ." - and I

forget now the section number - "they forgot to list a half a section in that exchange." And he said, "That's still government land."

Well, I went up to Tonopah, and looked at the records, and then my wife and I and the kids got in the old car and drove up to Carson City and I looked over the land records and I went in and talked to the head in there. He said, "Why, there ain't no way you could file on that homestead." Well, when he said, that, hell, I filed right then.

Dutch used to tell me, "If you ever drown, I'll never look for you downstream where the water will carry other people. You'll float upstream, you rat." But when he told me that I couldn't file on that 160, I filed. Well, I'll tell you, it hit the fan. Man, that was a mistake that Washington made; BLM and all of them made a big mistake. I filed on it, and we went back and forth, and then they wouldn't let me have a water permit - all kinds of stuff. Finally, after about 3 years, they turned around and give me . . . [chuckles]

DT: One of the requirements of a homestead is that you have enough water on it to irrigate and take care of your farm.

BT: What I really finally nailed them on was . . . I like the constitution. It's a hell of an instrument. In the constitution it says you are entitled to enough water from above the ground or below the ground or from rainfall to profitably operate the piece of property you own. And they can't take that away from you. When they said I didn't own that homestead, I said, "Well, the thing that's keeping me from owning is that you won't give me a permit to get this well water from down underneath the ground to irrigate it with." They had to give me the right to drill, and I got my water permit. That's where we got our homestead; we got the first homestead issued in the Pahrump Valley.

DT: It was a regular homestead.

BT: Yes; it wasn't a Desert Entry. We had our homestead and had already drilled a well on it before they ever got township 25 surveyed and blocked out for homesteads.

DT: And then they later became our neighbors over there under the Desert Land Entry.

RM: I see. That came later, didn't it?

DT: Yes. They were over there . . .

BT: Township 25 was the section they laid out on Desert Land Entry.

RM: When did you file on your homestead?

BT: Oh, about 1949.

RM: How many acres did you file?

BT: One hundred and sixty, and it cost $2.25 an acre.

RM: Did you build a place on it, then?

BT: We did, but it's been torn down and it's gone. We sold the property, and people come and took the house - parts of this and parts of that.

RM: When did you sell it?

BT: Twenty-six years ago. We sold it before we went to Vegas, didn't we? Before Leroy was born. It was about '61 or '62 when we sold it.

DT: I don't know, dear.

RM: OK, so you kept it - and did you live on it, then?

BT: As soon as we drilled the well we moved onto the place.

DT: We hit artesian water, so we had plenty of water for household use. There just wasn't enough to irrigate with.

BT: We drilled 2 wells, and never did get enough water to irrigate.

RM: But they let you keep it anyway?

BT: No, we got enough to . . . You plant 40 acres to a crop. You have a

certain number . . .

DT: Any number that . . .

BT: I had to take pictures of it and furnish proof of development, fenced, and a livable house, and we did all that. They came [out to inspect it, and] they said if there had been just one little bitty squeeze hole, they have . . .

RM: Oh, yes - they were looking for an out, weren't they?

BT: I think so.

DT: But we got the title to the 160 acres.

RM: And where is that located now?

BT: Down on Turner Boulevard.

RM: Turner Boulevard? It's named after you, then?

BT: I built the road.

DT: He built the road. Hafen Ranch Road runs right into Turner.

RM: So I just go down Hafen Ranch Road . . .

BT: It makes a big turn 'way down there past the gravel pit and turns to the right and goes down that way for a mile and a half. It runs right into Homestead.

DT: And it runs past it, I guess, because there's Turner Boulevard clear out the other side . . .

RM What did you grow on your 40 acres?

BT: I put in grain and cotton.

RM: And did you farm it the whole time you were there, or . . .

BT: No. I saw what the water situation was, and I was broke, and there was no way I could go ahead and develop any more water at that time. We got a chance to sell it and we sold it.

RM: Could you have developed water to farm the whole thing?

BT: Yes. I messed the second well up myself.

DT: I think he really could have done it.

BT: The second well was a good well, and I messed it up. It was nobody's fault but mine.

RM: How did you mess it up?

BT: Ignorance, and being broke - you know, not having money to do it right. Trying to haphazardly do something. I was putting in bad casing. I put in cheap casing and just messed the well up. You have quicksand problems down there at about 160, 170 feet. It would fill in with quicksand, and fill clear up, and I'd go in and clean it out, and run the pump in. It would just pump like hell, and fill it back up with quicksand, and it'd fill up. After about 3 or 4 times of that, I couldn't do it any more and I just quit.

