An Interview with Lorene Mathews

An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken

LINCOLN COUNTY TOWN HISTORY PROJECT
LINCOLN COUNTY, NEVADA

CONTENTS

Preface.. 5

Introduction... 7

CHAPTER ONE.. 1
Backgrounds of the Wright family in Nevada and Utah; Grandfather John Wright's life and work; Grandmother Mary Wright's home and store in Hiko; memories of the Hiko mill; background on Eloise Schofield Wright's childhood and parents; John and Eloise's marriage, and a life in Hiko and Alamo; remarks on the Stewart family of Alamo; Lorene's birth in Panaca; her early days in Hiko, and neighbors in the community then; memories of two local Indian villages in the 1920s.

CHAPTER TWO... 11
Further memories of area Indians; a description of the Hiko store; preserving meat; rendering lard and making soap; doing laundry outdoors, in a tub over an open fire.

CHAPTER THREE... 21
A further description of "washday"; the first washing machine in the Hiko area; a discussion of the Sharp families of Pahranagat and Railroad valleys; the Hiko post office; John Wright attends the Hiko school in the early 1900s; Lorene's Hiko schooldays.

CHAPTER FOUR.. 31
Further memories of the Hiko school, then to school in Alamo; Hiko residents in the mid-1930s; small-scale mining on Irish Mountain in the 1930s; a tragic murder; the LDS church in Alamo; holiday celebrations in Pahranagat Valley through the years.

CHAPTER FIVE.. 41
Further memories of Pahranagat Valley holidays, including a special turkey stuffing; food preservation in the days before refrigeration; memories of the Depression in the Wright home; travel in the Pahranagat Valley in the 1920s and 1930s - shopping trips to Caliente over dirt roads.

CHAPTER SIX.. 51
A trip to Las Vegas in 1928; remembering early automobiles; a discussion of life in the days before electricity and indoor plumbing; graduation from Pahranagat Valley High School in 1938.

CHAPTER SEVEN.. 60
Recalling a rescue on the desert; Lorene's goal of becoming a schoolteacher, and how her education at Reno was financed; college life, and trips home to Hiko; applying for a teaching job and finding one in Panaca; remarks on telephones and postal service in Hiko; Lorene moves to Panaca and meets . . .

CHAPTER EIGHT.. 70
. . . Lester Mathews; a long courtship; teaching in Panaca and Pioche; marriage to Lester in war-time; Lorene moves to Alamo to teach in 1943; Lester's return to the Pahranagat Valley; a break from teaching, then a return to her career; the Mathews children; Lester starts a turf farm in the 1980s; background on Lester Mathews; Lester's work with a dairy farm, then as an agricultural assistance agent; remembering the Pioche mining families that entered Panaca in the 1950s, and new housing that was constructed for them.

CHAPTER NINE... 80
Further remarks on Panaca houses; remarks on the present-day Lincoln County communities of Panaca, Hiko, Rachel, Alamo and Ash Springs; Panaca businesses; a condominium in St. George, Utah; observations on area farmers; remarks on Pahranagat Valley water; Bullionville in the early 1900s - a thriving community; further remarks on local water.

CHAPTER TEN.. 90
A description of a flood channel.

PREFACE

The Lincoln County Town History Project (LCTHP) 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 interview 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 LCTHP'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 LCTHP 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 LCTHP 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.

INTRODUCTION

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

Although Nevada was granted statehood in 1864, examination of any map of the state from the late 1800s shows that most of it south of the 38th parallel remained largely unsettled, even unmapped. In 1890 most of southern Nevada - including Lincoln County - remained very much a frontier, and it continued to be so for at least another 20 years.

Even in the 1990s, the frontier can still be found in Lincoln County in the attitudes, values, lifestyles, and memories of area residents. The frontier-like character of the area is also visible in the relatively undisturbed quality of the natural environment, much of it essentially untouched by humans.

A survey of written sources on Lincoln County's history reveals variability from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Pioche from its first newspaper, beginning in the fall of 1870, to the present. Newspapers from Delamar are available from 1892 to 1906 and Caliente from 1904 to 1968. In contrast, Panaca and Alamo never had newspapers of record. Throughout their histories, all Lincoln County communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities. Most of the history of Lincoln County after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Lincoln County's close ties to our nation's frontier past and the scarcity of written sources on local history (especially after 1920), the Lincoln County Commissioners initiated the Lincoln County Town History Project (LCTHP). The LCTHP is an effort to systematically collect and preserve the history of Lincoln County, Nevada. The centerpiece of the LCTHP is a 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 Lincoln County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson Library at the University

of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada.

The interviews vary in length and detail, but together they form a never-before-available composite 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 view of community and county history that reveals 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 Lincoln County residents. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories. The oral interviews and written sources served as the basis for histories of the major communities in Lincoln County. These histories have also been archived.

The LCTHP is one component of the Lincoln County program to determine the socioeconomic impact of a federal proposal to build a high-level nuclear waste repository in southern Nye County, Nevada. The repository, which would be inside Yucca Mountain, would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners initiated the LCTHP in 1990 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions and quality of life of Lincoln County communities that may be impacted by the 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 in the area. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nevada, material compiled by the LCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--RDM

This is Robert McCracken talking to Lorene Mathews at her home in Panaca, Nevada, January 18, 1991.

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Why don't we start, Lorene, by you telling me your name as it reads on your birth certificate.
LM: Eloise Lorene Wright.
RM: And then your married name is Mathews?
LM: Yes.
RM: And could you say when and where you were born?
LM: I was born here in Panaca down the street a couple of blocks on February 11, 1920.
RM: And could you tell me your father's name?
LM: John Peter Wright.
RM: And do you know when and where he was born?
LM: Yes, he was born in Delamar, Nevada, on May 31, 1897.
RM: And what was your mother's full name and her date and place of birth?
LM: Her name before she was married was Eloise Schofield and she was born in Nephi, Utah, in 1898.
RM: And what was your father's occupation?
LM: Cattle and farming.
RM: Did he have his own farm?
LM: Yes.
RM: Where was his farm?
LM: It was in Hiko until about 1942, and then he moved to Alamo and bought some property just below Alamo where he raised alfalfa hay and pasture and fed cattle.
RM: Was his father a miner in Delamar?
LM: Yes. His father was born in Pioche. My grandfather's name was John Peter Wright, and supposedly he was the first white child born in Pioche, as near as [we can tell from] any records we have.
RM: Do you know about when that was?
LM: Let's see, about 1863.
RM: How did your great-grandparents happen to land in Pioche?
LM: Well, John Wright, my great-grandfather, was in the army in Fort Douglas. My great-grandmother came from Denmark to a place they called North Salt Lake, which is about where Bountiful is now. She sold milk and eggs and butter to Fort Douglas, and that's when she met my great-grandfather. They were married and lived in Cottonwood, which is right next to Salt Lake, until the mines opened up in Pioche. When the mines opened in Pioche that was a booming enterprise for the surrounding country and everybody who was looking for a job flocked there, so there were lots of

people living in Pioche. And they came to Pioche for my great-grandfather to work in the mines.

RM: Was he a miner by trade?

LM: As near as I know he was in the army until he came to Pioche to work in the mines.

RM: Did your great-grandmother from Denmark convert to Mormonism?

LM: Well, she was already a member of the church over in Denmark. She came to North Salt Lake with another LDS family who she knew, and they settled there. She had been married before and had one little girl when she came from Denmark. The she met John Wright and they had 4 children - 3 boys and 1 girl.

[My grandparents] lived in Pioche and then they moved to Leeds, Utah, because there was a mine down there. My grandfather trucked vegetables (or hauled them - they called it truck gardening) from Leeds over the mountain to Delamar, and that's how he got acquainted over in Delamar and went to work there. Delamar was a booming town but, because of the quartzite that's in the dirt in the mining process . . .

RM: The silica, wasn't it?

LM: Yes - it's actually glass. They did this dry mining because they didn't have water and they didn't know any better, and the silica actually ground out the lungs. They would hemorrhage from the lungs, and that's what happened to my grandfather.

RM: So he developed silicosis - is that what he died of?

LM: Yes.

RM: How old was he when he passed away?

LM: Oh, about 36.

RM: Is that all?

LM: My dad was only 6 years old when he died. Then I have an aunt, his sister, who was born a month after he died.

RM: Did he die in Delamar?

LM: Yes, as it happened. He had a mail route - he drove the mail from Hiko to Delamar and he'd stay overnight in Delamar one night and then Hiko one night. He got so ill that he couldn't drive the mail, but he had a carrier. He was sick and so he went over to Delamar to see the doctor (the mail carrier took him) and that night while he was in Delamar he died - he hemorrhaged to death from the lungs.

RM: Goodness. How long did he work in the mines to get the silicosis?

LM: Oh, 3 or 4 years.

RM: That's all?

LM: That's all.

RM: A lot of people died of silicosis there, didn't they?

LM: Lots of them. We have a local song that was written by a couple of local people, and they call it "The Widowmaker." And it's very typical of what happened in Delamar. The men came there to work in the mine and they died and left their families.

RM: The song was about the miners in Delamar?

LM: Yes.

RM: Do you know the words to that song?

LM: Not that I could repeat them off to you, no. My son probably has them. He lives up here about 20 miles and he used to play the guitar and sing, and he sang that "Widowmaker" at my mother and dad's 50th wedding anniversary because of my dad's father, see.

RM: Your grandmother was left with 2 small children, wasn't she?

LM: Right.

RM: What did she do then?

LM: She lived in Hiko and raised a garden and chickens and turkeys and a few head of cattle and she ran a small store and the post office.

RM: How much land did she have in Hiko?

LM: I believe at that time she only had 40 acres.

RM: What years would this have been in?

LM: Well, she came to Hiko with her parents when she was about 13 years old and they lived there ever after. She died right there in Hiko.

RM: Could you tell me what Hiko was like during the early years? For instance, how big a town was it?

LM: In 1864 it was the county seat of Lincoln County. Lincoln County included Clark and Nye County as it is now, and it was really a booming town. Most of the ore from Irish Mountain came down to the mill in Hiko because there was water there. The ore was hauled from the mountain to the mill. There were lots of people who worked either up in Irish Mountain or in Hiko, but lived in Hiko because of the water. A lot of the houses were built into the side of the hills. When I was a girl and grew up there you could still see many of the spots where the houses were.

RM: Is that right? Dug into the hill?

LM: Part of the house would go back into the hill, and that would make part of the walls and so on. The mill was still standing when I was a young girl. It's only been probably in the last 20 or 30 years that it's been taken down. They took it down for the bricks that were in it.

RM: Approximately what would the population of Hiko have been then?

LM: I've heard that there was 6000 people there at one time, but I can't verify that.

RM: Did your mother grow up there?

LM: My mother was born in Nephi, Utah. She came to Pahranagat Valley when she was about 15 or 16 years old. Her father bought a ranch there in Hiko. (That's what they called it, but it wasn't a very big place.) It was called the Roder ranch. My grandfather and his sons bought it and they moved onto the ranch, and it was about 3 miles below where my father and his mother and sister lived. They were married in 1918, and they lived in Hiko until 1942, when they moved down to Alamo.

RM: And again, what did your father do there as an occupation?

LM: He always raised cattle and he raised alfalfa hay to feed the cattle. Then he bought this land down below Alamo which had some pasture land, but he still raised alfalfa hay and he bought some cattle and fed them as well as his own.

RM: How big of a place did he have?

LM: Oh, down below Alamo he probably had about 200 or 250 acres. In Hiko, he only had probably 60 acres altogether.

RM: How big was Hiko in 1918?

LM: There were probably only about 12 or 14 families from there down to what we call Crystal Springs. From Crystal Springs up to the Hiko Spring is this area that they called Hiko, and there's a post office there at Hiko and that's probably what designates Hiko. From Crystal Springs on down to Alamo [the area] is more or less known as Pahranagat Valley, until you get down to Alamo.

RM: How big was Alamo in 1918?

LM: In 1915, I would guess, it was just a big ranch. Then some people from Kanab moved over and bought that ranch, and they were the Stewarts. They divided the ranch up as a town, with streets and walks and so on. There were 3 or 4 different brothers with their sons, making up several families. That's why they set it up as a town - so each one of the sons and their families could have a lot.

RM: Some of the Stewarts moved to Vegas, didn't they?

LM: Yes. Do you know any of the Stewarts in Las Vegas?

RM: I don't know them.

LM: Well, Will Stewart was one of the brothers. Thomas Stewart and his wife Mary moved

to Alamo from Kanab, and they had several sons: Will Stewart and Dave Stewart and Sumner Stewart and Marion Stewart, and they all had their wives and children. Their daughters also all had their lot and their piece of ground. So that's the beginning of Alamo. Now, I don't know that all of the Stewarts in Vegas came from the Stewarts in Alamo, but many of them . . .

RM: Well, there was Helen Stewart . . .

LM: Is that Helen Stewart the one the school's named after?

RM: I don't know.

LM: That's not in this Stewart family. You see, Las Vegas was a ranch also, and it was called the Stewart Ranch. But those were not the Stewarts that were in Alamo. And that's where Helen Stewart's family's from.

RM: Oh. Because the Stewart family in Las Vegas originally came from Lincoln County.

LM: That one that Helen Stewart belongs to?

RM: Yes. [Her husband] died relatively young - he died in a gunfight down there - and left Helen Stewart a widow. But I know that he originally came from Lincoln County.

LM: Well, that is beyond my knowledge. But I do know that Las Vegas was originally the Stewart Ranch and it was a stop for the stagecoach as you went through. But that Helen Stewart and the school it's named after was a different family.

RM: Now, you grew up in Hiko, but you were born in Panaca?

LM: I was born in Panaca by coincidence.

RM: How did that happen?

LM: There was no high school in Alamo. The Lincoln County High School was in Panaca, and if the students wanted to go to high school after they got out of the eighth grade they had to go to Panaca. In many instances, the mother came over and rented a little place and sent her children to school. Some of them had to wait until the younger ones grew up, so 2 or 3 of them would all go to high school together. Well, my father's mother only had the one girl - my aunt - so she moved over here and rented a house for 4 years and sent my aunt to school.

RM: Did your father go too?

LM: No, he never went to high school. That was of little interest to him. He had a herd of cattle and things and when he got out of the eighth grade he was through school anyway. I mean, he'd had enough of that. He was a grown man at the age of 14 because of necessity. He'd had to ride on the range with the other men and tend the cattle and things and he really grew up.

My grandmother came over to Panaca and brought her daughter when my mother and dad got married because Dad and my mother could live there and look after things. She could leave and come over here and put Lois in school. Then my grandmother Schofield - she was my mother's mother - had 2 girls just about the same age as my dad's sister, and she came over and rented a place and put those 2 girls in school. So when I was born, my mother and dad came over so there'd be a doctor nearby - there was a doctor in Pioche, but he also took care of the patients in Panaca. So in December, just before Christmas, my mother and dad came

over and lived with my grandmother and his sister. I was born the 11th of February during the World War flu, as they called it.

RM: Oh yes.

LM: That terrible, terrible siege of flu. My mother was so ill when I was born that she hardly knew she had a daughter.

RM: She had the flu?

LM: She had the flu and so did my dad. They were both down in bed with the flu. And 3 days after I was born I took the flu, and they didn't see how I was going to live. But there was also an aunt of my mother's who lived here and she was here for the same purpose, putting her children in high school, and she was a practical nurse. She came and took care of me and stayed with me and held me every minute of the time for 3 days and 3 nights. My mother did not have any milk because of the high fever, and the only way they could keep me alive was that this aunt of hers, who was the nurse, fixed a little teaspoon full of sugar and whiskey with, I guess, a little water in it, too. They took an eyedropper and dropped 2 drops of this mixture of whiskey and sugar and water on my tongue, and that's how I survived for 3 days. Then they decided I was going to live.

RM: I'll be darned.

LM: But they said that my breath was so shallow and so weak that they couldn't tell that I was alive unless they put a mirror up to my mouth and could see the moisture on the mirror. They couldn't tell that I was breathing by watching, you know, or listening or anything.

RM: What do you think the whiskey did?

LM: It was stimulation. My husband teased me for years about being brought up on whiskey.

RM: [chuckles]

LM: I don't know the details in between, but in order for me to survive they fixed a formula out of Eagle Brand [sweetened condensed] milk. That's very sweet and they mixed it with water and made a formula and that's what I grew up on until I was old enough to sit up at the table and eat.

RM: So you were in effect "bottle fed" on Eagle Brand milk.

LM: That's right. I'm one of the very few babies that was ever raised on that at that time. In fact, I guess they had a hard time finding a nipple that would fit on a bottle that was soft enough and so on, because it wasn't a very common thing in those days to have bottles. They had to send clear to Salt Lake to get the nipples to go on the bottle. And the other thing is, it was very difficult because the nipples would be heavier and stronger than I was able to suck on. They had to heat a needle and make the hole

larger so the milk would come out freer so I didn't have to work so hard, and then I'd choke on it. But they finally got it regulated. But all the health nurses and so on, as I grew up, said that they couldn't understand why I wasn't bowlegged or have all kinds of problems with my bones because Eagle Brand milk is not supposed to supply all those things. But I survived very well. I still have all my own teeth, I have only had one broken bone in my life and that was one in my foot, just a little one. So I'm sure that Eagle Brand milk is good for your bones.

RM: It sounds like the sugar isn't that bad for you either, because it's really sweet, isn't it?

LM: Yes, but it's a natural sweet.

RM: Yes. So you were the firstborn of your family. How long did you stay in Panaca?

LM: Until the first part of that April. Then we went back to Hiko.

RM: Could you describe the living situation in Hiko?

LM: We lived in my Grandmother Wright's house at that time, because she was over here [in Panaca]. It was a nice, nice home. It had a front porch that was all screened in, and that's a necessity because of the flies and the mosquitoes and so on.

RM: There were a lot of mosquitoes?

LM: There were quite a few mosquitoes and flies and so on in the summertime, and we didn't have sprays and things like that. Then there was a big living room with a fireplace at one end, and then there was a nice big kitchen, no bathroom . . .

RM: Outhouse?

LM: Yes. A trail out the back door. Any 2 bedrooms. And then right next door to it was the store, and it was a rock building. It was an older building. I'm not sure, but I believe that rock building was built when they first moved there. That would be when the Sharps lived there. My grandmother was a Sharp and she just kept on living in what was the Sharp home.

RM: Are they related to the Sharps in Railroad Valley over in Nye County?

LM: You bet.

RM: Did the store have a name?

LM: Just "the store in Hiko." That's the way they referred to it.

RM: So you were living right in Hiko?

LM: Yes. The store was there, the post office was there, and then Louie Stearns had a little place across the street and down like this just a little bit (we lived like this and the street ran in between us) and he had a small saloon.

Right on this side was the Castles - Jim Castle - and up on the hill a little bit like that was another brother, John Castle. You went up the street a little farther and that was where the spring that supplied the water came out of the side of the hill. It was a beautiful spring. And there was a house up there that had been built early in the days out of solid rock. The rock was cut right out of the hill. It was not far from where the spring is.

RM: And those were the only buildings in Hiko at that time?

LM: Well, you went down the valley 2 or 3 miles and then there'd be these Nesbitts and Roders and so on until you got down to Crystal. In 1916 the Schofields moved on this Roder ranch that I was telling you about. There were 3 or 4 of the boys there living on that ranch with their families, and they were my mother's brothers. As you got down by Crystal there were the Loves - 2 brothers and their families at Crystal Springs. And then up in Irish Mountain there were 5 or 6 couples with older men who were miners who stayed there and looked after the mines.

