AN INTERVEIW WITH JAMES H. GOTTFREDSON, JR.

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LINCOLN COUNTY TOWN HISTORY PROJECT
LINCOLN COUNTY, NEVADA

CONTENTS

Preface.. 6

Introduction... 8

CHAPTER ONE.. 1

Jim discusses his parents Ä their backgrounds and their early years together in Utah and then Pioche; the senior Gottfredsons begin their Pioche Cash and Carry Store; the stores in Pioche in the early 1930s; Jimmy Papki, an area character; memories of homemade skis; the Pioche school in the early 1930s; early-day medical care in Pioche and Caliente; where Jim's father got meat for his store.

CHAPTER TWO... 10

Memories of Ma Steward; Jim recalls an encounter with a crusty old-timer; remarks on extending credit to customers in the Gottfredson store in the 1930s; a description of the Gottfredson store in Caliente and a general discussion of running a grocery/general merchandise store; remembering Hi Thompson; Jim's early memories of Pioche.

CHAPTER THREE... 20

Jim explains how his father came to carry clothing in his store; further memories of Jim's early days in Pioche, and memories of Missy Wah; Jim recalls Ed Snyder and the Gemmills; a Mormon background; Jim's family moves to Caliente in 1932; remembering people riding the rails through Caliente during the Depression.

CHAPTER FOUR.. 31

Memories of Caliente in the 1930s, particularly the town's commercial establishments; a description of the Green Lantern brothel, and a story about the Big Four brothel in Ely.

CHAPTER FIVE.. 41

Remembering childhood activities in Caliente; a description of the Plunge; on creating housing in Caliente in the 1970s; further recollections of a Caliente childhood; Jim's mother catches a shoplifter; a description of the Union Pacific operation in Caliente.

CHAPTER SIX.. 51
Further discussion of railroad facilities in Caliente; remarks on refrigeration in the 1930s and of heating homes with wood and coal; memories of Clare Whipple; on Jim's school days in Caliente and Panaca; on the Indian camp and other ethnic families in Caliente.

CHAPTER SEVEN.. 61
Further discussion of the ethnic population of Caliente in Jim's childhood; remembering bars, hotels and shops in Caliente in the late 1930s; on Caliente's movie theater; memories of high school athletics.

CHAPTER EIGHT.. 70
Thoughts on the Lincoln County High School band and other high school activities; the gas stations in Caliente in the 1930s; on railroad linkages in Caliente and Pioche; Jim refurbishes an old car; remembering Pearl Harbor, and service in the Pacific theater during World War II; Jim becomes a business partner with his father and they re-enter the Pioche market; the Gottfredsons purchase and remodel the Thompson Building.

CHAPTER NINE... 80
More members of the Gottfredson family join in the merchandising business; the family opens a store in Ely, which Jim runs; the Pioche store is closed and Jim's father devotes his later years to establishing a museum in that building; discussing changes in mining in Ely in the 1950s.

CHAPTER TEN.. 90
Television comes to White Pine County; Jim leaves Ely and moves to Las Vegas, where he goes into the light bulb business; a story about Charlie Culverwell; memories of the Silver Queen Mine; an experience with radioactive fallout.

CHAPTER_ELEVEN... 99
Memories of old-time radios and radio stations; a tale of hidden money; present-day broadcasts of old-time radio shows.

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 <u>not</u> history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the 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 <u>uhs</u>, <u>ahs</u> 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 1868. 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 Jim Gottfredson at his home in Boulder City, Nevada, February 5 and 9, 1992

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Jim, why don't you state your name as it appears on your birth certificate.
JG: James H. Gottfredson, Jr.
RM: And when and where were you born?
JG: I was born on December 4, 1923, in Delta, Utah.
RM: And could you state your father's name?
JG: James H. Gottfredson, Sr. He was born in Salina, Utah, in 1901 on April 7.
RM: And what was your mother's full name, including her maiden name?
JG: My mother's name was Orena Law Gottfredson. She was born on June 24, 1900, in Beaver, Utah.
RM: What was your father's occupation?
JG: My father was a businessman and was involved in the development of a store business going as far back as 1917. He first worked for a store as a stocking clerk in Salina, Utah, as a young man, and then later moved to Delta, Utah, where he and 2 brothers-in-law set up the first business that he was involved in. They had a meat market and a men's haberdashery. Later, when the banks closed in Utah, and particularly in that Sevier County area of Utah, they were forced to close down because even though they had the money in the bank to pay their bills and were owed money by people who had money in the bank, nobody could pay anybody's bills.
RM: Because the bank was broke?
JG: Because the bank went broke.
RM: When was that?
JG: That would have been in 1925.
RM: So you spent your first years over in Sevier County, Utah?
JG: No, I spent my first 3 years in Delta, Utah Ä Millard County. At the age of 3 years and about 6 months my parents, because of the circumstances we just talked about, moved out to Pioche, and there my father set up another little business that was a successor to the business that had gone down in Delta. It was called the Rochdale Store. I have no idea where that name came from. But shortly after having set up and gone into business in Pioche, again with a meat market, things got kind of tough there and they weren't well enough capitalized to make it work. My dad actually took out a bankruptcy in 1927 or '28 in Pioche, and then, with a loan from my mother's father, my grandfather Law, of $500 and in my mother's name, they

reestablished the business in Pioche, and it was then called Jimmy's Pioche Cash and Carry.