RM: You mentioned that you moved to Vegas, then.

DT: We went in there and had our babies. We brought 2 little boys with us when we came out here, and I was the postmaster. And we were expecting the third little boy - Richard - so we went into Las Vegas and Bill worked in there and we had Richard and . . .

RM: And was this after you sold the homestead?

DT: No. That was before the homestead. Then we brought Dick and came back out and I took the exam and was appointed postmaster.

RM: Now, you started as postmaster here when you came out, and how long were you postmaster?

DT: At that time, until Dick was expected, and he was born in 1950.

RM: And that's when you went to Vegas?

DT: Yes, we went to Vegas.

RM: So you were only in Pahrump about 2 or 3 years initially.

DT: Richard was born and then the lady who was working for the post office had to move or something, so I heard about it and I came back out and they made me postmaster again.

RM: Was it still in the trading post?

DT: Yes.

RM: Was it still a weekly delivery?

DT: I think we had the mail twice a week then.

BT: Anyway, she was postmaster until we had our 2 little girls, and then along came Leroy.

DT: Then we left again.

RM: That would be the 6th child?

BT: That was the 6th child; yes. We were gone about a year that time.

DT: Yes. And at that time you had to go in and take the exam in Las Vegas - the whole nine yards. I did it. I've been appointed postmaster 3 times now.

BT: I think she's about the only one in the state who's ever had that . . .

RM: Really; that's unusual.

DT: Yes. I really like the work; if I could get over this, I'd go back to work tomorrow. There's no retirement age for a postmasters - you work as long as you can.

BT: Here's an example of her reputation. She had a hell of a reputation here - people liked her and she liked people. We have a friend who lives here in the valley and years ago she was on jury duty. She was up at Tonopah and it was her birthday. She went to a cafe and decided to celebrate her birthday and ordered a big meal, and she didn't have enough money to pay for it. She didn't know anybody in Tonopah; she was a

stranger. She went up to the cashier and told them that she'd like to write a check for her meal, with no identification, no bank - she had banked in Vegas, where we all did. They said . . . How did that go, Dutch?

DT: They said, "Do you know the postmaster in Pahrump?"

And she said, "Yes, I know Dutch Turner very well - Frances Turner."

And they said, "No problem. Order what you like." [laughter]

But that's how small places . . .

RM: When did they move the post office out of the trading post?

BT: They moved it next door to the Cotton Pickin' and we had a big celebration and had bleachers set up and everything.

RM: Was that when you got your own post office building?

DT: Yes; we had a real building then.

BT: Pop Buol had the first post office that I know of; any mail deliveries were at Pop Buol's trading post. And then the next time I heard about a mail deal was in the old tie house over on Wilson Street. From the tie house on Wilson Street it moved to the trading post that we know as the trading post now - the Pahrump Trading Post. And from there they then moved over to Heiliger's, by the Cotton Pickin' Bar, and it was there for quite a while - that was a separate building. And then it moved up to where it is today.

BT: So that's about - Pop Buol, Helen Cayton, Johnnie Brooks, Dutch Turner . . .

DT: Marie Spencer?

BT: Marie Spencer - but I'm saying 5 locations, honey.

RM: Yes; almost since you came. When did you retire from the post office, Dutch?

DT: I was injured in 1974 and had to leave. I was lifting the mail, and

put a package up on my scales and turned the wrong way and ruptured a disk in my lower spine.

RM: Then you haven't worked there since?

DT: No. I haven't been able to.

RM: Do you remember how many people were on the rolls in '74?

DT: No, I don't. But we were getting mail every day; Betty Lacomb was driving the mail truck out here to deliver the rural route.

BT: Wasn't '74 when we started trying to get the bank in here? And you and Tim sat down and projected the growth of the valley. She and Tim and Jackie came down one evening and they got together and were figuring the projected growth of the valley for the next . . .

DT: We figured 10,000 people by 1990.

BT: And I don't think we're going to miss it very far.

BT: No, we've been just about even with our projections every year since.

CHAPTER FOUR

BT: They figured the growth of the valley. She could go back and see how many people were getting mail this 6 months and this 6 months and this . . . they just took that curve and prorated it on out and then they used that information when we were getting the bank established in here.