RM: The mines were not operating then?

LM: Not at that time.

RM: So we're talking about around 1920?

LM: Yes - 1918 and 1920.

RM: Who supported the store and saloon and so on?

LM: Well, partly it was the Indians. There were a lot of Indians there and they used to come and get groceries and things. And people who were going through the town. At the beginning, even the people from Alamo came to Hiko to get their groceries because there was no store or anything down at Alamo.

RM: Where did the Indians live?

LM: They had a village north of Hiko about 4 miles, and there was another one down close to Crystal Springs that was out in the hill. There's a little lake called the Frenchie Lake just north of Crystal Springs, and east of that lake was where the Indians had a little village.

RM: Is that right? Were they Paiutes?

LM: Yes.

RM: Do you remember any names?

LM: Yes, Elizabeth and Keno and Maggie and Pete. Maggie and Pete belonged to the north group and Elizabeth and Keno lived down by Frenchie Lake, and Keno used to work for my dad.

RM: In the store?

LM: No, on the farm - putting up hay and things.

RM: Could you describe a little bit about how the Indians lived at this time?

LM: Well, as I say, there was this little village down by the lake and I guess they used to use the water out of the lake. But they fished in the lake. They did a lot of fishing cause there was a lot of fish in that lake. And they hunted, and one of the main things they hunted was rabbits. They lived off of fish and rabbits, and they always had a good patch of corn. They always had one of these big rock things with another rock that they ground their corn in. For a long time my grandmother Wright had one - I think the one that belonged to Elizabeth and Keno. Keno died, we assume from pneumonia. And when he died, he had a beautiful team of dapple gray horses, and Keno's wife had my dad round those horses up and shoot them over the top of his grave. And then they took all of Keno's belongings and put them on the top of that grave.

CHAPTER TWO

LM: It was really hard for my dad to do that because they were such beautiful horses. But that was the Indian's custom and he did it because she requested him to do it, you know. It was just like anything that you would do nowadays to help somebody out . . . That was what she wanted done so he did whatever she said. He was trying to help her out because he thought so much of Keno.

RM: About how many people were living in these 2 villages, would you say?

LM: Well, I would say there was probably 10 or 12 couples and some children.

RM: Would this be in each village?

LM: In the one down at Frenchie Lake there were about that many, I would think - about 12 different tepees. I've been down there lots of times with my dad. He'd go down to get Keno to come and work or take him home or something and I'd go with him in the car.

At the north part, I really don't know what they did for water. Part of the time there was a little stream that came down from the mountain, I guess, but it was just a little ditch that ran along there. They'd go out with their buckets and scoop up the water and it'd be muddy and they would let it sit for a while until it got clear. As I say, there was one couple I knew up there, Maggie and Pete, because Maggie used to come down and wash for my mother when I was just a little girl - she'd do the washing on the board. And she helped to clean the house. We got to think a lot of Maggie because she'd tell us lots of stories. She got so she could speak English pretty well - enough so that we could understand her.

RM: Are there Indians around now?

LM: Well, I know that Maggie and Pete both died, and as I told you, Keno died. After Keno died Elizabeth moved over to Caliente. She lived there until she got to be really old and she died while she was in Caliente.

RM: Are their descendants around?

LM: Yes. There are some Petes down in Caliente, and they're descendants of Keno and Elizabeth. There's Willard Pete and Dan Pete and . . .

RM: Is that right? There's some Petes over around Tonopah, too. I wonder if they're related.

LM: I don't know. I'm not familiar with the Petes over there.

RM: I think the Tonopah Petes are Shoshone. Do you remember any of their ceremonies or anything?

LM: The only thing that I can remember is this death business. As far as having big powwows, I don't remember anything

about that. The one thing that I can remember is going down there with my dad. I was really close to my dad and I went everyplace with him that he was able to take me. We had an old Model-T Ford, and he took me in the car with him lots of times to take Keno back down there. It was about 3 or 3-1/2 miles from our house down to where Keno lived in this village. The thing that I remember is these Indians kind od leaning back out there in the sunshine and the dogs lying in the sand, asleep. And I thought that it was a "Sleepy Hollow" type of place, you know. That's the thing I remember about those villages.

RM: [chuckles]

LM: Elizabeth used to wash for some of my mother's brother's wives - my uncles and aunts - because she lived closer to them. And Maggie lived on the north part, and I guess she washed for my grandmother Wright first and then my mother. She did for both of them when I was just a little girl.

RM: Could you describe the store?

LM: It was probably about twice as big as this room - 25-by-12.

RM: And it was about 50-by-25?

LM: Yes. The main store where the shelves and everything was probably about this size, and then the other half of the building was her storage room. She had a little corner of that room built up off of the ground and all screened in so no mice or anything could get in it. And that's where she kept her flour. It was a special room that she had built out of screens so that nothing could get in, and then it had a tight door on it and you had to go up a step to get in there. They had a lot of flour. It came down on the train and then, I assume, one of the stores in Caliente or Delamar bought part of it and she bought part of it. (I really don't . . . can't verify how that went.) I can remember them hauling in these big 50-pound sacks of flour over their shoulders and stacking them.

RM: What all did they sell in the store?

LM: Well, canned things like canned vegetables and canned meat or whatever was canned at that time. And candy . . . I can remember when I was just a little, tiny girl they wouldn't give me very much candy. My mother wouldn't allow it, and Grandma would sneak me a little piece once in a while. But she had these fancy glass jars that the candy was kept in.

RM: Was it hard candy?

LM: Yes, and there was licorice and some long sticks like that were covered with chocolate. That's the one that I wanted all the time, the chocolate. They'd have those down in there and then they'd have little sacks that they'd fill up with so much candy and weigh on the scales. They had

scales that were small on the top and weighed heavier on the bottom.

RM: Did they sell dry goods?

LM: Oh yes. She had a big box like this with drawers in it, and that was [full of] all different colors of sewing thread. Some of the family still has the box that had the drawers.

RM: A lot of the women really sewed in those days, didn't they?

LM: Well, that was the only way. My mother sewed and my aunt sewed. My mother's sisters-in-law were some of the most beautiful seamstresses you ever saw. And then they sold yard goods - they came on a kind of a roller thing. I mean, she had these kind of rollers that was just the width of the yard goods. They'd bring in this big roll and put it on there and then she'd roll it off and measure how many yards of material they bought with the yardstick that was on the counter. One of the materials that I can remember that was always on the roller was flannelette. Do you know what I'm talking about?

RM: No.

LM: Flannelette is a cotton material, and it's very soft, they made shirts out of it and all kinds of things, because it was warm. They made night wear - pajamas and nightgowns. They also made shirts the men wore in the winter. They'd get in a roll of that material and every men in the vicinity had a shirt made out of that.

RM: And they'd all be the same color?

LM: Yes, the same material.

RM: What color would the shirts be?

LM: It was either a dark blue or a kind of a maroon red that I can remember, kind of in a plaid.

RM: What other materials were popular, do you recall?

LM: One of the things was white muslin - unbleached muslin. Muslin is a heavy piece of cotton material.

RM: Like a sheet?

LM: Like sheets. Unbleached muslin was heavier then a sheet, and it was not clear white.

RM: And what did they use that for?

LM: They made curtains, sheets for their beds. They even made underwear out of the muslin. I can remember my mother making some curtains for out kitchen off of them.

RM: Do you recall any other kinds of material that were popular?

LM: Well, they had what they called calico. Are you familiar with calico?

RM: Not really.

LM: It came on those big rolls, or bolts. Calico was a cotton material, but it was always a printed type of material.

The prints would be about as big around as your little finger. They weren't wild or bright or bold. It was always a dark kind of blue and gray or black and white with little flowers, little figures . . . I can remember my grandmother Wright having a dress that she made that had a little square like this with a little dot in the middle of it. But it'd be that big.

RM: As big as the end of your finger.

LM: Calico is not a wild print. It was always very small in print and done in dark colors - black with a little white in it and blue, usually with white. Gray was a very popular color in the calicos -blue and black and white and gray. You didn't see like pink or yellow or anything like that. Until I got to be about 12 or 14 I never saw material in pastel colors.

RM: Is that right? And your mother made all the clothes for you kids?

LM: Well, she made all of my clothes, but by that time they bought the boys' clothes. She made some of the shirts for my brothers. I have a brother who's younger than I am and then a sister and then a brother.

RM: What are their names?

LM: Kay Wright is the second one in our family and Jay Wright is the fourth one in the family, and they both live in Hiko. Kay lives just about 2 miles north of Crystal Spring and Jay lives clear up at the top of Hiko right by the spring, not very far from our original home. Keith Whipple, the county commissioner, lives right there in Hiko. In fact, he lives in the house where I grew up. After my mother and dad moved to Alamo, Keith Whipple bought that house.

RM: And that would be next to the store?

LM: Right by the store. Grandmother Wright's house was right next to the store, so you could just come out of the house and go between the 2 buildings and down the steps into the store. Then my mother and dad built their house on the other side of my grandmother Wright's house. But my aunt moved my grandmother's house, where I first grew up, down to Alamo and she still lives in it there.

RM: Now what other kinds of things did they sell in the store? Did they sell shovels, dynamite or anything like that?

LM: No dynamite. She sold the basic things like flour and sugar and salt and lots of spices. I can remember a whole shelf that had different kinds of spices. It's really surprising how far back a lot of these spices stem. Like cinnamon. Cinnamon was often in sticks, and cloves were the whole cloves. But they had little grinders that we used to grind them up. In fact, I ground up lots of

cinnamon sticks in my day when I was, oh, 6, 7, 8 years old. All you had to do was to turn a handle and the cinnamon would come out a little spout into a glass bottle or something. Then she would can them in the cans that came [with it].

RM: Oh, like spice cans?

LM: Yes, similar to what they are now. But some of them - sticks and whole cloves and various things like that - came in a pasteboard box about this tall - 3 inches tall and about 1-1/2 inches across the top. Some of the spices came whole like that, but they also took them ground. My grandmother ground a lot of it. And coffee - always coffee. We had a coffee grinder and we had to grind the coffee beans and make them into ground coffee.

RM: Would you grind them for each person as they made a purchase, or would you grind up some for the week, or . . . ?

LM: We ground them up and when they'd get low we'd grind some more so that there was always some on the shelves.

RM: Did you sell meat there?

LM: No, I wouldn't say so. However, my dad raised cattle and they killed the meat in the wintertime (because there's no way of keeping it in the summer). That's a little story I'll tell you about because it seems quite unique to me. In the wintertime they'd kill the pork, they killed the young animals and steers which they would fatten with corn and so on until they got to be the right amount of fat. Then they would hang them. They had a meat house and they'd hang them in the cold weather on hooks. I guess when it was really cold he'd just hang them and wrap them in what they called cheesecloth - thin, white cloth - to keep it from drying out.

RM: Oh, it would dry out?

LM: Oh yes, in the air. When it got a little warmer weather he'd hang it at night and then wrap it in big, heavy quilts that my grandmother and my mother made out of overall pieces and that would keep it cold during the day. At night when it got cold again then they'd hang the meat back out. It was a chore that my dad did, hanging the meat every night before he went to bed and then wrapping it the first thing the next morning when he got up. Also, they'd take the pork and cut hams and shoulders (hams is the rear part, the shoulders are the front part) and cure them.

RM: How did he do that?

LM: Oh yes, in the air. When it got a little warmer weather he'd hang it at night and then wrap it in big, heavy quilts that my grandmother and my mother made out of overall pieces and that would keep it cold during the day. At

night when it got cold again then they'd hang the meat back out. It was a chore that my dad did, hanging the meat every night before he went to bed and then wrapping it the first thing the next morning when he got up. Also, they'd take the pork and cut hams and shoulders (hams is the rear part, the shoulders are the front part) and cure them.

RM: How did he do that?

LM: They'd get big boxes of what they called smoke salt. (I can't tell you the brand name). The boxes were kind of round with heavy pasteboard and kind of a metal lid on the top. He'd take that salt and rub it onto the shoulders and hams. They'd rub so much every day, or every other day, until he felt that the hams were cured. And then they had big barrels that stood about like that, and they were big like this.

RM: Like 50-gallon barrels?

LM: Yes, about. But they were special barrels that they bought. They'd put the hams and shoulders in and put the lid on them and they'd keep way till it got to be real warm weather, or until we ate them up.

RM: But you didn't sell them - they were for your own use?

LM: Well, mostly for our own use. I've known of my dad's selling some, but only to special people who wanted them, I guess. And then they took the bacon - that's the sides, the stomach part - and made bacon and cured it just like they did the ham - in the same process. They'd cut off the rest of the fat, render it out and make lard. My mother and grandmother's job was to render the fat and make the lard.

RM: How did they render it?

LM: They'd put it in big pans. They'd cut it up in little strips and put it in big pans and put it in the oven and cook it slowly [so it didn't get] too hot. Then they poured the liquid part off into buckets. (I don't know whether you've seen a lard pail or not, but long ago everything was in lard pails.) They'd fill this lard pail with the liquid part and it would set up and get hard. Then it would just be like the lard you'd go and buy at the store. Then the pieces that were the remnants of what the fat came out of were called cracklins. They didn't dare cook it too much because if it got too hot it would turn the lard so that it was not pretty and white. But they'd put the cracklins back in the pan and put it in the oven and finish rendering them out and sometimes my mother would save a little of that to fry in or something. But most of the time they just threw it away cause it was too dark. But the cracklins were yummy good. They just put a little salt on them and we'd eat them. The people in the South

take the cracklins and make cornbread and break up the cracklins like this and put that in the cornbread. And my mother and my grandmother used to do that. Not always, but we put the cracklins in some of the cornbread they made.

RM: Did they make soap?

LM: Oh yes, I should say so. I've even made soap myself since I've been married.

RM: What fat would they use?

LM: From the beef - tallow.

RM: Not pork?

LM: No.

RM: Why was that?

LM: Because beef tallow gets to be a hard consistency. Pork fat never gets to be really hard. It's always soft enough that you can put a spoon in it and dig it out of the bucket. It never gets really hard, but tallow does. Candles are made out of beef tallow.

RM: I didn't know that.

LM: They did use some fat off of the venison - it will harden like the beef tallow also. They used that to make candles with sometimes because the wild taste from venison is in the fat. If you can cut all of the fat off of venison, the meat won't be wild.

Anyway, they'd take the tallow from the beef and render it out (it's just the same process that I just told you about for the pork) and take the liquid part and pour it off and set it in big tubs. They had a big, brass kettle (I don't know why it had to be brass, but it was the best to make the soap in) that stood up about 3 feet high and was a couple of feet across. They'd put the tallow from the beef in this brass kettle, and then they'd put lye on it. The lye ate up the tallow - the grease part - so it wasn't grease anymore, and you had to have the right recipe to make it - so much lye to so much tallow. Then you'd constantly skim the top off. I can't tell you for sure why they did the skimming, except that it had particles of the tallow that they'd . . . throw away.

RM: The skimmings you throw away. How long does that process take - I mean, the cooking of it? It's on the stove, right?

LM: No. We never used it on the stove. It was too dangerous. We always built a fire outside.

RM: Oh, the fat would burn.

LM: Well, if anybody bumped into it or it got knocked over that terrible lye concoction would burn till they'd have . . . if you got a little of it splattered up on you from skimming it, you'd have little places all over your arm that were like small little burns, but that was from the

lye. My dad built an outdoor stove deal out of bricks that had a metal top to it. A lot of the times we would cook the soap on that. But usually he'd just build a brick deal, for . . .

RM: How long did you have to keep the heat on it?

LM: Probably at least 8 hours. We never got one batch done in a day, hardly.

RM: And then what did you do? Did you pour it into little bar molds?

LM: No, we'd pour it into great big pans, like about 3 feet long and a foot wide. I guess they had them especially for the soap. They'd pour that liquid all out and it'd set overnight and then the next day it'd be hard and you'd take a big, heavy, long butcher knife and go out and cut it into sizes of bars. They used to be about like this - pretty good size.

RM: Was it good soap?

LM: It was good soap to clean with, but it was really harsh. You wouldn't want to bathe with it, I'll tell you.

RM: What did you bathe with?

LM: We bought store soap.

RM: What kind did you buy, do you remember?

LM: Woodbury's. That was the main brand that I can remember as a little girl. We always bought Woodbury's.

RM: And what did you use the homemade soap for?

LM: Laundry.

RM: You were scrubbing on the board, weren't you?

LM: Yes.

RM: So women's hands were in this harsh soap, weren't they?

LM: Yes. It was hard on the hands to scrub with the laundry soap. But when we did it on the board we'd scrub the white clothes for a little while, and then we'd have a big boiler - everybody had a copper boiler - and we had it on the stove that I was telling you about that my dad built. It was long because the boiler was long -and wide. We'd set the boiler on the stove, and he had a stovepipe that went up like this and we poked the wood in here. We'd put the clothes in the boiler and boil then in the homemade soap suds.

Now, why the boiling . . . except that made it white. We had a plunger that was specially built. I think you can still buy them - you've seen them in antique stores anyway. But you'd plunge the white clothes in the boiler when they were boiling. Then you'd take them out and take them to the washboard and the tub and scrub them, but it was to get the soap out. After you did that, you rinsed them and rinsed them and then you put them in the bluing water.

CHAPTER THREE

LM: We'd have a rinse tub, and we'd take the wash from the tub where we'd been scrubbing to get the soap out, put it in the rinse tub to rinse the soap out more, and then put it in the tub where the bluing water was. The bluing water keeps the white clothes white.

Bambi McCracken: What is bluing water?

RM: It was really blue, wasn't it?

LM: It was really blue, it looked like ink. You bought a bottle of bluing and you only poured in 2 or 3 drops into this whole big tub of water, and it got to be blue.

BM: Is it a dye or a special . . .

LM: I really can't tell you, to tell you the truth.

RM: Why did it make clothes white? I never understood that.

LM: Well, do you ever use Blue Cheer in your washing machine? Well, it's the same principle. It's got bluing in that soap and it helps to keep your . . . I've always washed my husband's white shirts in Blue Cheer because it's got that bluing in it, and it works on the same principle.

RM: Lorene, let me ask you if you've ever heard this. We used to live out in rural Nye County and we had cats. And occasionally a cat would start going crazy and throw fits. Supposedly it was because they were eating lizards. But the folklore was that if you fed that cat bluing it would cure him. Did you ever hear of that one?

LM: I've never heard that one. [chuckles] I guess it's good for everything then. But that's all we ever used it for.

RM: Lorene, why don't you talk about washing on the board. I don't think people know much about washing on the board.

LM: Oh, I can tell you from personal experience. [chuckles] We had a big tub with a washboard you know, you've probably seen them. They're corrugated with a metal corrugated piece in it. It had a little ledge up here where you could put the bar of soap and you'd take your clothes down in the water, bring them up onto the board, and rub the soap like this over them, because corrugated shape helped to take the soap onto the material. Supposing we had a sheet - they're difficult to handle. You'd put your sheet in your water and then you'd lay it up on the washboard. The washboard sits down in your tub like this - at an angle. You'd bend over the top of the washboard (you were standing up here and you kind of bent over it) and get the sheet up out of that water, put it on your board, which is at an angle, take your bar of soap off of the top of the ledge and rub it over the sheet. And this corrugation helped to take the soap onto the material. Then you go like this with your

arms good and hard and scrub it up good. Then you'd put it down in the water again and . . .

BM: Would it lather up really well?

LM: Yes, very - depending how much soap you put on it, of course. You'd scrub it and put it back down in the water and then do it again, because the water runs out of the material as you're scrubbing it. You'd do that 2 or 3 times, and if it wasn't pretty and white when you got through, you'd take it over to the boiler that was going with hot water and boil it. Then you use your plunger on it for a while. Then you'd pick it up. You had a stick, specially made, usually about 2 feet long and an inch in diameter, made of very hard wood. You'd take that stick and go over and dig the sheet out of the boiler and bring it over to another tub of water you had, because you now had to wash the soap out of it.

You'd get the soap washed out and then you'd rinse it in the clear water, then you finally got into the bluing water. And you'd wring it out with your hands. Eventually though, we got a wringer that you fastened onto the tub.

BM: Did it twist it?

LM: Well, the wringer was 2 rollers, with a handle here. Then you turn the handle and put the sheet (or whatever article you had) through and turn the handle and wring the thing out. It was much easier, especially with sheets and heavy things like that, to run them through the wringer than to wring them by hand - they were really hard to wring. You'd wring a section and another section and another section. And then you'd get them out and finally get them onto the clothesline and hang them up.

BM: How long did the whole process of washing them take?

LM: All day long, lots of times.

BM: Really?

LM: When I was 13 years old, I started doing the family laundry. I rubbed a lot of it out on the board. But finally my dad bought a washing machine that was made out of a wooden tub. It had a wringer on it similar to the one I was just telling you about that we fastened on the tub before. But this one had wheels on it and it connected with this wooden tub. Then my dad would take the Model-T Ford and put it up on a jack so that the belt went from the washing machine out over the wheel of the Model-T, and it'd go around and keep this belt going, and that would keep the center piece of the washing machine - turning like this. So it worked the same as the automatic washer does, really.

BM: My word.

RM: But it was run off of the wheel of your car.

LM: Yes.

RM: That is amazing.

LM: My dad had to get involved with the laundry, I'll tell you, because he'd get it all jacked up and set and then he'd do something that was close by. He didn't stay right there with us, but if the Model-T ran out of gasoline, or it stopped for some reason, he'd be there to get it going again for us. So then we'd go through the same process - the sheets and the clothes would be put in this wooden washing machine and then we'd run it through the wringer, into the rinse water, then into the bluing water, and then out. And we'd wring them with the same wringer because it would swing around.

BM: Did a lot of families have this type of washing machine?

LM: Well, eventually. I guess my mother and dad had the first washing machine in the whole vicinity. And it the envy of a lot of the people.

BM: Oh, I'll bet.

RM: How often did you wash?

LM: About once a week.

RM: Was there a wash day? My mother always washed on Mondays.

LM: Oh always, yes. We washed on Monday and ironed on Tuesday.

RM: Tell us about ironing.

LM: I wish I had one of those flat irons. They were made out of heavy, heavy iron. They were about this long and then they had an iron handle, and you put them on the cook stove. The cook stove had an iron top, and you'd put them on there and get that fire really hot. In the summertime it was really a warm job, I'll tell you, to heat up the wood stove, to heat the irons. We had a pot holder, and it would just fit over the handle of this metal iron, and take your pot holder and go over and get your hot iron off the stove and then you'd hurry back over to the ironing board. Today's ironing board is not much different than that one only it was just a board, it didn't have legs. You'd put it between 2 chairs or between the table and a chair or something like that, and iron. When the iron got cool you'd put it back on the stove and get another one. You had 3 or 4 irons to keep one person going.

BM: Did you use water with it?

LM: No. That's really new fashion. What you used to do was take them and sprinkle them down. You'd put them out on the table nd get a little pan of water or something and then you sprinkle the water. Then you'd roll them all up tight into a little bundle, and then you'd have a laundry basket - we always had a laundry basket. You'd roll the items of clothing down into this little roll and put them in the laundry basket until you had a whole laundry basket

full. Some of them used the washtubs, too, to put the clothes in.

RM: I can remember people had jars with a kind of a special lid on it with holes in it, and you would sprinkle the clothes with that.

LM: Oh, well that was quite modern.

RM: Is that right? [chuckles]

LM: We did finally get those that had the little sprinkler thing on the top, but . . .

RM: And it was an all day job? What time in the day would you start?

LM: My dad put the car up on the wheels just about at sunup. We'd have breakfast and then my dad would go out and get the car jacked up on wheels while my mother and I were getting the laundry ready. You had to sort them and get all the white things here and the ones that were not quite so white, or that had anything, and then the dark ones and then the overalls and the socks - everything had to be sorted out into piles. Because, you see, you washed them all in the same water.

RM: Oh, you'd just use one tub of water?

BM: So you did the lights first and then progressively got to the dark?

LM: The very whitest first. That was in the washing machine. When we did them in the tub we changed the water quite often because it'd get too soapy. But we heated the water in this big copper boiler I was telling you about that we boiled the clothes in. We heated it, we had about 3 boilers and we'd keep 2 going and one we boiled the clothes in.

RM: Where did you get the wood for the fire?

LM: My dad hauled wood from the mountains and had huge, big stacks of wood back of the house. He hauled enough wood to keep our house going and my grandmother's. And then he had a big table saw. Are you familiar with those big saws that they cut wood?

RM: Yes.

LM: Here again, we used the car - the Model-T Ford. HE put the same type of belt around a pulley on the saw and hooked it onto the wheel and the wheel would keep it going. This saw was about 3 feet in diameter - it was huge. They had what they called the table, and they'd put these big logs onto this table and push it back like this so it came in contact with that big old buzz saw and it would rip through that wood. They'd saw big chunks about like that, however big the logs were. He'd put those into a big pile, after he got a big pile sawed he'd take the ax and split them so that they would be pieces of various sizes, because we had

to have smaller pieces to go in the cook stove through the door where the wood went in there. The bigger pieces they put in the fireplace or into the big heater that we used to keep the house warm.

RM: How long did ironing take? Is it an all day job?

LM: Yes. Sometimes we'd never get it done in one day.

RM: Why did people iron?

LM: Well, they didn't have permanent press in those days. It was all cotton and it wrinkled so fast.

RM: Yes. But it seems like a person would rather wear a wrinkled shirt than to go to all that trouble.

LM: Oh no, they were too proud for that. We ironed the sheets and the pillowcases and things, because we were very proud.

RM: When did the store in Hiko first open, do you know? That store that your family had.

LM: Oh, I would say probably in about 1888 or '87. My grandmother Wright had it before she was ever married.

RM: Is that right? Where did she get it?

LM: She was about 30 when she got married and her parents lived right there in that house. My great-grandmother Sharp went off and left her family, so my grandmother nd the sister older than she kind of raised the children. Their father was home, but they raised the children. Grandma Sharp just saw a greener pasture. . . we don't know what happened. She just took off and went to Kaysville, Utah.

RM: But your family built the building there for a store?

LM: Yes.

RM: And you mention that they were related to the Sharps in Railroad Valley.

LM: My grandmother was a Sharp and her brother, George Sharp, went to Blue Eagle - that's Railroad Valley - and they had the 3 big ranches up there. So her brother's sons are the ones who live over there.

RM: I've never met those Sharps, but I know of them - they're well-know over there.

LM: Uncle George Sharp was my grandmother's brother and he went over there and took up these ranches. They called it Blue Eagle because there was a big mountain and it looked just like an eagle up in the rock. So they called the operation the Blue Eagle Ranches. There were 3 of them and they had big springs on them. They were real fun to swim in because the water was just right. I've been there lots of times. He had sons named Howard and Roy and Jim and Lester, and then he had 2 daughters - Inez (and the other one's slipped my mind). But they lived on this ranch at Blue Eagle. Then as the sons got older, Roy lived on one ranch (with his wife and children) and Howard moved onto the south part close to Nyala. So his family grew up down there, and all

of that valley up and down there was controlled by the Sharps. Jim lived on the main ranch.

RM: But Jim was your . . .

LM: My cousin. He was my dad's first cousin.

RM: So the Sharps are on your father's side?

LM: Right. My grandmother Wright was a Sharp and she was a sister to George Sharp who went over and took these ranches up.

RM: Do you know when they went over there?

LM: Oh, I don't. It was probably about 1888 or something like that.

RM: So the Sharps had originally come from . . .

LM: . . . Hiko. All the Sharps over there are my relatives now. And my husband and I got really well acquainted with Roy and his wife Ellen, because they had children the same age as my children, even though he was quite a bit older than his wife. He was older than I am, but his wife was about my age (he married a girl from Salt Lake) and their children were my children's age. We had a big Sharp family reunion, and these kids were about teenagers and they got to have a lot of fun. Roy Sharp and his family played musical instruments - they did it for recreation over there on the ranch - it was a lot of fun to go over there. They'd get their musical instruments out and play. Then they had the spring that was just right to swim in - all we had to do was walk down the road a little ways and go swimming.

RM: So as a kid you went over to Railroad Valley quite a bit.

LM: I went to Railroad Valley every summer from the time I was about 11 or 12 years old, because my dad and mother took my grandmother nd his sister up to visit Uncle George Sharp and his family every summer. That's how I kind of grew up with the Sharp kids. And then Uncle George and his wife and children came down to see my grandmother at least once a year. They often came at Thanksgiving time.

RM: When did the Sharps come into this area and where did they come from?

LM: My grandparents - the Sharps - were converts to the LDS church and they came into the Salt Lake area. Then they went down through Utah, and I'm not really sure, but I think they were probably called to go and help settle these places. My grandmother Wright was born in Goshen, Utah. The twin boys, who were younger than she, were born in Fillmore, Utah. Then the next child was born in Irish Mountain (you see, we found out where they lived because of where they were born).
Then they moved from Irish Mountain down to Hiko and built this little house, and then they added onto it, I'm sure.

But I think that they probably built the store first, because there was an old wooden building at the back that we kind of used for a storage. But the back of the store and all, I think, was their house to begin with. Then after they built the nice house (which was really nice in those days) they turned this part into the store.

RM: Was there a community at Irish Mountain, or was it so close to Hiko that it . . . ?

LM: Yes, there was a community at the time the Sharps moved over there.

RM: What kind of mines were they?

LM: Silver.

RM: They didn't have the silica problem that they had in Delamar, did they?

LM: Oh no.

RM: So when you were a small child your family store at Hiko was the only store in the Pahranagat Valley?

LM: Right.

RM: Did it also serve as a post office?

LM: Well, they had another building that was the post office.

RM: So your family ran the post office?

LM: Yes.

RM: But the post office was not located inside the store, huh?

LM: No. At first, as I told you, there was a small saloon across the street that Louie [Louis] Stearns owned. He had it and he ran the post office at first. And then my grandmother . . . I guess when she came back from sending Lois to school, and after I was born, got the post office and ran it from then on.

RM: Was there a school in Hiko when you were a kid?

LM: Yes, there was. When I was a kid or when my dad was a kid?

RM: Well, let's start with when he was a kid. Now we would be talking about what year?

LM: He was born in 1897, so it was the early 1900s. They were married in 1918 so he was about 21 when they got married.

RM: So in the very early part of this century he was going to school in Hiko.

LM: Yes - 1906 or somewhere in there.

RM: OK, tell us about that.

LM: They had a building - a wooden type of building - up atop 2 rooms. There was rock underneath. It was over on Castle's place, which is just kind of kitty corner, like across the street like this a little bit, kind of on the hill. They used this building where they had the 2 rooms made out of wood - just framed up with boards around the side. What do you call them - board and batten. They'd put a board up and then they'd put a small board over the cracks. Then

underneath was the rock building, and I know they used the rock building for grain and things.

RM: Was it a 2-story building or did it just have a cellar under it?

LM: Well, it was kind of a split level deal, because it was built on the hill. You could walk in off of the hill into the schoolhouse up on top or you could come around here and walk into the bottom part of it still on the level.

RM: Oh, OK. Do you know when that school was constructed?

LM: Well, I would assume around 1900.

RM: Do you remember him talking about what it was like to go to school then?

LM: Sure, all the time - and all the mean things that he did.

RM: Tell us some of the things.

LM: [laughs] They had a lady teacher who came in there to teach school. And the kids who were in the vicinity, even clear down the valley 3 or 4 miles out, came up to that school. They had a little cart and a horse that 3 or 4 of the kids rode in. One family had 3 girls in this little cart pulled by the one horse.

There were about 5 or 6 kids went to school there - and my father caused a little [trouble] for a girl named Popoff. She had long braids, and those long braids would lie down from the back on the front of his desk like this, so he was always moving the braids out of the way. One day he got mad and they had the little ink wells that went down in the desk like that, so he put one of her braids down in this ink well. And this really caused a lot of havoc, I tell you. The teacher got a little disturbed at kids in those days. You didn't wash ink out like you do now. It was permanent, you know. Part of her braid about that long was dyed the color of the ink, you see.

RM: Oh, isn't that awful?

LM: That was one of his favorite stories. He said, "You don't want to ever do that." [laughs]

BM: About what grade would he have been in?

LM: Oh, about the fifth.

BM: And this school was the first grade through . . .

LM: . . . the eighth.

RM: If the kids went on, where did they go?

LM: They'd come over here to Panaca to high school. My dad had a cousin who lived just above Alamo in what they call Richardville, which is about 4 miles above Alamo. Richardville was there before Alamo ever existed. The people who moved in were called Richard, and that's why they called it Richardville. There wasn't any school down there, so this cousin (he was the same age as my dad and full of as much dickens as he was) came up and lived with

my grandmother, who was his aunt, and my dad and went to school. One time they found a dead cat on the road going to school (they had to walk about a half mile to school) and they picked it up and put in a kettle of water and put it on the stove and had it brewing when the teacher came in.

BM: Oh, my word.

LM: She just about left and went back to wherever she came from. [laughs]

RM: [laughs]

LM: They weren't really what you could call mean.

RM: No, just mischievous.

LM: But they were always finding some of these things to do that got them into trouble.

RM: Right. And I imagine they gave them lickings at school, didn't they?

LM: Oh yes. I remember Dad telling about when he put the girl's hair in the ink well. She just took him by the nap of the neck and marched him all the way home to his mother. He got his punishment by her taking him home, because he didn't want to face his mother.
I guess the result of that story was that the girl probably had her hair cut so that it wasn't quite so long, you know. Anyway, those are things that my dad did. Nothing really serious, but I guess they were pretty serious in those days because they were really strict. At least in my family they were really strict, and kids were obedient, polite and so on, so when they did things like this, it was trouble.

RM: Right. Then you went to school in Hiko, too?

LM: Yes.

RM: It wasn't the same building, was it?

LM: No, it was about 1-1/2 miles from where I lived in Hiko down to the Hiko school. In those days there was a school in Hiko, there was one at Crystal Springs, there was one down at Richardville that I was telling you about and there was one in Alamo.

RM: And this would have been around 1925 and in that era?

LM: Well, '26.

CHAPTER FOUR

LM: In 1926 there was this school, and the kids from the south from around the Schofield's, my mother's brother's children, came up to the school and the ones in Hiko went down to it. So we had 8 or 9 students. Then there were people named Nesbitt. The school was close to their ranch and their children went there. I walked to school. During the first, second and third and fourth grades the teacher (who wasn't the same one every year) boarded and roomed with my grandmother, so the teacher and I walked to school. Then my brother was old enough to go to school, and we got promoted to horses, and we rode horses. We tied them to the fence and they stood there all day for us till we came out of school and got on and rode home.

RM: Even in bad weather?

LM: Always.

BM: Did you have a saddle on them?

LM: No, we didn't bother about saddles. We'd just climb on them and take off and go down through the brush lickety-cat, and be there in 15 minutes or less. It was a real treat compared to walking.

RM: Yes. Where did the teachers come from?

LM: My first grade teacher came from Ogden, Utah. My second grade teacher came from Elko, Nevada, and she taught the second and the third grade - Mary Minoletti.

RM: Oh. But the school had all 8 grades in one room, didn't it?

LM: Right. The stove was in the middle and we put the desks all the way around the stove, especially in the wintertime, so that we kept warm.

RM: Oh, that's how you did it. Facing the stove?

LM: Yes, facing the stove.

BM: And the teacher would then walk around the stove?

LM: Yes, she had a desk kind of the edge of the circle, but she spent most of the time with the different classes. She'd have the eighth grade there and the seventh grade here and the second grade over here and so on.

RM: They were usually young women, weren't they?

LM: Well, yes. The first grade teacher from Ogden was Jean Brody, and she was just young - just out of school - probably 20 or 21 years old. Mary Minoletti graduated from the University of Nevada and she was from Elko, but she came to Hiko to teach school, and she taught 2 years. The next year we had Marguerite McQuiston and she was from Lamoille, which is up by Elko. It's a little town now but it was bigger at that time because it was a mining spot.

RM: Do you know what they paid the teachers?

LM: No, I really don't know. But I would guess, between $80 and $90 a month.

RM: And you say they boarded for several years with your grandmother?

LM: Right.

RM: Now what was her name?

LM: Mary Eliza Wright.

RM: And then you went through the eighth grade at Hiko?

LM: Well, I only went to Hiko through the sixth grade because they consolidated these schools (Hiko, Crystal Springs, Richardville and Alamo), to become Pahranagat Valley School District Number One so that they could have a high school. You see, each school had its own school board. They had the school board members - my dad was on the school board all the time I was going to school.

RM: What did they call your district?

LM: Hiko School District. There was the Crystal Springs School District, Richardville, Alamo . . . they each had their own school board and hired their own teacher and took care of everything. But then the valley got together and said, "If we consolidate all these grade schools and put our money together we can have a high school." So I went through the sixth grade at Hiko, then by the time I went into seventh grade i was in Alamo and we rode the bus. The road was not oiled like it is as you came up today.

RM: It was dirt?

LM: Dirt.

RM: A snaking road?

LM: Yes, and around Ash Springs on the east side, we went not on the west side like you do now. There was a little road between the hills and the spring around like this. We rode the school bus and we left at 7:00 in the morning or a little after 7:00 in the bad weather and we got down there in time for school at 9:00. Then we got home at 5:30 at night.

BM: That's a long day.

RM: And a long ride.

LM: Yes. So my seventh and eighth grades were in Alamo. That was quite a different change for me because in Hiko I was the only student in my grade - there was nobody my age. There was my brother and another boy 3 grades below me and there were maybe 2 in the seventh grade, but I just happened to be a loner. So when I went to school in Alamo, it was quite a change to have 12 or 14 students in the one [doubled-up] grade. (We had the seventh and eighth grade together down in Alamo. [The students came from] 6 in one grade and 8 in the other.) And then they had the high school.