DT: We received notice to move on the homestead in 1953; it took them that long to approve it. So we sold our home in Vegas and were here to stay.

BT: We had a home in there, but we had been renting it for a long time.

RM: Do you still have your home in there?

BT: No, we sold it; stuck it in that well. [laughs] Let me tell you, you

can pound a lot of money into a hole, in a hurry. [laughter]

RM: That's right. [laughs] Tell me about some of the business establishments that came along in the valley. What was the next one after the trading post?

BT: Bars. Dan Murphy had a bar and Jim Cruse had one.

RM: Did the bars have names?

BT: There was no imagination at all - just Murphy's Bar and Jim's Bar.

RM: Where were they located?

BT: Murphy's Bar was located where the Feed Bag Cafe is. It was just a big old building there.

RM: Is it the same building?

BT: No, Murphy's burned down and Jim Cruse's place burned down. That was out as you go towards Shoshone at the state line on your right just as you start out of the valley.

RM: And when were they built?

BT: Oh, in the '60s.

RM: Then all through the '50s there was just the trading post here?

BT: That's about it, but there was a bar. Jim's Bar was the first one in the valley.

DT: Didn't Rusty Horgan have a bar with someone?

BT: He and Dan Murphy built that other bar back up this way, but they built that after Jim. Rusty Horgan bought land with Dan Murphy. He bought a lot of land and then sold it off and . . .

RM: What other businesses came along in the valley then?

BT: The Harrises put in a service station right where the bank is sitting now. Then they sold out to Leroy Vaughn.

DT: And Leroy sold out to Mankins.

BT: The Harrises got the land from Dickey and built the station there.

RM: Was that intersection on the old Pahrump Ranch?

BT: Yes, it was part of the Pahrump Ranch. Well, the Pahrump Ranch was a big place; lots of acres in there. There were 22,000 acres in the original Pahrump Ranch when we came here and the Manse Ranch was almost as big. The Manse and Kellogg were pretty well tied together. All this part down in here was Kellogg, and that part up there was Manse. Where the ranch house is - where those trees are - there was a big spring - the Manse Spring.

And there was one before - years ago - when the freight lines used to come through here - Stagecoach Springs. There was a Frenchman who had the Manse. They say he grew grapes there - had a winery. [chuckles] The stagecoach came in there one time and [laughs] they saw this man out there in this big vat. They went over there and all he had on was his straw hat and his shirt. He had his shirt tied up, and he was bare-assed naked from there on down, stomping grapes. [laughs] I often wondered how in the world you'd ever drink it if you ever knew where that wine came from. [laughs] That's the tale they tell about it - oh, it was funny; I laughed at that.

RM: [chuckles] That guy's name wasn't Yount, was it?

BT: Yount's - yes, I think that was the name of it.

DT: We moved out of the trading post into the first new post office, which was near where the Cotton Pickin' Saloon is, in 1967.

RM: You were in the trading post a long time, then.

BT: Yes - for years. The post office was in the Trading Post for years.

DT: We didn't get the new office until '67. Yes, with all my going and coming, I was there quite a while. [laughs]

BT: She'd go down early in the morning and open up and give Stan the mail.

One morning she went down there and there was a garter snake in that mail sack. [laughter]

DT: This snake had just slithered down into a mail bag. You put the letters in when you tie them together. I reached in to get it [laughter] and I screamed . . . I'm scared to death of snakes. I ran out of that office, and I said, "I'm not going back in there."

Stan went ahead and locked my mail bag - I watched him to be sure it was locked - and I didn't go in until they got the snake out. I hate snakes.

BT: It was so funny. After she got the mail boxes . . . The boxes come down to the floor. She knew everybody who came in and out of that door and one girl came sauntering in there one day [laughs] - it was just about closing time - and was getting her mail. Her box was up here and she was working her combination, and Dutch sneaked up and opened up the box down below and reached through and grabbed her by the leg. [laughs] Oh, my God! Poor old lady - lost her mind. And we had a tall fellow who was gin manager - George Slater. He and his wife bought the tie house and they did a lot of remodeling.

RM: Was that the tie houses that you built?

BT: No, that was that one where Helen Cayton had a post office.

DT: Where the post office was before Brooks' Trading Post.

BT: But anyway, George was sitting there [laughs] and he was a big, tall, slender fellow. She reached out and . . .