RM: What did you do for ninth grade?
LM: That was high school.
RM: Oh, so you went there for high school, too.
LM: Yes. We rode the bus just the same. Whether you was in the first grade (we didn't have a kindergarten then) all through the 8 grades and the 4 years of high school, those who lived up and down the valley all went to school there. There were a few students who lived down below Alamo on the ranches down there and they had a bus that came up to Alamo. So for 6 years, while I was seventh and eighth and high school, I rode the bus down.
RM: About what was the total student body for the whole school when you finally graduated.
LM: Well, I can tell you about the high school and then we'll see what we can come up with for the grade school. When I graduated we had 12 students in my class, and that was the largest class that graduated from Pahranagat Valley High School for quite a few years. The class just underneath us had only 2.
LM: And then the next class, which would be the sophomores at that time (that was in 1938), had about 10. And then the freshmen class had only 4.
BM: Did you graduate with a lot of the people that you had gone to junior high with?
LM: Oh yes. I went to school with them those 4 years, you see. People didn't move very much then.
RM: By the time you graduated, had Hiko changed?
LM: Not much.
RM: Was the store still there?
LM: Yes.
RM: Was there still a saloon?
LM: No, the saloon closed long before. Louie Stearns was an old man and he ran the post office and the saloon until about 1922 or '23, and I guess he either died or got too sick, but then he soon died. So the saloon was not in existence. There were no saloons up and down the whole valley until later, probably in 1932 or '34, they had a saloon down just this side of Alamo a little ways called John Louis's. (That was his name.) He set up this little bar and that was the extent of it.
RM: Were there any other stores in the valley by then?
LM: By 1936 or somewhere in there (after I was in high school) they started the store in Alamo. Then we didn't have much of a store up at Hiko anymore.
RM: Did your store just start to fade then?
LM: We just kept a small store there until about 1938. My grandmother died in 1938 and my aunt kind of ran it for a little while, but it just finally fizzled out and they

closed it down. The only thing they had then was gasoline - they had a pump and sold gasoline.

RM: When did they put the gasoline in?

LM: Oh, in about 1932.

RM: During the Depression, where was the trade coming from for your store in Hiko?

LM: The valley.

RM: So you weren't getting that much competition from Alamo?

LM: Well, they didn't have a store down in Alamo until about the time it closed. She closed the store in '38 and they started the store in Alamo in about '36.

RM: I see. How many people were living in Hiko then when you graduated? Could you list some of the families and the structures and so on?

LM: Jim and Carrie Castle lived in a big 2-story house on this side of us, and then there was my aunt and grandmother. They lived there until 1938 when my grandmother died. Just a year or 2 before that my aunt got married, so she and her husband lived in the house next to us. Then there was us, and then there was the house up here on the hill that was called the Castle place, and that's where Dad first went to school. But they had all died and gone or moved or something, so that ranch was leased to different people.

At the time I was going to high school there was a family by the name of Bastion - Cyril and Vilda Bastion and their family - who lived there, and they lived there for quite a few years.

And then the ranch was sold to Murray and Rita Whipple when they came (the Bastions had given up the lease). That's the Whipple ranch now, but it was the Castle ranch. He came from Sunnyside, Nevada, up by Lund, and bought that ranch and put cattle on it and things. They had a boy who was about my youngest brother's age when they moved there, and he is Keith Whipple, the county commissioner, he was 3 or 4 years old when they moved there. I guess he was 4 and my youngest brother was 3, and they grew up together.

So that is Keith Whipple and his folks. His mother and father had another son, Kent, and then Katherine, the 3 children. But 2 of them were born after they moved to Hiko. His dad died in 1946. Then you go on down the road and there was Nesbitts' ranch. And then down at Schofield's there were about 4 different families -Mom's brothers had divided this ranch up. And then you get down to Crystal Springs and the Loves that lived there.

Then you get down to the Middle Ranch, as they call it, which is right down by Ash Springs, and I don't know who owned it, to tell you the truth. I guess the Roders did, but i didn't ever know them because they lived away

someplace and just leased the place - different people came in and ran it. Higbees are on that Middle Ranch now. I don't know whether you've ever heard of Burns, but he was a big money man down in California. He had the Burns Tool Company in California, and he was quite well-to-do nd he bought this ranch and then hired the Higbees to run it. He died and Higbees were able to buy it from the estate, so they own it now.

RM: So that was the extent of the ranching activity and the people in that vicinity?

LM: Until you got down to Alamo.

RM: Was there any mining activity going on then?

LM: Not in the valley. There's always been some mining activity in Pioche off and on, until the last . . . And there was always a little bit up at Irish Mountain, but it was just individuals. A couple of men who lived there kept one of the mines kind of going. They'd just bring a truckload of ore down and ship it to Elko.

RM: Do you remember their names?

LM: Rose Iracuri and Brownlow. Iracuri was a little , short Italian. And then the other one's last name was Brownlow and he just went by that name.

RM: Were they just little leasers up there?

LM: I guess - I don't know. I think Rosie owned that place. He'd work away and he had a dumptruck and when he got enough ore to fill that dumptruck he'd haul it over to Caliente and load it on the railroad. I really don't know what Brownlow did with his.

But there was a fellow who went out there from Salt Lake. He came with his son, and the son brought a friend of his. These 2 young boys were going to run this mine up there for the father, but they murdered this one boy's father. The boys were named Murdock and Carter. Murdock was the son of the father who owned the mine or had possession, and Carter thought that this fellow had money. So he involved the son (can you imagine) to kill this father. There was quite a big trial over it.

RM: Good lord. You mean Murdock's father.

LM: Yes, Murdock's father. I can remember very well, it was just one of the tragedies of Pahranagat Valley. People knew these 2 boys because they'd been there for at least 2 years. They'd come down to the valley and buy groceries and get the mail and they just got to know them, you know. The next thing we heard was that Mr. Murdock had come from Salt Lake to spend some time and I guess somebody in Salt Lake didn't hear from him or something. Anyway, they found out that he was missing. So people went down and they found him. They'd stacked big rock slabs that had been cut

out, maybe for a building or something, and they'd buried him like that by lying these slabs over the top of him. So they had a big trial in Alamo for these 2 boys - a local trial (that was the law). Then it went to Pioche to the district court, and the boys were sent up to Carson City for murder.

RM: Is that right? Was there a church in Hiko or in the area?

LM: In Alamo.

RM: And it was an LDS church?

LM: Yes. The only church that there's been in Pahranagat Valley was in Alamo, and everybody who belonged to the church went to Alamo to church.

RM: Were most of the people in Hiko and in the area LDS?

LM: A good percentage of them. Then in the last few years, 10 years, mostly because of the Test Site, a lot of the people who have moved into Alamo and that area and work out at the Test Site . . . Oh, and then there's the mine out at Timpahute.

RM: Oh yes, I wanted to ask you about that.

LM: A lot of the men who lived in Alamo worked out at Timpahute. Timpahute boomed.

RM: Was this in the '50s?

LM: Yes, the '50s and '60s. Anyway, there are a couple of [non-LDS] churches over at Alamo now. They're small, but they do have a couple of buildings where they meet.

RM: Was there ever a church in Hiko?

LM: No, there was no type of church. You see, the Sharps I told you about joined the church and came down through Utah, but by the time they reached Irish Mountain (we don't know why or what) they never had any children who became members of the church. There was nothing mentioned about their church.

RM: So the Sharps out in Railroad Valley are not considered Mormons now?

LM: [Shakes her head] It's funny - they're not, but nearly all the rest of them are, because they've been involved through the church in Alamo. But the Sharps in Railroad Valley aren't. George Sharp, who was the father of the ones who moved out there (he was my grandmother's brother), married a woman who was a Catholic. So I think, if any of the kids remember, they're Catholics. I know Jim Sharp was. Roy Sharp wasn't, but Jim married a girl who went there to teach school who was a Catholic, so a lot of the kids were brought up in the Catholic Church.

RM: Did the folks in Hiko who were Mormons participate actively in the church down in Alamo, or was it too hard to get to?

LM: No. I'll tell you something that you'll say, "Oh, not really!" During the Depression it was hard to buy gasoline

or to have enough money to buy gasoline, so they drove the school bus from Hiko to Alamo. Anybody who wanted to go to church on Sunday morning got on the school bus and rode to Alamo. Now that was approved by the school board and so on.

RM: That's interesting.

LM: But this was a cooperation - a thing that happened during the Depression.

RM: What role did the church play in community life and in terms of the way people lived?

LM: A very large one. They sponsored many of the activities. They didn't have any community activities. It was either the church that sponsored them or the school.

RM: What were some of the activities?

LM: We had a big celebration on the Fourth of July, and we had one at Christmas time and one at Thanksgiving, and there was always a dance at these special times. People from Hiko and all down the valley went to the dance. They had a local orchestra, we had good dances.

They always had horse races, even on Christmas, the weather permitting. But then, in Alamo we didn't have cold weather like we do here. One person had a horse and somebody else had a horse and they challenged them and set them up and they used the Main Street in Alamo for the horse racetrack. (I had a horse and we had a fellow who worked for us, Dan Stewart, who lived with my folks when I lived up at Hiko, before we moved to Alamo. He worked for us and lived right there because it was too far to travel back and forth like they would now). Dan was riding my horse in this horse race and the horse got scared and went over the top of the car and knocked him into a man and we thought he was killed for a little bit because it knocked him in the chest and knocked his wind out. But as soon as he got his wind back he was all right. I felt all upset and bad about my horse, but I guess nothing happened.

RM: Was the horse dead?

LM: No, she just got banged up a little.

RM: Did the church sponsor the Christmas celebration and the Fourth of July and things like that? How was Christmas celebrated?

LM: Well, they had a big Christmas tree. And in those days they had these great big pot belly stoves - one at one end and one at the other at the hall. They'd have a big Christmas tree and they'd always have a Christmas program and the kids got different little gifts off the Christmas tree, and there was always something for everybody because they'd bought all these little gifts. They weren't expensive in those days, but it took a lot of money to get

it rounded up. The people would donate so much money and donate things. Then after that they had a dance. And lots of times we used to have a big supper. (This would be Christmas Eve, or maybe the night before Christmas Eve.)

RM: Was it a pot luck supper, where everybody would bring something?

LM: Something like that, but they'd usually sign out somebody. They always had a group that did the meat, and then they had salads and they always had great big hot rolls. (I don't know why they made them so big in those days.) And lots of times at Christmas they'd have freezers of homemade ice cream from the ice cream freezers that you crank. And then the women made fruitcake. You had to have fruitcake at Christmas time. And it was that old dark fruitcake made with molasses. I can remember we always had fruitcake and ice cream. After that they had the Christmas tree and the program. Then they had the children's dance. The children danced for a while and the men sat around in the corner and talked and the women cleared up the supper and things and some of the others were carrying on the children's dance, and things. After they got all through with that, the grown-ups would dance. The kids would be stretched out on benches and blankets and things, asleep.

BM: [chuckles]

LM: We lived clear up at the top of the valley, so often we stayed down in Alamo at night on that kind of occasion. My dad had a couple of aunts and cousins and there was all kinds of people [we could stay with]. We'd stay overnight, then the next morning we'd get up and go home. We were always home for Christmas Eve, so it had to be the day before.

RM: Was the Fourth of July a big occasion for the valley?

LM: You bet. We always had horse races and they always had a big patriotic program and a dance. A lot of the times they'd go up to Ash Springs and have a picnic at noontime, and the kids would swim in the afternoon. They always had these big, long tables at the picnic.

Let me tell you about Christmas Eve in Hiko - in the whole vicinity. (I think everybody did the same thing.) My dad hauled wood, so he always brought in our Christmas tree and one for my grandmother and then some for the neighbors. When he came with a load of wood he'd bring these Christmas trees in and put them up on wooden stands and they'd sit on our big porch for several days to a week or 2, waiting for Christmas to come. Christmas Eve afternoon, my dad would bring that Christmas tree in and set it in the front room. After we had supper, my mother and the kids who were old enough would gather around the Christmas tree and decorate

it. My dad always sat by the big, wooden fire and participated by poking the wood in the stove and keeping the fire going and telling us stories and things while we were decorating the Christmas tree.

RM: What did you use to decorate the tree with?

LM: Oh, popcorn and cranberries threaded on strings that we'd worked on for days before, and then we had candles that were on little round things like that with clip-ons, and we clipped them onto the branches of the tree. We were very careful - we only lit them for a little while Christmas Eve and they'd sit and watch them and then all the candles were blown out carefully before anybody went to bed. Then the next morning my mother would always get those candles lit so that they'd be glowing when we'd get up about 4:00 in the morning.

RM: You'd get up at 4:00?

LM: Oh, always. [chuckles]

RM: Did Santa Claus come in those days?

LM: Oh, you bet.

RM: Did you believe in Santa Claus?

LM: I should say. After we got the Christmas tree all decorated and we hung up our stockings . . . we kids always hung up our stockings. (This was the general tradition, it wouldn't matter which house you went into, it would be the same traditional thing.) After we got the stockings hung, we sat and Dad always told us stories, and then we were hustled off to bed. And then while we was in bed Santa Claus came, and the next morning there were all these things: candy and nuts and an orange and a banana - when the bananas were available (we didn't have bananas for a long time).

RM: That was a big treat in those days, wasn't it?

LM: Yes. When we got a banana we thought that we'd really had it then.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: What kind of gifts would a child have gotten for Christmas in those days?

LM: The gifts were not many, the way kids get now. But we were a very fortunate family because it seemed like we got as much s anybody in the community. One of the reasons is because my grandmother and all would run the store, and they had great contacts with the big stores in Salt Lake like Salt Lake Hardware. They always sent to Salt Lake Hardware or ZCMI up in Salt Lake for certain things that we got for Christmas. My sister and I always got a doll until we were too old to get dolls.

RM: Now how old would that have been?

LM: Oh, about 12 or 13. And we always got a new dress. Sometimes Mom made it. Once in a great while we'd get a boughten dress, but not very often. But we were so fortunate because of the contact with the stores, a lot of kids didn't have those things. I remember at different times one or the other of my brothers would get a red wagon made out of wood. Then as my brothers got a little older, they got saddles and bridles and saddle blankets and things of that nature, because my dad was in the cattle business.

RM: Things they could use.

LM: Yes.

RM: What kind of gifts did you kids get your parents? What would you give your mother?

LM: Handkerchiefs, for one thing. I can remember getting a box of beautiful handkerchiefs for Mother, and a bottle of perfume.
That was really special, you know. Of course, we didn't have too much money as kids to buy things with, but we did get some money. I can remember once giving my mother a beautiful pin cushion.

BM: What did you get your dad?

LM: Some socks or a tie or some handkerchiefs. The usual thing, you know - that went clear back to those days. I can remember giving my dad a pair of really heavy wool socks that he was really happy about. It was cold in the winter and when I gave him those socks, he was really happy with those.

RM: Did you wrap your presents up in pretty paper?

LM: Oh yes. The paper was a cheap type of paper that tore easily. It was hard to get it together without having a tear in it.

RM: And you opened your gifts on Christmas morning?

LM: Yes. My dad always got up at 4:00 in the morning and built this big fire, and then he always came to every bedroom

door. "It's time to get up. It's Christmas morning.' My sister and I were just reminiscing about Christmas. (My sister lives in Bloomington down by St. George, and I have a condominium in St. George where I spend some time. She was over at my place not too long ago.) She said, "Can you remember Dad always coming to the bedroom door and shouting that it was Christmas morning - 'Merry Christmas, it's time to get up' at 4:00 in the morning?" He never came any other morning. My mother always got us up in the mornings to go to school and things. But on Christmas morning Dad got us up.

RM: And that would have been before daylight?

LM: Oh, long before daylight.

RM: So you would see the tree there with the candles and everything.

LM: Right. I suppose part of the deal was to get up and see the tree lit.

RM: Sure, in the dark. What was Christmas Day like?

LM: We always opened our packages in the morning when we first got up. The first requirement was that we get up and get dressed before we came to participate in the Christmas. There was none of this business of being in your nightgown or pajamas or anything –you got dressed. After we opened our packages and things and had our Christmas, so to speak, my mother always cooked a big breakfast for Christmas. Many times we had waffles on Christmas. They had a waffle iron that sat on the wood stove and you turned the handle over like this so that it baked on both sides. We always had waffles for Christmas, and usually sausage.

Back to this meat business I was telling you about: When they killed the beef Dad used to take some of it and some pork and make sausage. They had a special recipe for making sausage:so much sage, so much . . . and half beef and half pork. Mom made big bags about 3-1/2 feet long out of cheesecloth and they'd stuff that with the sausage. After the meat was thoroughly mixed in big pans with the seasoning and so on, they'd put it in the bags that Mom sewed up. Then they'd hang them in the meat house during the winter. Then we'd go out and get one of those sausages, as we called it, brought it in the house and Dad would slice them off and the pats of sausage would be about 4 inches in diameter. Then they'd fry those. Of course, when they got them fried up they weren't quite that big. But we had waffles and homemade sausage for breakfast on Christmas, and syrup, and I suppose maybe we got away without having cooked cereal on Christmas. Our breakfast usually consisted of some kind of cooked cereal, but I think that we didn't have to do that. We used to get so

tired of cooked cereal, I think we got out of it on Christmas. Then later in the day, about 2:we always had a big Christmas dinner.

RM: And what did that usually consist of?

LM: Turkey. My grandmother raised some turkeys and so we always had turkey for Christmas and Thanksgiving. And they'd stuff the turkey with dressing.

I'll have to tell you a little story about my grandmother and then you can see where my dad got his teasing from. I must have been about 12 years old, and they invited some of the relatives from down in the valley to come up for Christmas dinner and so on. Sometimes we'd eat dinner at my mother and dad's house and sometimes at my grandmother's house. Well, this time we ate dinner at my grandmother's house and they invited my grandmother's niece (my dad's cousin), she happened to be a really good friend of my mother's before they were married. My mother and Emma Richard came over to Panaca to high school together and they got to be good friends then. And it just so happened that my mother married her best friend's cousin. But she and he husband and 3 children came up for Christmas dinner. And I always loved to go over and watch Grandmother Wright stuff the turkey. Well, this is the first time she had ever seen candy corn. Are you familiar with the candy corn? They look like a kernel of corn - yellow with a little orange on it. Well, that's a long time ago. But she'd seen it over at Caliente or someplace, so she bought some.

I have to backtrack a little bit. When they raised the turkeys they always fattened them with the corn - they shelled the corn off the cob. We fed the corn to the turkeys and they would eat this whole kernel corn and digest it through the crop and so on. Well, of course, when the turkeys is dressed, the insides are all cleaned out and the crop is right here in the neck. The corn and everything is ground in there by the turkeys eating gravel and various things, and that grinds the grain. Well, my grandmother fixed a place in that turkey where the crop had been and put candy corn in it.

She had asked Carl Foremaster (who was my dad's cousin's husband) - he was kind of a tease, too - to carve the turkey. They always set the turkey on the table whole as it came out of the oven - that was tradition. Then they carved the turkey on the table. So she asked Carl Foremaster to carve the turkey. My dad had always done it before and I thought this was kind of unusual - how come she was asking Carl Foremaster, the guest, to carve the turkey? Well, he carved in and one or two of these pieces

of corn came out on the platter. So he turned it around like this and carved and another kernel or two came out. And he was so embarrassed. He thought that Grandma had forgot to clean the crop.

RM: [laughs]

LM: Grandma got to laughing so that when Carl looked over and saw my grandmother laughing, he looked down at that corn and then he started to laugh, too. Grandma used to tell me, "That was a dirty trick to play on him." But she enjoyed it.

RM: That's funny. What other things did you have at dinner besides turkey?

LM: Cranberries, mashed potatoes and turkey gravy, and then we'd have some kind of vegetables - whatever. In my day they raised lots of cabbages and they'd pull them up by the roots and then put the head of cabbage down in the dirt in a row. Then you'd go out and pull up the roots on the cabbage.

RM: The roots were sticking out?

LM: Yes, they were sticking up like this. We'd pull the cabbage up out of the dirt and then we'd pick the outside leaves off and wash it off and the cabbage would be snow white when you cut into it like that. They'd just be bleached so white, you know.