DT: Shook his hand. When he reached for his mail, I just reached in and shook his hand; frightened him to death.

BT: He hadn't forgotten it. He's a professor in some big university now. He came by and called us and wanted to know if we could come up to the

Cotton Pickin'. He said, "I was just in Vegas to a convention and I have no way of getting to call everybody, and I want to see everybody. Can you come down and have a drink?"

Well, we got in the car and drove down and visited with him till he left. It was sure good to see him; he was a nice guy.

RM: Now, when you first came here, the school was in the little red schoolhouse. When was that replaced?

DT: Oh, I think it must have been 4 or 5 years [later].

BT: Our kids were in grammar school - Tommy was still in grammar school - so it had to be just about 4 or 5 years. Later we got a little school right by where the grammar school is now; by the trading post.

DT: And the school teachers lived in part of it. We got that building hauled out from Boulder City and set it down. That was our grade school.

BT: Elmer Bowman brought that building in for the cafe at the service station and then we brought the building in for the living quarters for the teacher.

RM: Did you have trouble getting teachers to come out here?

BT: It seemed there was no trouble getting them to come out; sometimes we had trouble keeping them here. [chuckles] There were 8 grades in there, and one bunch would be having a singing lesson, and this bunch over here would be studying history, and another bunch would be doing math; it was just like a Chinese laundry. You couldn't understand a thing that was going on. I don't know how any kid ever got anything. But every one of the kids who came out of there seemed to be a fairly intelligent kid.

RM: And it was all in room?

BT: All in one room about big enough to cuss a cat in. This one poor old teacher came in one night - and we had some pretty ornery kids; they'd do

just about anything. She had her suitcase all packed and Dutch and I took her in the car to Indian Springs to catch the Greyhound bus going to Reno. She was leaving. We were out of a teacher here for a few days. Dutch went down went morning and told Elmer Bowman, and he got busy and rustled up another teacher.

DT: He was our school board member - Elmer.

BT: You know, that man did so many great things. Elmer Bowman was a far-thinking man. He was really pushing for an education all the time. And he lived and breathed getting power in the valley. He said, "We won't have a valley here until we have power." And, "We need roads in here." He was on roads. We got this rural deal, and he was all over the country to meetings - anywhere there was a meeting, Elmer was there day or night. I don't know how the man ever kept up, but he really went. Elmer felt that anything that was good for the Manse Ranch was good for the valley, and it was true.

RM: Did you work for Walt Williams when he had the Pahrump Ranch?

BT: No, I never worked for Walt.

RM: Did you ever work for the Pahrump Ranch again later?

BT: No. After I left there that one time, I never went back to work for them.

RM: And then eventually Williams sold out to Preferred Equities, didn't he?

BT: Yes.

RM: Was that kind of the beginning of the decline of farming in the valley?

BT: Yes.

RM: Was it because they began withdrawing the land from . . .?

BT: Well, we got the gin in here, and cotton prices dropped some. Cotton

was a stabilizing deal on the farm, because all farmers need financing. What really hurt the valley, and has ever since we started to farm in here, is that Nevada is not a farming state. They don't understand farm financing, they don't want to know farm financing, so when we needed financing we had to go to California to get financing. When they wanted to check their investment they had to drive clear to Pahrump Valley to check. It just wasn't set up to be . . . And after [they] discontinued cotton, you know, other places began to fold up. Hay is about the only commodity that you can produce and keep going. And the turf farms in here now are doing well.

RM: Are there turf farms here, now?

BT: Two of them, and they've put in one over in Ash Meadows. Those turf farms are doing nothing but getting bigger.

RM: When did the turf business start here?

BT: Oh, probably 10 years ago.

RM: Do they take the turf to Vegas?

BT: Most or all of it. I don't think they even supply what Vegas needs. I notice the one over at our homestead is just expanding as fast as they can expand. It looks good.

RM: They tried lettuce here for a while, didn't they?

BT: They tried it, but you've got this marginal season, again. Your lettuce comes on, you miss that good price, which the Imperial Valley and Yuma and Salt River Valley bring. They did pretty well with lettuce, but not well enough to warrant staying with it. Sugar beets were the same thing.

RM: How do you see the future of agriculture in the valley?

DT: I can't see it. You've got to be big enough to make a living at it.

Most of the farms today are too small to make a living from. You have to subsidize them through some other kind of work. [If] you've got enough acres, you can make a living at farming.