RM: Had the ground frozen though, or did it matter?

LM: Yes, sometimes, but it didn't seem to.

RM: I'll be darned.

LM: If you left it out so that it got to thaw out before you cooked it, then it would get soft. When they raised cabbages before they put them in the ground in the row, they used to bring them in, in the fall. They had big knives that were sharp as could be and my dad would slice that cabbage off really fine and make sauerkraut. We had big crocks like this and you'd put a layer of sliced cabbage and then some salt and back and forth. When you got through with that you put a big wooden lid over the top of it and a rock on the top of it. As the cabbage fermented and became sauerkraut, they'd have to dip the liquid off every day until it got cured. Then we'd go down with a big fork and dip up this sauerkraut into a pan and take it to the house and cook it.

RM: Were fresh foods shipped in from the outside, or was it just canned goods?

LM: Just canned goods.

RM: So any fresh foods you had were your own that you had grown.

LM: Yes. We had bananas and oranges at Christmas time - that's the only time we had anything fresh like that. They were

too expensive. But we raised lots of apples, and we had big bins of apples and a big bin of potatoes. But the only fruit that I can think of was not canned.

RM: You grew the apples in Hiko?

LM: Yes.

RM: Did you have any other fruit trees there?

LM: Yes - peaches and pears and plums.

RM: And they all did fine, huh?

LM: Yes, and they'd bottle those. We call it canning now, but in those days we bottled them because if you canned that meant using a tin can, and they didn't use tine cans. We just got glass bottles, and they put peaches or pears or whatever into a big kettle with a sugar syrup (not too heavy). They cooked them and then put them in bottles and screwed the lid down tight and then put them in a big kettle and brought them to a boil.

RM: And this was all done at your place at Hiko?

LM: Yes.

RM: Canning was a big thing in the fall, wasn't it?

LM: Oh yes - there were lots of peaches and lots of pears. We had lots of pear trees. I used to get so tired of preparing pears to go in the bottle. If you didn't can them when they were just right . . . they had to be ripe enough or they weren't any good - and the juice would just run down your arm like this. I just hated that so much. We were always getting a wash rag and mopping up our arms because the juice would run down them.

RM: Is that right? Are those trees still over there?

LM: I don't think there's a pear tree or a peach tree left in Hiko. I think they're all gone. They don't raise them anymore. I don't know why - I guess it's because people don't can like they used to. We bought the lot that's next to us over here [in Panaca] and there was an orchard up in that end years ago. We gave that lot to our son Phil and there are still some apple trees, but we get some fruit about every 7 years - other years they get frozen.

RM: It's just too cold here, isn't it?

LM: The frost comes at the wrong time. This year we had tons of apricots in Panaca. That's the first time we've had apricots for years.

RM: But you didn't have that problem at Hiko, did you?

LM: Not so much, because they're a little warmer over there.

RM: How about things like lilac bushes - did you have them over in Hiko?

LM: Lots of them.

RM: Were there any other kinds of flowers that you grew for decoration and so on? For instance, did you grow those yellow rose bushes that you see all over Nevada?

LM: Lots of them. And some red roses. But lots of the yellow roses. [Tape is turned off for a while.]

LM: We had another holiday in Pahranagat Valley in August - Melon Day. We raised lots of watermelons in Alamo and they would meet at Ash Springs and they had lots of ball games.

RM: Baseball?

LM: Yes. First they had a big picnic. Then they had ball games all afternoon, and then they'd get the big truckload of watermelons out. And later on they used to come from over here on this side of the county. They'd bring the ball team from here over there, and Alamo always had a ball team. Then they'd have the watermelon bust and then they'd have a dance that night.

RM: So there weren't too many holidays because people were so scattered?

LM: Right. Transportation wasn't that good.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

LM: During the Depression money was really hard to come by, and my dad raised cattle, you know - range cattle. There used to be cattle buyers who would come in and buy them. He had one favorite cattle buyer who came (and it wasn't his fault, it was just the way of the Depression) and bought some cattle and shipped them to Los Angeles, and he didn't get the money, so he didn't have any money to pay my dad. So my dad was just out the money for those cattle, but that was the situation lots of times during the Depression. Well, because of this setback with the cattle and not having any sales for them, he did a project. He gathered the cattle up from different people in the valley who couldn't afford to buy feed for them and more or less took them to take care of them. And we milked them - my dad and my brother and I - (Kay and I weren't very big, but we helped him milk them). Then we had a separator. We carried the milk into a little house close by our house and we'd separate the milk and then put the cream into about a gallon can. We'd save that until we got a 10-gallon can full of cream and then we'd ship it over to Caliente and it went up to Salt Lake on the train. Then they'd send us a check back for it. And that's how we bought sugar and flour and things. I even got a pair of shoes from the cream check.

RM: Is that right?

LM: That was a great thing, I'll tell you. Of course we had all the milk and cream that we needed to use. We did not suffer during the Depression as far as necessities. We had chickens and turkeys, so we had eggs. And we had chickens, turkeys and beef and all the food that you could think of, and we shipped enough cream that we could buy sugar and

salt and flour. Grandmother Wright (as I told you before) bought flour in great quantities for her store, so I don't know that we bought a great deal of flour. And we bought coal oil for the lamps - we did not have electricity. We used to buy the coal oil in bulk.

RM: Were you making any money on the store or was it kind of a break-even proposition?

LM: Well, by that time the store was about to the final end (that was probably another reason for it). We closed the store in '34. Thirty-two was about when we were milking the cows.

RM: Did people pay cash or did you have a lot of credit at the store?

LM: Both.

LM: The locals would run a store bill. They had little books that had duplicates, so she'd write out everything they'd bought - bottle of vanilla, a dozen eggs, or whatever - and total it up. They'd take their slip and go home with it and the other slip was left in their book. And each family that ran an account had a book, so she'd have a running balance on the book. When they finally got some money they'd come in and pay it on their store bill. But for people who just went through the country . . . you see, we were on the road between Ely and Tonopah at that time. There was nothing down the White River . . .

RM: Oh really? You mean going down through Currant?

LM: If you started through Ely. No, there was no road there. The only roads from like Ely to Tonopah was down through Pioche and across and through Hiko and over to Tonopah.

RM: Oh, I didn't know that.

LM: So we had quite a bit of traffic that went through. I can remember as a young girl walking along the road close by home, and a car came along and stopped and they said, "Can you tell us where we can find the road to Tonapah?" [accent on second syllable]

RM: [chuckles]

LM: And I wondered where Tonapah [accent on second syllable] was, you know. Finally I figured it out. But we were on the main road. That was one reason why they ran the gas station. All we had was a gas filter that you pumped by hand.

RM: Did it have the glass thing on top that you pumped through?

LM: Yes.

RM: In the early '30s was the store a pretty good source of income for the family?

LM: I think the reason they closed it was because they had too much out on the books.

RM: So you had to take a lot of losses when you carried credit like that?

LM: Yes. We had so much loss. We didn't get enough money from the people because they couldn't pay, so we couldn't send the money to salt Lake to Salt Lake Hardware and United Groceries. ZCMI, United Groceries, and Salt Lake Hardware were the 3 big companies in Salt Lake that they bought from and had merchandise shipped to Hiko. United Groceries was where we got the flour and a lot of the groceries. I don't know all the things they got from United Hardware, but I know that was one of the big companies. ZCMI is where we got the [dry goods].

BM: That's a big department store. They still have it, don't they?

LM: Yes, they still have it. [They have a lot of branches in Utah.] I know ZCMI first just opened up a furniture store in St. George. Now they have a shopping mall close to the town of Washington. And ZCMI has a big store in that big fancy shopping mall.

BM: It's a department store, right?

LM: Yes. ZCMI and Penney's and Wal-Mart are the main ones in that shopping mall.

RM: At that time the road from Hiko to Tonopah was not paved, was it?

LM: Oh, I should say not.

RM: What was it like to get from Hiko to Caliente?

LM: Well, from Hiko to Caliente you'd go north of Hiko a little ways, about 4 miles - almost to where we used to turn off to go up to the Indian camp I was telling you about. But we went through a natural cut in the mountain range along there. The road would go up, and through that cut and there was about 2 feet of sand.

RM: Good lord.

LM: Those old Model-Ts had a hard time getting through that sand, let me tell you. We'd go up through there and then across what they called Six Mile Flat (we still go through Six Mile Flat), but where we came out of the upper canyon through that cut in the mountains we went way above where the road is now. Now, when you came from Alamo you came up through the valley. Then you came up by Crystal Springs and through where these great, huge, big rocks are.

RM: Yes.

LM: Well, we did not go that way for years and years - until they made the oil road. We went way up above. And then we cut across the flat they called Six Mile Flat, and then we got onto the dirt road. It was all dirt, but we got onto more of where the road is now. Then we went through Delamar Flat, and then you come to where the joshuas are.

When you get to the joshua trees, then you go off across to the south of you - to Delamar. We went over the Caliente Summit in the vicinity of where the road is now, because that's where the natural canyon is.

RM: I see. But it was a dirt road.

LM: Oh yes - all dirt. We'd leave home at about 7:00 in the morning to go to Caliente and we'd have lunch on the Caliente Summit.

RM: Five hours to get to the Caliente Summit? Is that right?

LM: We'd have lunch and then we'd get down into Caliente at maybe 2:00 in the afternoon. We hardly ever went over till 1938 or '36 that we didn't stay overnight. It wasn't till they built the highway. One of the reasons was that pulling that summit was really hard on the cars, because the summit was steep in the old road. So we nearly always planned on going over and staying overnight.

RM: Did you stay with friends, or was there a motel or hotel?

LM: Both. We usually stayed with friends, but occasionally if they weren't there we stayed in the motels. They had a big hotel. It's right on the corner, but it's closed now and I don't know that you'd recognize it, the drugstore is in part of it.

RM: What occasions took you to Caliente?

LM: Doctor, grocery shopping . . . of course, we had to go through Caliente to go to Pioche for anything that was connected with legal things - it was the county seat, so for taxes and what-have-you we came over to Caliente and then on up to Pioche and then back to Caliente to stay overnight, and then we'd come home the next day.

RM: Did you ever go to Las Vegas?

LM: Oh yes.

CHAPTER SIX

LM: My first experience with Las Vegas involved my sister. She's about 9 years younger than I am (she was born in December and I would be 9 in February) and she was born in Las Vegas. My mother had a difficult birth with my brother, so my dad was going to take her down to Las Vegas where there was a doctor. In those days, First Street was a residential area, and we had a house that my dad rented on First Street. The railroad went right behind it. The doctor came to the house and delivered the baby - I'm sure there was no hospital in Las Vegas in 1929.

RM: So that was before Boulder Dam?

LM: Oh yes. There was not really a whole lot to Las Vegas until they came in to build Boulder Dam. There was one big hotel there -or we thought it was a big one - the El Cortez.

RM: [chuckles] Yes. Then they had the Sal Sagev, [laughs] and that was about the extent of it. So that was about the only time you went there, for medical purposes?

LM: Yes. There was not much in Las Vegas, so there was no reason to go. That was my first experience. Do you want to know how I went to Las Vegas for Christmas? my sister was born on the 17th of December, and I stayed with my grandmother Wright and my aunt, who was not married then, so that I could go to school, and the rest of the family went to Las Vegas.

BM: What grade were you in?

LM: Oh, the third, or something. Well, we were going down to Las Vegas for Christmas to be with my mother and dad, and then I had a brother and a new baby sister. We went down to Las Vegas in a truck that Marion Stewart owned that had a rack on the back and he hauled a big Jersey bull in the back of it - he was taking it to Las Vegas.

RM: [chuckles] Is that right?

LM: So Marion Stewart, my grandmother, my aunt and myself were all in that little cab with the Jersey bull in the back, rolling this way and that way. And it was all dirt road.

BM: Oh, my word.

LM: We left at 4:00 in the morning. We lived in Hiko and Marion was in Alamo, so we'd gone down to Alamo and stayed overnight with my grandmother's sister. We left Alamo at 4:00 in the morning with this truck with the Jersey bull to go to Las Vegas and we got there about 8:00 at night - long after dark.

RM: Oh, it took that long?

LM: You bet. And we went down through Corn Creek. Have you ever heard of Corn Creek?

RM: I've heard of it. The Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad used to stop on Corn Creek. It's on the other side of Sheep Mountain.
LM: Right.
RM: So you didn't go down the way the highway [does now].
LM: I should say not. We had the long way around, I'll tell you.
RM: So you went over and hit what would now be Highway 95 to Mercury . . .
LM: Well, we would have if there'd been one.
RM: In fact, you crossed what is now the Test Site, didn't you?
LM: Yes.
RM: Tell me about that route across there.
LM: It was a long, long road full of lots of ruts and sand, with nothing but a few water holes to stop and fill the truck with. We stopped at Coyote - do you know where Coyote is?
RM: I've heard of it, but don't know exactly where it is.
LM: Well, you know where they had those houses of ill repute down on the road to Las Vegas. They had those 2 brothels close to Coyote. Coyote is just a little west of . . .
RM: It's south of Alamo, right?
LM: Yes - I was going to say it's about halfway between Alamo and the Clark County line, but they're closer to Clark County by quite a bit. Anyway, you'd go west of where those houses were and that was Coyote Springs.
RM: Was there anything there, or just a spring?
LM: There was just a spring. The water just came up out of a little spring. There were tules and things around there and a little creek that went off down. But after it went down the road a ways it just sank in the sand. Well, we went down by Coyote, but we had to stop and get water there for the truck. I can remember that.
RM: Was it was heating up?
LM: In those days, it was just one of those things that you had to do. You either had to carry a lot of water with you - or enough to get from one place to another - that was just part of it. It didn't matter what car it was - pulling through the sand was hard on it.
LM: So we stopped at Coyote, I know, and got water, and then we went on down to Corn Creek.
RM: Now where is Corn Creek?
LM: You've got to go south of Coyote and still west, get on the other side of Sheep Mountain. When you said it was probably in the vicinity of the Test Site, I guess you're probably right. But you see, then we came in and we would be coming in on the road from Tonopah to Las Vegas. I'm

sure that road was there. It was just an old dirt road then.

RM: I'll bet you crossed over north of Sheep Mountain. If you're going to Tonopah you come to Sheep Mountain, and then . . .

LM: Well, we went on the west side of Sheep Mountain.

RM: Yes, but not too far from Indian Springs.

LM: I think that's right. I don't remember going through any springs - there may not have been an Indian Springs then.

RM: I think there was probably a ranch there then.

LM: Or something like that. But Coyote and Corn Creek are the 2 places that I have in mind.

RM: Was there really a creek at Corn Creek?

LM: Yes. But it wasn't the kind of creek you think about, it was more like the one at Coyote. It was just a little dribble that kind of went alongside the road a ways.

RM: Did you ever take the train into Vegas? Of course, you'd have to go clear to Caliente to get the train, wouldn't you?

LM: Right. When my mother and her mother went down to Las Vegas, my dad took them to Caliente and put them on the train to Las Vegas so they wouldn't have to go through this long trip with her expecting like that. But then he took some of the belongings and things and went down in the car. But we went with Marion instead of going over to Caliente to the train. Years later we went to Las Vegas on the train quite often.

RM: Did these trips to Caliente and elsewhere in a car always involve a lot of flat tires?

LM: Oh, I'm sure we had flat tires occasionally. I can only, actually, remember one, but my dad was always very careful to keep his tires and everything up and carry spares and so on, so we never had any great worries.

RM: How about trips to Cedar City or Salt Lake?

LM: We nearly always went to Salt Lake once during the summer. My dad (who died of silicosis) had a sister - his youngest sister in Salt Lake, Aunt Christina. My grandmother and her sister-in-law kept a great relationship so we always went to Salt Lake. But [those trips didn't start] until about 1932. I know that we went on the train a time or two before that. We went to Caliente and then got on the train to Salt Lake. The first time that I can actually remember going to Salt Lake in the car was in 1932. My dad bought a new car, and that was during the Depression, if you can imagine.

RM: What kind of car did he buy?

LM: Always a Ford. Well, I'll have to take that back. We had a Model-T Ford, then in 1926 my dad bought a Chevrolet. It

had a rubberized top and it had a windshield, and I don't know what it had in the back, but it was all open on the sides. When it was cold in the winter or if it was going to rain, we'd put up these isenglass curtains. They snapped or something on the sides, and they had little windows out of isenglass. And you could see out through the windshield. We had that car from '26 to '32, and then my dad bought a new Ford, and it was a sedan.

RM: It was a Model-A?

LM: No, it was past the Model-A. I think the Model-A was about '30. But this was enclosed, it had windows in it.

RM: Very luxurious and warm!

LM: Right! [chuckles] Oh, it was a luxury. It had this really neat upholstery that was kind of mohair-like. It was really something to have a car during that time. My dad was probably better off than most of the people because he had the cattle.

RM: All the time that you were growing up at Hiko you never had public power, did you?

LM: Oh no.

RM: Tell us how you lived without electricity and what you did for lights and cooling and whatnot.

LM: For cooling, you opened the doors and the windows - that was the only cooling system we had in the summertime. Fortunately, in Hiko we nearly always had an evening breeze so that the nights cooled off. Down in Alamo it was warmer, Hiko is a little higher.

And a lot of people slept outside in the summertime cause it would be cooler. I can remember some of them getting sheets and getting them wet and hanging them between trees and so on, so a little bit of the breeze would come through, and that's how they kept cool. We didn't ever have to do that up at Hiko. We had this big, screen porch around our house and my mother and dad put a bed out and slept out there, and I had a bedroom that had a north door and we opened the north door and we'd get this breeze in the bedroom. We had no other cooling system than that.

We didn't have a bathroom in the house when I lived in Hiko. We did have the water piped in because we lived about 1-1/2 miles, I guess, from the spring where the water came out of the rock in the mountainside. My dad and one of the neighbors - Jim Castle, who lived next to us - bought used pipe in Delamar and brought it over and piped water from Hiko Spring down into the houses - Castle's, and my Grandmother Wright's and our house. So we had cold water in the house. We had a big sink and a tap with the cold water. That beat carrying it from the ditch, which they'd always done before.

We had a ditch that went out in front of the house with a big box that he built so that we could go out and dip up the water. We used the water out of the ditch to wash the clothes with, and we'd bring it in and heat it up for the bath. We bathed in what they called a number 3 tub, the larger size of washtub that we used to wash the clothes in. In the cook stove they had a place in the back that they called the reservoir. You took your kettle and dipped the hot water out of the reservoir and put it into the bathtub. And we always put a big kettle on the wood stove to heat water for the bath.

RM: How often did you kids take a bath?

LM: Oh, probably not more than twice a week.

Then for lights, at first we had kerosene lamps. We had a kerosene lamp for every room - one in the kitchen and one in the living room and one in each bedroom. On Saturday it was my job to clean the lamp chimneys, to get the black off of them and clean them. They were all to be polished every Saturday, and the coal oil, or kerosene, (they're the same thing) replenished so that every lamp was filled with the kerosene. They usually lasted a week, except for maybe the kitchen or the living room, whichever one got used the most.

RM: Did you burn the lamps all the time in each room, or only when somebody was in there?

LM: Only when somebody was in there. In the evening, as soon as it would start getting dark, we'd light the lamp in the kitchen and one in the living room. The bedrooms wouldn't get lit until we were getting ready to go to bed or, if for any reason, we needed to be in there. Usually that was the way it was.