RM: Is that what most little guys did here - subsidize it with a job?

BT: That's right; with a job.

RM: Which ones didn't subsidize?

BT: Manse and Hafens.

DT: Manse had a dairy farm.

RM: Hafen made it, then?

BT: Hafen made it. Elmer Bowman put in a big dairy farm over there. Some time when you're talking to some of the Bowmans, they'll give you all the information on that dairy farm. That was a big, big operation.

RM: Was it successful?

BT: Very much so. Then he got kind of crossways with the dairy outfit in town, and they just cut him off - put him on allotment - and he couldn't make it on the allotment, so he just folded her down. He had a beautiful bunch of dairy cows.

RM: When Williams sold out it opened up a new era, didn't it?

BT: Walt Williams . . . a fellow from Texas was Walt's partner. Walt just kind of had it all under his wing, 'cause . . . But anyway, he sold that place. Farming kind of died, and people began moving in. You notice most of the people moving in are not young people with families; a lot of people are middle-aged, but still with kids in grammar school and high school. A lot of people I talked to when I was still quite active had moved to Pahrump to keep the kids from getting in trouble, or they'd been in trouble and they moved out here to eliminate the trouble. I think you can bring trouble with you when you do something like that. But our schools are just

going right on up with everything else. If you look at that chart up there by Cal-Vada you see the growth is . . .

RM: It's incredible; yes.

BT: And we're getting a much more diversified educational program. I think Pahrump farming had its little spot in history. It came and it went and the land can be put to much better use, now, than it was - and [you can] make more money at it.

RM: And that better use is subdividing?

BT: I think that's what it will be. Because it's for retired people, and it's not too far to commute. You can drive from here to Vegas to work faster and easier, with less stress, than you can in L.A., driving about 10 miles on freeway traffic. So I think it's gone about the way it should've gone. I hated to see it.

RM: You hate to see the growth?

BT: I hate to see the growth, I hate to see the lifestyle change. I came here because it was a different lifestyle. What's happening today is that people are moving from town. They sit down and they want the police to take care of them, they want a streetlight on every corner, a sidewalk . . . what in the hell did they leave Las Vegas for? The people who came here first were . . . I wouldn't call them pioneers, but they were self-sufficient. If you didn't have it, you made do without it or substituted or did something. You didn't run and cry to somebody to come down - somebody's kicking my dog, or somebody's not feeding his horse right . . . Jesus Christ, that's all they do.

DT: We used to play canasta at night by the kerosene lamp. The Bowmans' daughter and son-in-law - Imogene and Len Anderson - used to come down and we'd play canasta. They would come down and bring their children. They

had 2 little children and we had 2.

BT: And we'd make picnics and go up on the mountain and get the kids out and let them run up and down around those cedar trees till they'd be so tired they'd have to go to sleep.

DT: And if you met a car, and it looked like there was no driver, you didn't ever get worried, because pretty soon a little head would peek out. The little 8 and 10-year-old boys drove out here.

BT: I taught my kids all to drive before they could see over the dash board. All the people taught their kids to drive, because it was a necessity when you lived off out here 5 miles from your closest neighbor. [If] you'd fall down and break a leg or something, somebody has to go [for help, and] kids were just fine. You'd be surprised what they could do.

DT: We liked it very much.

RM: Could you talk a little bit about the values that people had in the early days here?

DT: I don't think anyone wanted anyone to lie to them. Truthfulness was highly valued. When we first came out here, if someone told us that they would do something, we were comfortable with that, because they would do it.

BT: If it wasn't done, there was a damn good reason.

DT: I really think that that means a lot.

BT: I think the valley's been changed a whole lot.

BT: When Leland J. Glitzner first came to the Pahrump Valley, he stayed at our place. He came here with a church group. It was a nurse from California and 2 or 3 young people, and they stayed at our place for quite a while during the summer and worked around over the valley and we got real well acquainted with them.

We had a little epidemic of ringworm hit the kids. I got all of them wearing skullcaps around. Dutch and I were just losing our mind. We had taken our kids to every doctor in Vegas, and we had gone to Phoenix. And this nurse got word to us about some the doctor she worked for, there in California. He had been overseas to Sweden, I think it was, and they had developed a treatment for the type of ringworm that the kids had. My wife took Dickey - he was the first one in the valley who went down to California to that doctor - and he treated his ringworm and it started clearing up right now, and we got the medicine and told our doctor. Our doctor, at that time, was Dr. French from Boulder City. We told Dr. French, and then the rest of them began to - it scattered.

Just [to show you] how nice people are, this doctor came to Las Vegas on a convention. She sent word that he was going to be in Las Vegas at such and such a time, and to save her that long drive back down there he would see the boy at the convention. That man took time out from his work to examine Dick. Now, that was nice people. You don't hear those things so much any more.

RM: What was health care like out here?

BT: You doctored a lot, yourself. A lot of sicknesses and things can be taken care of with an aspirin, and a lot of it can be taken care of by loosening the skin up with a little switch or something and get them to agitating and growing good. You'd be surprised - you don't have so much sickness. When you got sick, you went down to the doctor.

I drove in one time at the Pahrump Ranch over that dirt road with a pickup. It was about 10:00 at night when I got home - that was a long way, coming down that road, because if I got over about 15, 20 miles an hour, I'd run off the road. I'd had a stroke and my whole side was paralyzed -

my arm - and I couldn't . . . I drove into the yard out there [chuckles] and my wife took one look at me, and she said, "Don't even get out of the car; just move over." She hauled me [chuckles] to the hospital.

Over at Shoshone you had a nurse who had a phone, and if there was anything she couldn't handle, she'd get on the phone and talk to her doctor down in California, wherever he lived. He would tell her what to do and she'd go ahead and do it. We went to her with a lot of our medical problems - if they got a severe infection, or needed a stitch, or something like that.

RM: For those you went to Shoshone?

BT: We'd go over there, or if you needed it really bad, you'd go into Vegas.

RM: Is there anything that I've forgotten, or anything that you would like to add?

DT: I think we've just about bared our souls. [laughter]

BT: At one time here in the valley [chuckles] . . . There were about 4 paying jobs in the valley - on government money. She was postmaster, I was the resident deputy sheriff . . .

RM: Oh, you were deputy?

BT: I was resident deputy here for 5 years. I got $50 a month when the county had money to pay it, and 10 cents a mile. Lots of times they couldn't pay the mileage; Nye County had no money for years. They were pretty poor. And the school had to have a custodian who worked on cleaning the school. So she was the postmaster, and she and I and the kids would clean the school at night. We were at a meeting [chuckles] over here - a town board meeting. We used to have town board meetings - they'd advertise it as meeting on such-and-such a date and everybody'd come; it would be

some place to go, and you got 100-percent turnout. One of the Bowman kids was talking about the economics of the valley, and he said, "Well, we know for sure that there's no more paying jobs available in the valley, 'cause Turners have all of them." [laughter] It was so funny - I've never forgotten that.

DT: They furnished the gas and the transportation for our kids for the school bus. Mr. Bowman bought the bus. I drove the bus to take our children from the homestead, and picked up all the other children, and took them all to school here in Pahrump. I would go up to the post office and work there until time for the kids to get out of school, and would deliver all the kids home, come back, take the bus home, and park it. But that was one job we had. [laughs]

RM: Who were you under when you were deputy sheriff?

BT: My sheriff was old Sheriff Thomas.

RM: Was this in the '50s?

BT: Yes; before I went to work at the Test Site.

RM: You didn't work for Revert - you reported to Thomas?

BT: Sheriff Thomas was my lord and master.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: Bill, you were talking about Sheriff Thomas.

BT: When he swore me in that day in Tonopah, he told me, "Bill, you can't run up here with everything [that happens] down there. You've got to handle that stuff yourself." That let me have an idea right then that you just didn't go to Tonopah with everything that happened, and Beatty wasn't

much better. By the time you got to Beatty you might just as well go on to Tonopah; you already . . . So we took care of things ourselves, pretty well.

RM: What kinds of problems did you see and run into?

BT: There was no problem that happened anywhere else that we didn't have, at one time or another, here in Pahrump.

RM: Did you have any murders?

BT: We had accidental murders; some shootings and knifings and what have you and drunks and car wrecks - things like that. If a person got hurt badly, I'd take them to . . . I had a Mexican boy who got shot here one time, and I took him to Tonopah. There were a lot of people I took to Vegas. I could take them in there to the hospital.

DT: We had a station wagon, and they used it for the police car, but they paid mileage.

BT: I had a telephone in my car, but there were only 2 places in the valley where I could make that phone work. One down where Tom Duke's store is - Tompkin's store?

RM: OK, yes.