RM: Did you use stick matches?

LM: Yes, just like we have now.

RM: Did you ever get Aladdin lamps?

LM: We never had an Aladdin lamp. My uncle Merle Schofield, my mother's brother, had one, but after the kerosene ones we had a gasoline one.

RM: Oh, like a Coleman lamp?

LM: Right.

RM: They were like a different world, weren't they?

LM: Oh, I should say so. We had lanterns and lamps with the mantels. But we used white gasoline in those. It didn't use the regular gasoline that you . . . we burned in the car. It's more like aviation gasoline now.

RM: And you had to pump them up, didn't you?

LM: Oh yes, both the lamps and the lanterns.

RM: Do you remember about when you got the white gas lamps?

LM: I would guess it was probably about 1930, somewhere in that vicinity. We also had gasoline irons then.
RM: Oh really? I'm not familiar with them.
LM: Instead of the flat iron that I was telling you about before, we had an iron that looked something like the electric irons now, only they were that long. They were just about this long and then they had a little tank on the end of them. Then they had a little tiny tube - I don't think it was copper, but something similar to a copper tube that ran from the tank down into the iron part. Then there were holes in there. And you had to pump the iron up also. You'd pump it up, but the air forced the gasoline through. Lamps and irons all were the same thing, but there were no mantels on the irons.
RM: There was a flame burning in there just like a lamp?
LM: Yes. You'd turn the gasoline on a little bit after you'd pump the air up, then you'd turn the little knob with a little of the gasoline in it, take a match and strike it and light it through here. After you got it going the flame would burn all the time with the little blue flame about 1/4 inch high. That would heat up, and as soon as the iron got hot you could start to iron. But you didn't have to run back and forth to the cook stove, you didn't have to have that hot fire going all the time. It was a dream. And it was convenient. When we got the electric irons with the cord on them they were an annoyance to us because of that cord dragging across there.
RM: Oh, right - you weren't used to that.
LM: No. We could just iron with the gas iron.
RM: What did you do to keep food cool?
LM: We didn't have any refrigerator in Hiko until about 1936 or '37. I went to Reno to school in '38, but we had the refrigerator before that.
RM: And was it a gas refrigerator?
LM: Yes - a Flamo. It had propane gas that you got in a tank.
RM: What did you do before that if you wanted to keep food from spoiling?
LM: Well, we had a cooler. You could buy them, or y dad built ours. It stood about 4 feet high and it was about 2 feet wide and it had a couple of shelves. The ones you bought were made out of metal and they had holes in them about the size of my finger. My grandmother Wright had one with the metal. The sheets of metal on the top and the sides and so on had the holes. When Dad built ours he just used screen and covered the square box that he made for the frame with screen, and then they covered that with gunnysacks. They had a little tank on the top of that, and there was a little spigot that the water dripped down on the top of and

it would go down onto the burlap and keep the burlap wet, and that would keep the food and the milk - especially the milk - cool. We put milk in big pans and set it out there in the cooler and it'd stay pretty well, it would really be good. It would last all day without getting sour.

RM: When did electricity come into Hiko?

LM: Hiko didn't get electricity until '45.

RM: Did people have generators or anything like that?

LM: Well, in Alamo they had Delco plants, and they had wires run from this big Delco plant. It was run by batteries that looked about like an automobile battery. But they had a bank of them. If I remember right there were about 12 of them, and that ran the generator.

RM: Was that for each house, or for the whole town?

LM: This was for the whole town. But, you see, the town wasn't as big as it is now. But that's what they had when we went to Alamo to live in '41. I came to Panaca to teach school and the family lived in Hiko until that fall. But when they went they were still using the bank of electricity. When we went to Alamo . . . Hiko didn't get electricity until long after Alamo did.

RM: Where did it come in from, the south?

LM: Yes. The line came up from Las Vegas and Boulder City. It came to Lincoln County mines and up here to Pioche first. They had electricity in Caliente and Panaca and Pioche because they brought the line up through Delamar Flat from Las Vegas for the mines.

RM: So Pioche didn't get electricity till the '30s, the '40s?

LM: I came here in 1940 and they just got electricity then. Some of the homes in Panaca were just getting wired for electricity in 1940 when I came here to teach school. Lester, my husband, lived down here at the end of the street. When I came to teach they were just getting their house wired, so it was just in 1940, I guess.

RM: Did they have a community plant before then?

LM: Yes. Panaca did, like Alamo did. But Alamo didn't have power when I came here to teach school. When my folks moved from Hiko down to Alamo they had this generator bank. But I was married in '43 and they had electricity in Alamo by then. They had just got it in.

RM: Well Lorene, let's pick up on your life where you graduated from high school in 1938. You had a question, Bambi.

BM: Yes, I wanted to ask what your graduation ceremony was like when you graduated from high school? Did you have the robes or . . . ?

LM: No. When I graduated from high school (it was the same here in Lincoln County as it was over in Pahranagat Valley) we wore really pretty dresses - long, like you would to a

dance. My graduation dress was a peach colored chiffon. It was long - clear to the floor. All the other girls' dresses were long and they were various colors.

BM: Did the whole family and everybody come for the ceremony?

LM: Oh! And we had the graduation up on the stage at the Pahranagat Valley High School, and they had the valedictorian and the cell and things like they do now. They had one who gave the history and one who gave the will and the whole thing.

BM: Did they have a band that played the music when you marched in?

LM: Oh yes. We had a really good band in Pahranagat Valley High School when I graduated.

RM: Bambi graduated from Tonopah High.

BM: Yes, in '87, so it's kind of fresh in my mind.

LM: Yes, I guess so. We had the regular ceremony, but we didn't have robes. After the graduation program was over with the trustees and the principal and so on did their ritual of handing out the diplomas like they do now. Now, in Lincoln County High School they had all the graduates march by the member of the school board that gave out the diplomas. The president of the school board always stood by the table where the stack of diplomas were and the graduates would march by and get their diplomas. Over here at Lincoln County High School (even after I came over here to teach school this same thing happened) the president of the school board was a Mr. Denton from Caliente, and he gave all of the girls a kiss.

RM: Is that right? On the cheek?

LM: Yes. All the girls hated to go through the line cause Mr. Denton was going to kiss them. [laughs]

RM: [laughs]

BM: That's funny.

LM: We didn't have to go through that over at the Pahranagat Valley High School. When I came here to teach school, you see, he still was doing that. He had been the president of the school board for years and years, so every class suffered through that.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LM: My dad and Will Stewart leased Sand Spring Valley to run their cattle on - that's the valley just on the east side of Railroad Valley. Railroad Valley is one valley over towards Warm Springs.

RM: Is it the same valley that Rachel is in?

LM: Yes. You went down past Hancock Summit and Coyote Summit and past where Timpahute was (kind of up in the hills). You went past it for a ways (in fact, you went past Rachel a little ways) before you turned to your right and headed north up through the Sand Spring Valley. We had a little home base type of a place called Shadow. The reason they called it Shadow was because there was a mountain right there, and this little house and a corrals and what-have-you were in the shadow of this mountain.

They had wells all over Sand Spring Valley that were pumped with windmills, but the one there at Shadow was pumped by gasoline. The motor was run by gasoline and they had to keep filling the tank with the gasoline.

There was a 3-room house there - a big living room and a kitchen and a big bedroom, and all the men who worked there had beds in this room. And there were corrals built all around. Then there was the tack house, as they called it, where the saddles and things were kept.

One of Will Stewart's boys had just been married and he was going out and they were going to live in this house at Shadow and take care of the wells. They had to go around to all the wells and make sure they were all running and pumping so the cattle wouldn't be without water. They were going out one Sunday afternoon (they'd come in Saturday night and go back out Sunday afternoon before dark) driving up this dirt road, chugging along through the sand, and they spotted an airplane on the ground in the valley not too far off the road. This was such an unusual thing - to see an airplane. So they knew that there was a calamity or some reason he had made a forced landing, because it was sitting out there in the desert. There was a little brush all over and the airplane was just sitting out there.

They couldn't drive the car across because they'd get stuck in the sand, but they got out of the car and walked over to this airplane. This new bride (she'd been married about 3 months, I guess) had beautiful blond hair, she was really a pretty girl and [her husband] walked up to this airplane and looked down in the cockpit and there was this young man alone in there. He had been there for several hours. He'd walk this way and he'd walk that way and he could not see the road that was over there so that he could come out on

the road anyplace. He had written notes to his sweetheart and to his parents and so on, "This is what happened." I don't remember what happened to the plane, but something to the motor, and he was just forced to land. It did tear up the plane somewhat, but he was not hurt to any extent.

RM: But he didn't know which way to go for help, did he?

LM: No, he didn't know. Being out there on the desert with no water, he was prepared to just lie there and die. So here came this young couple going to Shadow. As she climbed up and looked down in there, and he saw her, he said he thought he was dead and he'd seen an angel. He said it was a great experience for him.

RM: What happened next?

LM: When he realized that he was still alive and these were live, real people and all this, he was really excited. And they were excited to have an airplane out here in nowhere. They just loaded him up in the car and took him on to Shadow with them. They fed him and he drank well, because he had been there for hours, you see.

RM: He was dry. [chuckles]

LM: And it was in the summertime. They had groceries and everything and with them for the next week. They were able to take care of his needs and fix him a bed (there were several beds there for the cowboys) and he was so grateful to that couple.

RM: Isn't that something?

LM: He said they saved his life. I'll tell you, they did. You see, nobody would have picked him up. Well, he stayed with them for a couple of days and rested, because it was necessary for this fellow to make his circles to make sure that the cattle all had water. Then they brought him in to Alamo. There was one telephone in Alamo, but he was able to get out on the telephone to reach his parents and talk to them. I don't remember the details of what happened - I suppose that he eventually got on the train and went to Salt Lake - that's where he was from.

RM: Did they get his plane out of there?

LM: Yes, they did. I was trying to remember how in the world they got the plane up to Shadow. (It's down here several miles away.) I don't really know how they got to the plane up there, but I remember seeing the plane at Shadow.

RM: What year was it that the airplane crash landed out there?

LM: I guess it was about 1930.

RM: Now, you graduated in 1938. What went through your mind with graduation?

LM: Well, about the time I was a senior in high school I made up my mind that I was going to be a schoolteacher. One of my neighbors had been a schoolteacher and I got acquainted

with her. That was Keith Whipple's mother, the Whipples lived on the corner. She had been a schoolteacher, she'd come down to Sunnyside to teach school and that's where she met Murray. They got married and lived at Sunnyside, and then they came down and bought the place in Hiko and she still lives there.

RM: Is that right? She's still living there?

LM: Yes. Her husband died, but she's remarried again. Keith lives where we did and then they live up on the hill we used to call the Castle place.

RM: And the Castle place was the original school?

LM: Yes. If I was over there I could show you where it is. The building is still there, unless they've taken it down.

RM: Is your school building still there - the one you went to as a child?

LM: No, it's all gone. I don't know what's become of those buildings - the schools at Hiko, Crystal and Richardville.

RM: Well, you made up your mind to be a schoolteacher. How did you decided to reach that goal?

LM: I decided that I was going to be a schoolteacher so I was going to go to Reno to school. In those days, if you went to Reno to school you had the first opportunity to teach in Nevada. They didn't go over to Utah and up to Idaho and around and recruit teachers like they do now - they hired the ones out of the University of Nevada first. If they couldn't get any there, then they'd go someplace else. But we always had the first opportunity. So that's why I went to Reno, Reno was the big school then. BYU was a small school, comparatively. Cedar was there, but it was very small. If you wanted to teach school you went to the University of Nevada for the reason I just told you.

RM: Reno must have seemed like a million miles away and very intimidating to a girl that had grown up in Hiko.

LM: Right - I'd grown up out here in Hiko and hardly been off the place. Now for the financial situation: My dad and John Castle (who lived up on this Castle place we were talking about) owned some cattle together. I don't know why, but that is the way it was. My dad had his own cattle, and he had the brand Hattie-T. It was like this.

RM: It was a hat with an upside-down T inside of it.

LM: Then later he had the 7HL.

RM: Oh, OK - a 7 with an L joined by an H.

LM: Then the cattle John Castle and my dad owned had a Bar-O. And these brands were all recorded. Now, this was recorded in John Castle and John Wright's name, but John Castle was old and he decided he was too old to go out and take care of the cattle. So he said to my dad, "John, let's sell those cattle," and they did.

But there were still cattle out on the range that weren't gathered in - it was hard to gather them all up out on the range. So he said, "I'd like to give the cattle that we haven't been able to gather to Kay and Lorene . . . " (Kay is the brother that's just younger than I am) " . . . and the brand Bar-O." And we were just young kids then. Well, those cattle grew and they gathered up calves and they branded all the mothers and calves that went into the Bar-O. Well, by the time I got ready to go to school, which was about 10 or 12 years later, there were quite a few head of cattle accumulated. So Dad said to me, "Do you want to sell your half interest in the Bar-O," (that's how they referred to the outfit) " . . . and take the money and go to school?"

And I said, "Yes."

So he said, "Well, Kay will buy you out." He's 3 years younger than I am, so Dad took my brother, who was 15, and they went over to Pioche to the bank and borrowed the money from the bank and Dad signed the note with Kay and got enough money to buy my half of the cattle. So now the Bar-O cattle outfit is Kay's.

RM: How much did it come to - your half interest?

LM: Oh, I got about $3200, something like that. But in those days, you could go to school on about $1000 a year - especially if you worked. So I had enough money, about, to go to school because I worked when I was going to school. And that's how I went to school.

RM: Where were they running the cattle?

LM: Up on Irish Mountain and Coal Valley and Cherry Creek, which is all north of Hiko. Irish Mountain is up there where the mines were. That was some of their range, and then just north of Hiko -the road goes up through there now.

RM: And your dad had the grazing rights? Or did they need grazing rights in those days?

LM: They didn't have grazing rights then.

RM: You just grazed your cattle wherever you had water.

LM: Yes, kind of. You didn't have to worry about it with the government or anything, but the Wrights had grazing here, and the Nesbitts had someplace else, and the Sharps down in the valley (who were related to my dad) had another place, and it was just kind of designated that that was their range. I don't know what they did to have claim to it, but there were no Taylor Grazing fees nor anything like that in those days.

RM: Right. So you got the money to go to school and went off to Reno. How did you get up there?

LM: My mother and dad took me in the car.

RM: Did you go up through Ely?

LM: Yes, I think so. I remember Austin . . .

RM: It was a long trip, wasn't it?

LM: Yes.

RM: The roads weren't paved by then, were they?

LM: Oh, no. They probably were oiled from Fallon into Reno, or something like that. But my mother had a sister who lived up there, so they went up and took me to school, and then they stayed with her sister - my aunt - for a day or so and then came back home. When I wanted to come home for Thanksgiving it was too far, so I didn't come for Thanksgiving. When I came for Christmas, I came on the bus to Ely and my dad and mother came to Ely and helped me off the bus. We stayed in the hotel overnight, and then came home the next day.

RM: The Nevada Hotel?

LM: Yes. The next year I had a different story. There were some kids from Lincoln County who went to school up there and also there was a young man who had worked with the Soil Conservation down here - George Camelson. He was older than the regular bunch of us and he had a car. I got to know him quite well and he used to bring us back and forth. So I'd come with George. He'd come to Caliente and there was Lee and Emery Conway and there was another girl here, Virginia Mathews, who is a relative of my husband's. She and I got to be good friends at the university. We came down as far as Panaca and I'd stay overnight with Virginia and her folks, and then my mother and dad would come from Hiko and get me.

RM: Did you find it intimidating up there at first, or did you take to it like a duck to water?

LM: Can you believe a young girl that lived in Hiko by herself going up there and not being intimidated?

RM: That's what I was wondering.

LM: Well, it's just like everything else - it's what you get used to. The first 2 weeks went along pretty well, and then I got homesick. And I was really homesick. I was sick. That's the only time in my life that I've been homesick. Every night I'd come home from school and I'd actually be sick, and I'd say, "This is not worth it. It's just not worth it." But I had my money in a savings account down at the bank and the only way I could get it was during banking hours (you'd take a little book and go down and draw it out) I couldn't do it at night so, "In the morning I'm going to go back home. I'm going down and draw the money out and I'm going home on the bus to Ely and Mom and Dad can come to Ely and get me. I'm not going to stick it out." The next morning I'd wake up and I'd feel better,

"Well, I'll go to class today." I'd go to class all day and when I'd come home I'd go through the same thing, and I did that for 2 weeks.

RM: And then what happened?

LM: I finally got over it. Then I got a job working in the dining hall. They had a big dining hall, there was Artemesia and Manzanita and the dining hall was in between, the Lincoln Hall was where the boys stayed. It was just up on the hill a little bit, and there was a big lake they called Manzanita Lake. It's still there. Have you been to the University of Nevada?

BM: I haven't spent much time there.

LM: Well, the lake's still there. Artemesia Hall is gone, but Manzanita Hall is still there, and I guess Lincoln Hall is. I worked in the dining hall and got acquainted with a lot of the kids, and then everything went along smoothly. I had a job and I had friends and I got interested in school and it didn't bother me not to go home for Thanksgiving because there were a lot of kids in the same boat, there were kids from Mesquite and Logandale who couldn't go home for Thanksgiving. So they had the dining room open because there were enough kids there, and on Thanksgiving Day they had a nice turkey dinner for all of the ones who couldn't go home. We got together and did something -we were together all that day, and it wasn't too bad. We suffered through it pretty well. But then at Christmas I came home, as I told you, on the bus. Then the next year I went home for Thanksgiving and Christmas because I dated George Camelson and he had a car, and there were the 2 Conway boys I had kind of known before. You see, I didn't know the kids over here before - there was no communication. When I got up to the University of Nevada I got acquainted with the kids from this part of the county. When I got ready to finish school the dean of education told us how to send out the applications with your picture and so on, but it was improper to send an application to a school unless you knew that there was an opening. So you'd go through a ritual of finding out what schools had an opening. So, do you know where Barclay is?

RM: No.

LM: It's a little place on the railroad that goes from Salt Lake to Las Vegas. Families lived there that had cattle and ranches, and some of them worked on the railroad. I don't know how many families there were - probably 8 or 10 in the vicinity. But they had a school there and they had an opening. So I sent my application down to the only place that I could find an opening. Of course, I knew where it was and kind of knew of the people because my dad

knew them through the cattle business. I sent my application down there and I got a letter back and it said, "We were interested in your application but we want a personal interview." Can you imagine?

RM: [chuckles]

LM: I'm clear up in Reno and they want a personal interview and the transportation . . . Well, I went into Dean Trainer, who was the dean of education, and I told him about this letter. I said, "Dean, there's no way I can go. I've got finals, I don't even have transportation to get there. What am I going to do?"

He said, "Lorene, that school will still be there when you get through. Just don't worry about it."

RM: [laughs] He knew, then?

LM: [laughs] He really was reassuring. Then the morning of graduation he had us all out there on what they called the quadrangle and then we had to march into the building where they were going to hold the graduation. Dean Trainer came along and he said, "Lorene, they need a teacher down to Panaca and they need one in Caliente, and I sent your papers and your recommendations and everything down there," just kind of casual like. I didn't even make out an application.

I went ahead with graduation and when I came home I said to Mom and Dad, "I guess I need to go over to Barclay for that personal interview." Well, we were all going to go - my dad was going to take me to Barclay and he needed to go Pioche also. It would make a long day, but the roads were a lot better by then.

RM: This would have been what year?

LM: Nineteen forty-two. So we were going to go, but on the way we stopped to get the mail (the post office was about a mile from our house) and in the mail was a contract from Panaca for the first and second grade. They'd never seen me, I'd never sent an application or anything, they just took Dean Trainer's word for it and sent me a contract signed by the school board.

RM: Isn't that something?

LM: So all I had to do was sign it. We were all ready to go the other way, and Dad already needed to go to Pioche anyhow, so we just went on. And as we went, we discussed it. They said, "Well, do you want to teach in Panaca or do you want to go to Barclay?"

"Well, there's no use to going to Barclay, cause they may not want me, but Panaca does." I told you that I was born here and then my brother was born here later, so my dad and mother knew some of the people here and they knew one of the school board members. He worked in the mine, but he

and his wife and family ran a little malt shop. We drove into town (it was right on the highway) and stopped and he was there, so I went in and we talked 2 or 3 minutes and I signed the contract and gave it to him. I went home and I had a job. So I never went to Barclay.

RM: Is that right? Now, I want to back up on a couple of things. I hate to keep backtracking, but . . .

LM: That's all right.

RM: What about phones in Hiko?

LM: There were no phones in Hiko until the '50s, probably.

RM: And no telegraph or anything like that?

LM: No. We had a phone in Alamo.

RM: So if you wanted to make a phone call, you went to Alamo?

LM: Yes.

RM: And what about postal service? Where did the mail come in from?

LM: It came from Caliente to Hiko and then on down to Alamo. We had a post office in Hiko and it was just about a mile or mile and a quarter from our house down to the post office. The Nesbitts ran the post office then. Mind you, my grandmother used to run the post office. But when she went to Panaca to send Lois to school and moved away, the Nesbitts took the post office. The mail would leave Alamo and drive from Alamo up to Hiko and to the post office. And as I told you, the road was above Hiko, so they didn't go back down to Crystal, they went on up to hiko and out through the cut there and across Six Mile Flat, so it was all in their route. But the mail went 3 times a week. I don't know when they changed and had it go 5 times a week.

RM: What kind of a role did the catalogs play in your life - Sears and Roebuck and so on?

LM: The first catalogs that I can remember was National Bella Hess. National, I guess, had been the catalog before, but they combined. I was just a little girl then, about 7 or 8 years old. I know that when I was about 8 or 9 I used to take the old catalogs and cut out the pictures of the girls in dresses and have them for paper dolls.

RM: Did you order many things from that catalog?

LM: The necessities of clothing, yes.

RM: How about Sears and Roebuck?

LM: Sears and Roebuck and Montgomery Ward came along later - in about '32 or '34. I was 12 in '32 and they came in about the time I was 12 and 14. I can remember when I was 9, but I don't remember anything about Sears and Roebuck - it was National Bella Hess. It was similar to Sears as far as clothes. But I don't know what became of them. They just finally went by the wayside, I guess. I think that Sears and Roebuck and Montgomery Ward became the 2 popular ones.

RM: Well, you got your contract to teach in Panaca, and what happened then?

LM: I came to Panaca to teach school. And while I was teaching school there was a young fellow here who wanted to get acquainted with the schoolteacher. Do you want to hear about that?

RM: Yes. That's a part of your history.

LM: You bet - a major part. I came here to teach school in the first of September. (School started the day after Labor Day.) I came a day or two before, and of course my mother and I came over earlier and found a place for me to live.

RM: Where did you live?

LM: Nobody lives in it now, but as you turn to come up the street here it's the house right on the corner with no lights in it. The school was just on the east of it. My mother knew Amy Mathews, but on top of that Virginia Mathews, who I mentioned a minute ago, was their daughter. But she was younger than I so she was still going to Reno to school when I came here to teach school. Anyway, I lived with them for 2 years. I guess I'd seen Lester at church but didn't know who he was. But one Sunday afternoon I saw a black Chevrolet car go around the square, as they called it. (The church and the grade school and the high school and so on took up this square.) And I saw this car go around and finally it stopped out in front of the house where I was living.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LM: She kind of got up and she said, "Oh, that's Lester." She went to the door and greeted him and, of course, her husband and Lester were relatives. But then, they knew everybody in town, everybody knew everybody. Well, she was so exuberant about Lester and he came in and she greeted him graciously. Then she said, "I'd like you to meet Miss Wright." She introduced me to him and he sat down and visited with Amy and me. Finally he said that he was on a talent survey for the church - that they needed to know what all the new people who came into the ward could do. What were my talents? Did I sing? No. Did I play the piano? No. I didn't have any talents and I was getting so embarrassed by this little interview he was giving me, because here's a school teacher come into the town, and you're supposed to be able to do something. Finally he said, "Well, you must give a reading."

And I said, "Yes, I've done that in the Alamo ward."

"Well, next Tuesday we want you to give this reading in Mutual," which is an organization for the young people. So I agreed to do that. I've never given that reading yet, by the way. [chuckles]

RM: [laughs]

LM: Then he asked me if I'd like to go down to Caliente, that he had to go down to Caliente to meet somebody. I went with him, but they had it all concocted. There was another couple, who are our really good friends (they weren't married then), and we all met down at Caliente at the drugstore and had ice cream or something.

Well, that was my first acquaintance with Lester Mathews. Then he invited me to a social they were having and they were decorating for this social - some of the young men were there - and one of the fellows, Lavon Phillips, said, "Starting tomorrow night," (which would be the social), "we ought to get acquainted with the new school teacher."

And Lester said, "Starting last night."

So that kind of deflated the young men in there, to think that Lester had already gotten acquainted with the new school teacher.

RM: [chuckles]

LM: You see, in those days when the new school teachers came, it was new blood in the community, I guess you'd say - a new girl had come to town. But there were quite a few young people here then and I really had a good time.

BM: How was your husband related to the family that you were staying with?

LM: Well, Lester's father and Clyde Mathews were cousins.

BM: Oh.
RM: Where was he from?
LM: Lester? He was from Panaca. They lived in the house at the end of the street. Nobody lives there anymore, but Lester was born in that house.
RM: How long did you go with Lester before you got married?
LM: For 2-1/2 years.
RM: What did Lester do?
LM: He helped his father on the farm and things. And then a lot of the time he worked down in Las Vegas. They were building the houses in Henderson at that time [for BMI]. His sister lived there in Las Vegas, and so he lived with her and drove out to Henderson to work. He worked on those houses a lot, and then he'd come home on weekends and things. He came on the train some of the time, and some of the time he'd drive the car. But it was cheaper for him to come on the train.
RM: How did you find your first teaching experience in Panaca?
LM: It was a great experience. I had a good principal and things. And then Lester went into the service before we were ever married, in World War II. And teachers then became very scarce. I had the opportunity to go into Pioche. I taught the first and second grades in Panaca, and I really didn't want to teach first and second. My training had been in the fourth and fifth grades, and that's where I wanted to teach. And opening came up because one of the young men who was teaching there, Harold Wilkes, had to go to the army, so they needed a fourth grade teacher up there. Because of the mines they had a bigger school and they only had one grade per room so I would get fourth grade like I wanted, I'd only have one grade in the room instead of 2, and I would get a little bit more money. Do you know how much money I made the first year that I taught school?
RM: How much?
LM: Thirteen hundred and twenty dollars . . . for the year.
RM: Gosh - just about $150 a month, wasn't it?
LM: About $133.
RM: [laughs] Is that right?
LM: And I would get $1440 if I went to Pioche for the year. That was a little incentive, but that wasn't the incentive. The incentive was to have one grade and be in the fourth and fifth grade area where I had trained. So I went up there and taught the fourth grade.
Then Lester came home in March of '43 on his first furlough and we became engaged at that time and we were going to get married in June. I had all the preparations made, even had blood tests taken, because we were going to be married in

Utah. I get word after all these preparations that his June furlough was cancelled. He was going to be shipped out. So I thought that was it. He was going to be shipped overseas, so I just put everything away and thought, "I may never get married." Who knows, you know? It was hard.

Then he didn't get shipped out. They shipped most of his unit out, but he was in the signal corps, and they didn't sent the signal corps, they attached it to another outfit. He was in Colorado Springs at Camp Carson most of the time, except when he went to Georgia to communications school. And while he was waiting to go with the other division, we were married. I was lying on the bed with the 3-day measles and it was in August. There was one phone in Alamo. Somebody came from that phone and said, "You're wanted on the phone." I went over to the phone and it was Lester. He said, "Can we get married in 7 days' time?" He got 7 days scraped together somehow, and that included his travel time.

He came home and we were married and then left and went back to Colorado Springs and I stayed there with him for 12 days and lived in a hotel, because that was the only way you could do it [with the housing situation there]. Then I came home because I already had a contract to teach in Alamo, and that's where my folks were.

RM: Your folks had moved to Alamo?

LM: Yes.

RM: When did they move to Alamo?

LM: In the 1940s.

RM: Why did they leave Hiko?

LM: Because my dad had an opportunity to buy land down below Alamo that had pasture and a lot, lot more land to put up hay and things, and he wanted to expand. He still kept his range rights and things for his cattle, but he bought cattle then and had a feed yard in Alamo, and raised hay and a lot of silage because it was a bigger farm.

RM: What year did you say he went down there?

LM: '42.

RM: '42. So you taught a year in Panaca and then you went to Pioche for a year . . .

LM: . . . and then I went over to Alamo. I had got married in August but I already had signed my contract and there was no place to live in Colorado Springs. So I only went with him until it was time for me to teach school, and then I came home to Alamo and taught school. And I got more money - I got $1550. I taught the fifth grade there and that's when I taught Keith Whipple.

But on the 23rd of October Lester fell off of a cargo net in a practice. He broke his heel and hurt his back. He

landed on his heel and they said it was just like a boiled egg that you dropped, it was just a million cracks. And they put that heel back together. The doctor always said it was a man-made heel. He was in the hospital for 6 months, and then they tried putting him back out to march and back out in the field, but he could not march. So one day they came up with the idea that they were sending him home - giving him a medical discharge. He only knew it 2 days before he was home. It was a real surprise when he called and said, "Meet me in Caliente. I'm coming home."

RM: Is that right? And meanwhile you were living in Alamo.

LM: I still had another month of school to teach.

RM: And this would have been in '44?

LM: Yes. So he came home and he stayed part of the time in Panaca with his folks and then we always spent weekends together. Either he came over to Alamo or I'd come over here (I had a car by that time).

RM: How long did you stay in Alamo then, just one year?

LM: Just till I could get through the year. It was really dumb. I had a contract already signed for another year there in Alamo and he came home all of a sudden - it was really sudden - and when I got through teaching school, I just packed up and moved over to Panaca. After I'd been over here about a month I realized that I hadn't done anything to be released from my contract in Alamo. But I knew all the school board really well and I didn't have any trouble getting released, but we've laughed about that a lot.

RM: Did you teach anymore after that?

LM: I didn't teach until after my youngest daughter was 5 years old. One night about 11:00 there was a knock on the door and we were in bed asleep. Lester got up and went to the door and he came in and said, "The whole school board's in your front room wanting to see you." At that time, they had a school board in Caliente and one in Pioche and one in Panaca and then one for the high school. Well, the school board from Panaca came to visit me at 11:00 at night. I got up and dressed and came in and Lester and I visited with the school board, and what they'd come for was to see if I'd teach school. They had a teacher coming from Colorado and 2 days before school was to start they got a letter in the mail saying that she was not coming. What were they going to do for a teacher 2 days before school starts? So they came down to see if I'd teach school. I said, "Give me 2 days to think about it," and we decided that I would. Lester's mother and father lived down at the end of the street, which is just a couple of houses down there. I'd leave Neva with Lester's mother during the day

and then pick her up when I came home from school. Then the next year she'd be in school, you see. I taught 18 years.

RM: What year did you start the second time?

LM: In '55.

RM: And so you taught until '73?

LM: Yes, or '74, something like that. Let's see, it's been 16 years since I quit teaching school.

RM: And what type of occupation did Lester follow?

LM: Agriculture. When he came in March proposed to me for marriage, he asked me to marry him and before I had time to say yes or no, he said, "Will you live in Panaca?"

RM: What did you think about that?

LM: That was fine because I really liked Panaca and I had lots of friends here. When he came home form the service, I had taught school enough and saved money an we could start to build this house.

RM: Oh, you built this house?

LM: Yes. We didn't build this room on until later, but they started to build the main part of the house with the basement and so on right after he came home.

RM: How many children did you have?

LM: Four.

RM: Could you tell me their names and the years they were born?

LM: Sure. John's the oldest and he lives on a ranch out of Pioche about 10 miles. He was born on January 31, 1945. Phil was the next one and he was born on May 25, 1946. Robert's birthday is December 16 and he was born in '47, and Neva Jo's birth day is May 17 and she was born in 1949. She lives in Richland, Washington.

RM: Do your sons all live in the area?

LM: Well, John lives up here on the big ranch I mentioned, he and his father bought it. Phil's lives up here in the housing just a 3 or 4 blocks from me and he has a wood yard in the lot next to me. He works on the state highway maintenance and runs this wood yard. He cuts wood in the mountains and his wife says that's his hobby.

He's a very energetic person and has to do something besides just work. He gets home at 3:00 in the afternoon, so he works in the wood yard. He either goes up in the hills and cuts wood or splits it and sells it here in the winter.

Robert lives right over here close to the Y junction, just on the road to the airport. And he is running the turf farm. He did various things. He worked in the bank down to Caliente and then he had a friend had a big business going in Idaho selling tractors and big trucks and things - Dave Steed. And he came down and worked on Rob several

trips to get him to come to Idaho and run the business in Twin Falls, Idaho. So Rob moved his family but he didn't sell his home. He moved his family up there and worked in Twin Falls for 2 years, and then the agriculture crunch came in Idaho and the farmers (they raise potatoes, mostly) were hauling potatoes out and dumping them because the price of potatoes went down. Rob had done a really fine job in Twin Falls and pulled the business out of the depths of despair, so Steve thought if he got him over to Idaho Falls he could pull the one in Idaho Falls out.

He moved him over there and they lived in Shelly, Idaho, which is right by Idaho Falls, but it was too far gone to do anything with. The farmers couldn't pay for their trucks and tractors and a lot of them just drove them into the yard and handed over the key and walked out and left them. Some of them didn't even bother to bring them in, they were still sitting out in the fields. The company (Intermountain International Harvester) and the bank (which he'd borrowed money from) both came and wanted their money because he had too much out for the trucks and tractors that were all sitting around, so they just foreclosed on it.

Lester and Rob knew that this was going to happen, and Lester had been building a turf farm for 3 years while he was gone. He'd reached the point where he said, "We've either got to sell it or else get Rob down here to help run it." So we went up and visited with Rob and he was grateful for the opportunity to return, so he came home and moved into his house and went to work for Lester working on the turf farm. In 1989 with landscapers in Las Vegas, and it was too bad Lester didn't live to see. But I know that he knew that it was going to be the best year that we ever had in all of our farming.

RM: Is that right? When did you begin the turf farm?

LM: In '84, I guess.

RM: When and where was Lester born, and what was his full name?

LM: It's Lester C. - initial only - and he was born December 26, 1919. (He was 6 weeks older than I am.) He was born in that house at the end of the street and lived here ever after. He went to BYU one year to school and then he went into the service and when he came out of the service he was going to be a farmer. He did various things in the farming business. He bought a bunch of land around that was available. Some of it was really cheap, but the main part of the farm over there was a Desert Land Entry that Quincy Keal had taken up. Quincy Keal moved to Reno and taught shop in the Reno High School, so nothing had been done with

the land except that he [proved up on it enough to get] claim to it.

Lester bought it from Quincy Keal and drilled some wells on it, fenced it and went to farming it. It was a real struggle, financially, for a while. He tried different things. He had a dairy and ran a dairy for 5 years, I think. The greatest day in my life was the day those milk cows went down the road.

RM: [laughs] Where was the dairy located?

LM: Over there where the turf farm is - just north of there.

RM: Right down by the Y?

LM: Yes. It'd be just north one mile. A friend I knew quite well, Merrill Bunker, came up and wanted to buy the dairy and Lester was more than willing to sell it to him. Because Merrill had some dairy cows, but he didn't have enough milk base, and with our dairy we had a good milk base. He was really more interested in our milk base than he was the cows, but he had to take them.

RM: What's the milk base?

LM: It's a contract of some kind to sell so many gallons of milk with some company. Lester's was with Meadow Gold and we had a good milk base. I don't know how we were so fortunate, except that Grant Lee lived here and drove the truck to Cedar City for Meadow Gold and knew the people over there really well. Grant helped Lester to get a really good milk base so that we could expand our dairy. I guess you bought the milk base, to a certain extent. Merrill was interested in the milk base as much as anything, but as I said, he had to take the cows with it.

RM: I have good friends who are dairy people and to me it's the hardest, most demanding job there is.

LM: It's tough, I'll tell you. There's not one day off out of the year, you know.

RM: Yes, it's slavery.

LM: Anyway, then Lester went to work for the AFC. Are you familiar with that?

RM: I don't think so.

LM: It's a government program where the government offers assistance to the farmers if there are floods or other calamities of some kind. They build people back up and they have certain soil conservation practices that they support. There was an opening in the office in Caliente. A fellow who had been working there was killed in an automobile accident, so it happened suddenly that the job came open and they were really hunting for somebody. I talked Lester into going down and applying for it, and of course, he got it. He worked there for 7 or 8 years or more.

One of the things that we did was to buy calves - heifers, I guess mostly - from some dairies down in California and bring them up here and feed them out. We did that for several years. They shipped those heifers up here - they called them replacement heifers. When they raised them they'd sort through and take the best ones to put in their dairy and sell the rest of them.

RM: Lorene, could you give us some of your observations on Panaca? For instance, what was Panaca like in the mid-1940s?

LM: Well, Panaca wasn't much different than it is now, as far as population and so on is concerned. The thing that caused Panaca to be as big as it was, was the mines from Pioche. A lot of people that worked in the mine up there lived here because there wasn't too much of a place to live in Pioche, and what there was, was mostly taken up. The mine - Combined Metals was the main mine in Pioche then - expanded and expanded and they needed more men.

RM: When was this now?

LM: Probably in 1950, '52. They decided that they would put in what they called the Sun Gold Manor - a housing development out here on the east edge of Panaca, which is a good portion of our town. They built 100 homes then.

RM: In the early '50s?

LM: Yes. Robert was 4 and 5 years old while they were building them and he was born in '47, so that was about '52.

RM: That was a sizeable addition to the town, wasn't it?

LM: Oh my, yes. And those houses were, I guess, practically all filled. So Panaca was a good-size town for a while. Then 2 things happened. For one, the houses started to settle. They didn't go in and settle the ground and part of it was a big flood wash. They just filled it all up and went in and put in the houses with cement floors. And the walls were . . . . Lester's nephew was living with us and working and he said, "I'd hate to live in one of those houses. If your neighbor got mad at you he could put his fist right through the wall." Anyway, they were quickly built houses. And then, because they didn't settle them, they started settling, so then there'd be a 6-inch gap so the dogs and cats, the rats, the lizards, everything, could crawl through because the floor went down and wall was still up here. So a lot of the people moved out of them and the government condemned them. They sold those houses after they were condemned. A lot of people just gave them up and walked away and left them, but they condemned them and sold them for $2500.

RM: Is that right? Are there people living in them now?