BT: Right there on the highway as you're going off the hill just about where the power company building is. It was a hot spot. I could go and park my car there and get Bishop, California, on the telephone. And through Bishop they had a good line into Tonopah and they would relay my messages and it would come back to Bishop and back to me. And then up at the other end of the valley I had another hot spot I had found where I could always go to and get a message out to Bishop.

RM: Did you have occasion to communicate with them much up there?

BT: Oh, yes, every once in a while something would come up and you'd have

to communicate.

RM: Did you know Thomas very well?

BT: I knew Sheriff Thomas quite well. In fact, after I had been deputy sheriff for about a year I went to see him one time. We were over having a drink at the bar. He said, "Bill, I want to give you something. I've had it for years; it's kind of a keepsake." And he gave me his first badge. He give it to me and I kept it for years; even after I retired. I went to get it to show somebody, and that son of a bitch was gone, and I've never found where it went to or who got it. But that was the kind of friendship we were talking about.

We had a pretty good understanding, and I want to tell you something. Bill Beko is one of the finest fellows . . . he knew people. He knew. If you had a problem you could go and tell Bill what was going on, and he'd tell you what you'd better do, what you could do, and everything worked out well.

RM: Was he the D.A. when you were deputy?

BT: That's right, before he was made judge.

RM: How long were you the deputy here?

BT: Almost 6 years.

RM: Was that a full-time job?

BT: I was on call 24 hours a day. It got to where if you'd see a light coming down the road to your house at night, you knew something was . . . You got to where you hated to see a light coming toward you. There were more and more coming in, and I told [Thomas] that I was going to work at the Test Site. I got the chance to quit graciously, and I quit.

RM: Was it a full-time job as far as pay was concerned?

BT: Oh, no. It was part-time pay and a part-time job. You worked at your

other work, and then any time anything happened . . . We had a lot of Indian people here in the valley at the time, and every time somebody died they'd have a wake and it would run for a week. They all would drink and congregate and view the corpse for a day or two, and dig the grave. There would be a lot of drinking and a lot of problems.

And then we had a lot of single men - drifters - coming in. Any time a person would come in and stay, he could always go to work. They'd work around the valley for one of the ranches, and any time you get single men sitting around a bar, you get problems. Things would show up . . .

RM: Did you ever run into any physical danger? I mean, with somebody wielding a knife or anything?

BT: Any time you are a sheriff, you run into those problems. We had one fellow here who was at a ball game one day, and I saw Steve coming - Steve Brown. When I first came to the valley, Steve Brown and his brother worked on the Manse Ranch and they had a cattle ranch down below here - Browns' ranch. Their mother married a white man by the name of Brown, and he had this ranch down there, and he died, but they were still running cattle, and they had a big nice new truck and they both worked on the Pahrump Ranch. Then they'd take care of their cattle and . . . Anyway, he got to chugging, and first one thing and another and I don't know what . . . Steve got shot [once] - you can see a scar all through there where the shotgun took part of his ear off. But I came over to the ball game, and I went over and told Steve (I've known him ever since I came to the valley), "Steve, you get your butt out of here. You're drunk. We don't want that talk. People are here for a baseball . . ." I was referee at the ball game. Next thing I knew, I saw Steve coming back again. He left came back and he was worse. Well, drunk as he was, and being good friends . . . I took the knife away

from him and I took him up to the jail and told him not to come back - 86ed him out of the valley for a year.

RM: Did he stay away?

BT: Yes. Steve went down to Parker and stayed for about a year and came back, and everything was fine. We've been good friends ever since. He brings my wife flowers. [chuckles] Doby Doc bought Pop Buol's place. Steve would come see Dutch at the post office, and he'd just pull up a whole bush and bring over flowers, dirt and all. [laughs]

But I knew all these fellows. And when they were sober . . . I could handle most of them; even drunk. Mutt Weed cut Deacon Brown one night - cut him awfully bad with a knife. They came down and I took one look at Deacon, and I didn't think he could make it to the hospital. They had him in the car and I didn't want to move him. I just told them to go on into Las Vegas to the hospital. They wanted me to take him to Tonopah, and I told them he wouldn't make it to Tonopah; they should take him to Vegas. So they took off to Vegas with him.