LM: Oh yes, lots of them. A lot of them were fixed, and some of them didn't settle. But in a lot of them they went in and jacked them up and poured cement under there so that they built kind of a foundation up so the floor wouldn't go any further. My son Phil, the one who works on the state highway, lives in one of those, but it didn't settle. It's on kind of a little mound, so it wasn't out on the flood wash. But when they condemned them, people from over in Enterprise and New Castle (those are places between here and Cedar) and even in Cedar came over and bought those houses and moved them off.

CHAPTER NINE

RM: So people from east of here from Enterprise, even as far as Cedar, came in and bought those houses?

LM: Right. We can go to Cedar or Enterprise and pick out houses that they bought and moved over there and put on lots. So then they had these empty lots here. Well, almost all those lots have been sold and they've built houses or put mobile homes on them. There's one that's just been put in there just recently that's just beautiful, and they did a whole landscaping. It's really nice. So that's how they filled up those lots.

RM: But the original homes were built to supply the mines at Combined, right?

LM: Right.

RM: Now the mine's not working, so what's supporting the community?

LM: We have Lincoln County High School, which employs quite a number of people - teachers, janitors, bus drivers, what have you. Some of the people who work at the courthouse live in Panaca. Probably the main thing other than that is the Test Site.

RM: So there are a lot of workers from the Test Site in Panaca? Do they commute or do they live on the Test Site?

LM: Both. If you worked in the north - Section 51, which is the north section, they drive from here over to Pahranagat Valley, over to Crystal Springs. (That's right when you came into the valley.) There's a bus that goes from Pahranagat Valley out to 51 and they get on the bus and ride the 45 miles out there.

RM: That makes a long trip, doesn't it?

LM: They have a long trip. But then they come back to the Pahranagat Valley and get in their car and drive home. They leave at 4:00 in the morning and get home about 5:30 at night.

RM: Those guys are tough.

LM: Or crazy - I don't know which. A few men go and stay during the week and come home for the weekend - if they work down in the southern part towards the Indian Springs area. I don't know what the names of those places are.

RM: So the Test Site is a big factor in the economy of Panaca?

LM: In all of Lincoln County. That's what keeps Alamo going. A lot of the people came in when the Timpahute Mine started up, and they either lived in Alamo or out at Rachel. That's how Rachel came about. They started this little town of Rachel out here - they brought in trailers and various things and set them up. (I guess you'd call it a town.) And they worked in Timpahute - the mines up here on

the mountain. But a lot of them lived in Alamo because they didn't have a school at Rachel. People who didn't want to haul their children into school lived there and the men drove back and forth. In fact, they rode a bus, too. The mine provided the bus for the men.

RM: And then, how many people live in Hiko now, would you say?

LM: Oh, 60.

RM: Are there any Test Site people there, do you think?

LM: Yes, there are about 3 families that I know of. One [man] who lives there still works out at the mine out at Timpahute. He takes care of it - works on the machinery and keeps it so that it doesn't rust out, and so on. He's a mechanic and he goes out to work every day and comes back.

RM: OK. So Hiko is mainly what, agriculture and . . .

LM: Retired.

RM: And then Alamo is ranching and farming and . . .

LM: Somewhat. Not too much in Alamo. They have some farms down below town, but I would say that 90 percent, probably, is Test Site or involved with the schools.

RM: I see. And what about Crystal Springs?

LM: It's only an area that's broken up because that's where the road comes from Tonopah and from Ely to [Highway] 93.

RM: Yes, it's just a junction there, isn't it?

LM: Yes.

RM: But there was a kind of a town there at one time, is that right?

LM: Yes, but not really at Crystal Springs. Up to Hiko though, which is 6 miles north of Crystal.

RM: The population was more at Hiko than at Crystal?

LM: Oh yes. Really, the only thing that was at Crystal was this spring that produced the water that went down and provided the water for the top half of Pahranagat Valley to farm with.

RM: And there's an abandoned building that looks like a little casino there on the right.

LM: Yes - they just couldn't make a go of it. There was not enough to support it.

RM: Do you know who built that place?

LM: Not really. Some people out of Las Vegas came up there and built it because they thought that it was going to be a really neat place, the road from Ely was being built down through there. They bought the land with the anticipation of building it, but there was too much at Ash Springs already built and it didn't work out.

RM: Are there quite a few retired people here in Panaca?

LM: We have quite a few retired couples who come here because it's quiet, and it's cheap to live here compared to Las

Vegas. A lot of the people here are retired from Henderson and Las Vegas.

RM: What supports the Pioche economy?

LM: The courthouse and retirement.

RM: What supported Panaca in the '40s when you first came here?

LM: The mines.

RM: And when we talk about the mines, we're talking about the mines in Pioche, right?

LM: Right. Caselton, which is over here on the hill. It's as close to go to Caselton from here as it is to from Pioche around the hill.

RM: And Caselton was Combined . . . ?

LM: Combined Metals is what it's called. And there have been different ones come in and try to reactivate it. Kerr McGee is one of them. They're a big operation.

RM: And when did they come in?

LM: Probably in the '70s.

RM: Is that right? And it's basically zinc, isn't it - or is it silver too?

LM: There used to be some silver, but mainly it's lead zinc in Pioche.

RM: So Kerr McGee came in, in the '70s - and they couldn't make it go either?

LM: I don't really know. They spend a lot of time and money . . . we sold an acre of our farm over by the highway because they were trying to buy some land. They talked Lester out of it. We had this strip along by the highway and Kerr McGee put 2 quite nice mobile homes there. They had 2 of their engineers, I guess, who lived there. We knew them because we sold them the land and they were next to our farm and so on.

They put up these nice homes - they bought the land and put in the electricity and water and everything, and they promised that they'd be there at least 5 years. They were there 7 or 8 months, and they were gone. Once couple went to Grants, New Mexico.

RM: Were there any other projects like the housing addition that they built out here on Panaca back in the early '50s that really changed the town the way that did?

LM: Not in size, no. Combined Metals and the addition up here that they called Sun Gold Manor are the biggest things that ever happened to Panaca, as far as extending population.

RM: How about services available in Panaca through the years. How have those changed, if at all?

LM: You mean restaurants and service stations and things like that?

RM: Yes - restaurants and health care and shops and barbers and whatnot.

LM: When I first came here to teach school in 1940, there was a barber shop, but it only lasted till maybe into '50 and then the fellow got too old, I guess. He closed the barber shop and there's never been one since in Panaca. Can you imagine that? He ran a store and had a little gas filter out in front and he had the barber shop and store here. They tell the story that he'd get through cutting hair and go like this and come in and cut you a piece of cheese. [chuckles]

RM: [laughs]

LM: They've had barber shops in Pioche and in Caliente, and I guess the 3 communities are not large enough to justify one in Panaca.

RM: Was there a doctor in town?

LM: No. We've never had a doctor until about 5 years ago when Dr. Wilken came and put his office out on the highway just below the cafe.

RM: Where did you go for your health care in those days?

LM: Well, to Caliente for the local things. But most of us still go to St. George and Cedar, mostly, for the doctors.

RM: What about dentists?

LM: We do have a dentist here. About half of the people go to him and the rest of us go to Cedar or St. George. The reason I go to St. George is because I own a condominium down there, so I go to the doctor and the dentist and things down there because it's convenient for me.

RM: How much of your time do you spend at your condo?

LM: Not too much. How I came to buy the condominium is that my mother bought it. She bought it in December of '89 and died in May. My dad had died about 3-1/2 years before that, but she lived in a retirement center that they'd built down there called The Meadows where they had their own little apartments and things, she had a 2-bedroom apartment. But they provided meals for them if they wanted it and a lot of services, so we felt that was a good place for Mom to be. But they sold it to another outfit, and the outfit that bought it kept raising the rent. When it got up to $1000 a month she said, "I'm not paying $1000 a month anymore. It's all going down the drain." She was so upset we thought maybe she might have a heart attack, because she had a bad heart.

My youngest brother went over and talked to her, and his mother-in-law had just bought one of these condominiums. He said, "Would you like to buy one of those condominiums?" (She had sufficient money to do this.) He took her over and they looked at his mother-in-law's, and then they looked at some that were for sale and she decided to buy one. She bought it in December, so we moved her from The

Meadows over to the condominium. There was some adjustments that we had to make, but they have what they call a life line. It's a little chain around her neck and if she needed help, she could just press the button and then it phones in someplace at the numbers that you get, and they get help for her quick. [We had] few things like that. My sister lived in Bloomington so she used to go and see my mother every day and she kept the house up - did the vacuuming and things. So that's how she got along.

But she died in May, so what were we going to do with the condominium? Well, I lost my husband the following October and so I said, "Well, I'll buy it." Of course, the reason I could buy it was because Mom left me some money. I really put the money that I got in the condominium. And I did it because i needed something to put my mind to, instead of sitting around and feeling sorry for myself. I like to do that, and so I did all this interior decorating - papered the bedroom and the bathroom and put up fancy curtains and really fixed it all up nice. There's a living room and dining room that's all in one, but the living room part has a 16-foot ceiling. It has a big light and then fans way up there. But then there's this wall that comes down and it's way up high and it partitions off the upstairs. So what was I going to do with this big, plain wall? I considered pictures and things and one day I was looking through a magazine and saw 2 pictures. They were advertisements, but the background was black wallpaper with flowers about this big that were pink and kind of viney. (They aren't like big roses or something.) And I said, "I can paper that with black wallpaper and put these pictures up. And so I did that. People that I tell about it kind of look down their nose, "Paper your living room with black wallpaper?" But they love it. Everybody who comes in thinks it's great. And I have a white sectional that goes along the wall on the other side and then a black lacquered coffee table - cocktail table, whatever you call it- with a big, beautiful bouquet of silk roses on it. Then in my dining area I have a black lacquer dining room set - table and chairs.

The whole condominium is carpeted with mauve-colored carpet, so I had to decorate to that. So my living and dining area is black and white and mauve.

BM: It sounds nice.

LM: I've had a lot of fun doing it. I've got it all done except for a storage room in it that is not finished. It's got Sheetrock but the cracks aren't finished and there was no floor covering. I don't need it for a storage room because I can put all my storage things here, I have plenty

of room. So I took that room and I've got it carpeted, and now I'm in the process of filling the cracks -taping them - and then I'm going to paint the ceiling and paper the walls and then I'm going to have another bedroom.

RM: It sound great. Lorene, on the history of Panaca, it's always been really difficult for people to make a living here - especially people who are farming - hasn't it?

LM: There are not very many people who make their living from farming. Lester Mathews was one. Except for when he worked at the AFC office, he made his living off of the farm one way or another. Kenneth E. Lee makes his living off the farm and he has the north part of this country here above town in pasture and alfalfa hay, and he raises black Angus and purebred (I think) Angus bulls and has kind of a business selling black Angus bulls. Now, Robert's going to go through with the turf farm and so on - take Lester's place. I would dare say those are the only people I can think of who make their living off of agriculture.

RM: There are people who have small operations that they supplement, aren't there?

LM: Yes, they're supplemented by some other business.

LM: When you go further up the valley (you can go up this way or you can go up to Pioche and out) there's my son and his father-in-law, and they bought 1200 acres of alfalfa out there.

RM: Are they in Eagle Valley?

LM: No, it's this side of Eagle Valley. They're in what they call Dry Valley. They're right by Echo Dam, which is this side of Eagle Valley. You go another road up and go to Eagle Valley and Eagle Valley Dam. But they built Echo Dam, which is down the same creek of water, but it's closer to what they call Dry Valley. A fellow years and years ago went up and took up that land - or bought it from different individuals - and fenced it and put it into alfalfa hay, and then John and his father-in-law bought that.

And then just below there there's another farm. Dan Frehner came up from Mesquite and bought the place adjacent to John. Then there's another place down there that's been there for years and years [owned by] the Delmues, and they just run cattle.

RM: What's your perception of the Las Vegas water grab going on now?

LM: I'm not as disturbed about it as a lot people are because I don't think that the state engineer is going to sell the water from Panaca. Panaca has some wells and they pump their water up on the hills in those big tanks. People were so upset about it here in the community that they felt that we'd lose all of our water. I don't think the state

engineer is going to take the water away from Panaca and sell it or allow Clark County to come because Panaca would be left without any water. They would have to move, and I don't think that'll happen.

Now they may . . . MX came in and drilled all these wells all around in all these counties. And what Clark County has been doing is appropriating the wells that have been drilled. I think what'll happen is, when they get those wells all appropriated Clark County will take that water.

And then I understand that there's a big ranch up north that is willing to sell water to Clark County for a large sum of money, because it's worth more than the ranch itself is. So if they sell it . . . but the people in the community say, "Well, even if they do that it'll take all the water. There won't be anything left." But I'm not sure, I guess only time will tell.

RM: Are you concerned about drying up the springs in the Pahranagat Valley and that kind of thing?

LM: That's probably the biggest concern, how much water they take. They think that if they take all this it'll take the underground water and there won't be any left for Panaca's wells and things up here. But I think they'll have to drain off a lot of water before that happens.

RM: Can you think of anything that I haven't asked you that you would think is important in the history of the area?

LM: Well, you know Panaca wasn't a very big place to begin with, but Bullionville was. Now, Bullionville is right adjacent to our farm - kind of kitty corner across through here.

RM: About how far?

LM: About a mile, mile and a quarter. You can go over there and see where the houses had been in the sides of the hill, something like I told you about Hiko. And there were either 1300 people or 1300 men who worked there. A lot of them were just men that came there and lived. A lot of the people from Panaca worked over there in Bullionville.

In fact, my dad worked at Bullionville when I was born. I told you he was here from December, January and February and March, and so he got a job working over there. There's a cemetery over on the hill that's from Bullionville. My grandmother Wright's family came over here and lived in Bullionville for a while.

I'll tell you another little side story that's interesting. My grandmother Wright was probably 13 when she came over here with her family, and she was maybe 18 when they moved back. And the 2 youngest Sharp girls were born here. They came so that Grandpa Sharp could work in the Bullionville - that was a mill, you see. Well, my grandmother got to be

really good friends with a young girl they called Fatty Mathews. Her name was Helen Amelia, and she was a Klingensmith. My grandmother's uncle, Louis Sharp, married into the Klingensmith family, and so that's how, I'm sure, she got to know Helen Amelia, whom they called Fatty Mathews. And my grandmother used to tell me stories about Fatty Mathews, and how she loved to tease her. They took black charcoal out of the fireplace and blackened her baby's big toe because she said she kept the baby just immaculate in these long white dresses and things.

I listened to these stories and I thought that was really strange. I never thought about a child being out of wedlock or anything to this young girl, 15 years old, because I was too naive to think of that. As years went on, I thought, "How come Grandma's friend, 15 years old, had a baby?" When I came here to teach school, got acquainted with Lester Mathews, I found out that the baby whose toes my grandmother used to black was Lester's father.

RM: [laughs]

LM: She wasn't quite 15 years when she got married, but she was still 15 when she had the baby a year later.

RM: Gee. It's amazing, isn't it?

LM: And so my grandmother's best friend was Lester's grandmother in their earlier years.

RM: Isn't that something? There was nobody living in Bullionville when you came here, was there?

LM: No. In fact, Bullionville was really at a very low ebb when my dad worked there in 1920.

RM: It was the mill town for other mines, wasn't it?

LM: Right - because of the water. When I came here in 1940 there were remnants of the town there. But Bullionville had a spring, and the spring was where part of our farm is. Lester and I used to drive over there before we were married and watch the ducks out on the pond of water and so on, and he used to dream of owning that place. As time went on we bought the farm down below and then later we bought it. But there's no spring there now.

RM: Why?

LM: The floods came down and brought the silt - the fine sand - and filled it all up. So there's a spring under there someplace. But you can drive over there. We farm it. We raise alfalfa on part of it and there's no spring. We have a well there. But it's always amazed me what became of the spring that was there when I first came.

RM: Really. Do you think the water's still flowing, but it's underground? Or maybe it just stopped.

LM: I just can't figure it out. I kept saying to Lester, "Well, what happened to the spring that was here?"
And he said, "Well, the floods came down and brought all the silt and filled it up and covered it over." It was not just one flood, but several through the years. We don't have floods like that anymore because of Echo Dam and Eagle Valley Dam.

RM: Oh, big waters used to come down through there?

LM: Oh yes, down through there and down through what we call Meadow Valley. Clear down through Rainbow Canyon or Meadow Valley or whatever you want to call it.

CHAPTER TEN

LM: The terrain has changed somewhat because of this big, big flood channel that ran down through where our farm is. We wouldn't have the acres that we farm now if they hadn't built the 2 big dams up there. So now we don't have the big floods and the big flood channels. In 1941 my brother and my mother and dad and I had been to Cedar and we came through here on the 24th of July, and they had such a big flood that it went down through and covered what is now a good part of our farm to the extent that we couldn't get through across the highway. The water was going over the top of the fences.

RM: Wow. The top of the fences?

LM: Yes.

RM: Now, how does the valley come down?

LM: Eagle Valley, Rose Valley, Dry Valley and down through this part of the county.

RM: And this would be Meadow Valley.

LM: Right.

RM: How far down do they consider Meadow Valley goes?

LM: I think down as far as Elgin, probably, below Caliente. At the edge of the town here you start to climb and go out of the town, and you're out of Meadow Valley then.

The flood up on the east side of the hills which comes way from Panaca Summit (that's probably 15 miles up there, because you go up here to 9-Mile Rock, as they call it, and we haven't even started to get to the top of the summit yet, and it's at least 15 miles up to the top) used to drain down through Panaca, right through the middle of the town. There was a big flood channel that went right down through where the schools and things are now, and went right through the middle of town. In fact, right on the highway where you turned to come up this street, only on the south side of the street, there was a big cottonwood tress. The trunk came up like this and then it went like this, so part of the tree was here and part of it was over there. The flood used to go through the middle of that tree.

RM: Is that right?

LM: It was right there in this big wash that came down through Panaca.

LM: And I told you a minute ago that that's where they built the houses up here in the Sun Gold Manor - right in that big flood area. But when the CCC camp came they built flood controls. They went through and built flood controls all the way up through Panaca Summit, so we don't have that flood anymore.

RM: But originally Panaca was built in a flood plain.

LM: The big channel went right down through the middle of town.

RM: The first people who settled in here must have really gotten blasted from time to time then.

LM: Oh yes. I should say so. I have never seen that flood because the CCC camp was here when I came to teach school. They spent several years before that working on flood control. They went through and built rocks and wire and cedar posts and things - little fenced areas - that hold the floods back pretty well. Check dams is what they really are. So that's why Panaca doesn't have that big flood anymore. You see, they got it 2 ways. It came down from Panaca Summit down through the middle of town, and then it came down through the valleys that we were just talking about and went through the middle up here.

RM: I see. And then just went on down Meadow Valley and on down to Caliente and even south of Caliente.

LM: Yes. In fact, there's a big, big canal that runs on the edge of Caliente where the floods go down. It goes down through Caliente and by the railroad down through Meadow Valley down by Rainbow Canyon, where the railroad goes down through the canyon. Six or 7 years ago they had a big flood down through there and one of the young men that we knew really well was trying to cross that with his car before he realized how bad it was. The flood just took him and the car. They found the car but they were 2 days finding him. So they've had big floods.

RM: Even now.

LM: Yes. I was trying to think of where the big flood came from. A lot of it came down through some of the washes down between Panaca and Caliente and into that big flood channel. We didn't get so much of it here, it just happened to be the storm, I guess.