I went up to where Mutt was living, and opened the door, and there was not a light in there - there was a little old kid building a fire in the cookstove. I saw his knife blade flashing there in the firelight and saw the outline of him sitting there. I told him, "Mutt, what in the hell did you cut Deacon for?" And I made it a point to never carry a pistol - all that did is get you in trouble.

"Oh, Bill," he said, "that son of a bitch - I had to cut him. He just kept at . . ."

I said, "Well, I've got to take you to jail."

"Ah," he said, "I've been waiting for you to get here."

I said, "Well, put that damn pocket knife in your pocket and let's

go."

I wasn't about to try to put handcuffs on him. He pulled that pocket knife up, stuck it in his pocket, and went out and got in the car and we took off to jail. But I'd known Mutt for years, too.

RM: What did you use for a jail?

BT: I'm talking about the Tonopah jail. But I had one of those round Butler buildings on the ranch, and sometimes the drunks would get pretty bad, and rather than haul them to . . . If I didn't really care for the fellow staying around the valley, I'd take him into Vegas and drive down Fremont Street till I'd see a couple of foot cops on the sidewalk. I'd just open the car door and tell my passenger to get out. They'd pick him up and take him and lock them up, and Nye County wasn't stuck with him. Or [chuckles] if I didn't feel like driving into Vegas, I could drive through Shoshone and up to the top of Apex. I'd open the door and do the same thing there, and he'd head downhill because it was easier walking, and he was headed toward Baker.

But sometimes I'd just take one of them out there at the house if he was real drunk and put him in that Butler building and leave him.

DT: They weren't handcuffed or anything.

BT: I never put a handcuff on them or anything; I'd just lock them up in there. It had a metal floor and a smooth wall; there was no way they could hurt themselves. Then I'd go in the next morning, when they sobered up, and let them out. We had a big pump pumping water right there by the building, and most of them would come out of that place and go over and fall off in that pump and wash off and clean up and maybe they'd come in the house and have a cup of coffee before they'd go on home.

RM: How did you get the job as deputy, Bill?

BT: Well, a fellow here was deputy - Arlen Frehner. He owned the ranch here before Hafen bought it from him. Arlen came to me one time and he said, "Bill, I took this job as deputy and my dad insisted that we have law down here." He said, "I took the job and I don't want it. I don't even like that kind of stuff. I only . . . Would you do me a favor? If I get another deputy that Dad likes, and Elmer likes, well . . ."

So he and I got in the car and we drove up to Tonopah and they unswore him and swore me. And it was true - Arlen was gone a lot and he had a big farm to take care of, he had lots of worries.

RM: Was Bob Revert the deputy at Beatty at that time?

BT: No, there was a big Indian fellow who was deputy, and later on Bob Revert was deputy up there. That was young Bob's uncle. He was deputy for awhile [in Beatty] while I was still deputy.

This valley has been real good to my wife and me. We've raised a good family out here and we've got a good life. We had a lot of hardships, we had a lot of happiness. I tell you, I wouldn't trade it for anything.

DT: We're going to fly to San Francisco June the 18th because our baby boy graduates from dental college.

RM: Oh, that's wonderful.

DT: We're real happy.

RM: Where's he going to set up his practice?

DT: In Las Vegas, but he's supposed to serve some type of rural areas because he was with the WICHE program, and he wants to work here in Pahrump. He would like to, but [they'll send him] where he's needed. But for 2 years he has to serve some time in rural areas.

RM: Did he go to school here in Pahrump?

BT: He went to grammar school and high school and then he went to college

in Utah. He went to UNLV one year, but then he went back to Utah.

RM: So the Pahrump graduates are going on to be dentists and so forth?

DT: He did. We're very proud of him.

BT: He said he was going to be a dentist years ago, but I told him, "You know, I've watched all my kids. Every one of them has started to be something and then they've - maybe [they] change." And Lee really lives and breathes sports, and he mixes well with kids. When he went to college, I insisted that he major in a subject where he could become a teacher or have some other profession besides going on to dentistry, in case he decided . . . So he majored in science and math when he was in college and graduated with qualifications - he can teach in high school out here.

I'll tell you, you see these kids grow up, and I didn't think he could pour it out of a boot with it wrote on the heel, you know. And, hell, he does, they say, just beautiful dental work. We have some friends who live in a little town out Frisco way. She went over there and had all kinds of work done. He did the first job and she's been going back and back and back. Her husband just wouldn't go to the dentist and she finally got him to go and he's just crazy about it.

BT: That speaks very well for him.

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