That was in 1928. During the years '28 to '31 they were in business in Pioche and expanded that meat market to a grocery store. My father did well enough to stay alive business-wise in the community by cultivating the business of the restaurants there for meat and grocery products.

Then in 1931 he had an opportunity to buy a store in Caliente, and by this time, of course, the so-called Great Depression had set in. The mining wasn't so good in Pioche and the railroading was less than it had been, but those people who were employed on the railroad got paychecks every month, so there was a source of income in Caliente that didn't exist at the time in Pioche. So in 1932 my mother ran, for 2 years, the Pioche store and my dad ran the Caliente store. He'd commute back and forth between Caliente and Pioche in an old Model A 2-door coupe.

RM: You were living in Pioche?

JG: We were living in Pioche.

RM: What was the store in Caliente called?

JG: I'm not sure what Ben Douglas called it; it was a store that was owned by a person by the name of Ben Douglas who my father had worked with previously over in Delta, and who also had moved out to Nevada and established this little business. And about that time Ben developed cancer and things got pretty rough for him. He had no way to sell the business; there was nobody that could really buy the business from him, but he knew my dad and had a world of trust in him, and he got ahold of Dad and Dad went down and visited with him. Ben wanted to go back to New York where his people were; he wanted to die in New York. He didn't want to die out in the West. So he worked out a deal for my dad where Dad would pay him so much every quarter or so, and they took an inventory and they depreciated the inventory to where it was an absolute safe bet for my father and that's what the business was sold for to my dad. And that's how he came to be in the clothing business as well as groceries and a meat market.

RM: What was going on in Utah in 1925? Apparently the banks went broke there before the great crash, didn't they?

JG: Yes, they did.

RM: What was happening there?

JG: They went into a decline that was just impossible, almost. My mother's father had a business in Delta, and after he loaned my parents $500 to start this other little business out in Pioche again (which they eventually paid back to him), he wound up getting in trouble and the Intermountain

Association of Credit man came in and closed his business down. So they all had problems. This was a tough time.

RM: What was going on then?

JG: In the Delta area Ä Delta being the delta area of the Sevier River Ä previous to '25 they were growing alfalfa seed. They did a lot of raising of alfalfa and selling of the seed from alfalfa. But everything got into an upheaval at about that time and the economy just went right out the window. They couldn't sell the seed. Even though they had the alfalfa, there was no market for hay. It just wasn't an economy that survived well. My grandfather managed to stay in business there for several years after that.

RM: Could you state his full name?

JG: Robert J. Law. And he did business as R.J. Law and Company. He ultimately did go broke and then things started to pick up again as the Depression wore on in the '30s, and he went back into the business. He was in business there until the time of his death in 1944.

RM: How did your father happen to go to Pioche?

JG: He was on his way to Las Vegas, believe it or not.

RM: Now, what year was that?

JG: That was in early 1927. They came out via the route that is now Highway 6, that runs from Delta across to Ely. And at Major Station they turned south and came down to Pioche, and were actually headed for Las Vegas. When they stopped in Pioche, my dad got to nosing around and he found a little niche. There wasn't really a good service in the community for a meat market and he had some background and expertise as a butcher, so he started the store there as Jimmy's Pioche Cash and Carry. That opened in April of 1927.

There was a period of time during those years of '29 and '30 Ä and I think this is a nice little story that should be known Ä when business was so tough in Pioche, with the recession setting in, that things were really getting hard. My mother baked several dozen doughnuts in her kitchen every morning. She brought them out and set them on the front counter in Jimmy's Cash and Carry, and there were days on end when that was the only thing that sold and the only cash flow that was created in that store. But it kept them afloat.

I remember that store really very well. My father carried a line of turntable phonographs Ä the label name was Columbia, as I recall. I can remember being in the store, and them playing records, and one of my favorite records that I remember very well was "The Old Rock Candy Mountain." I have a copy of the words of that in my possession. It's been something that I always remembered Ä

being a little shaver of 4 or 5 years old, sitting in the store and listening to these phonographs.

RM: Were they selling the phonographs there?

JG: They sold several of them, and one of the couples that bought one of them was Jim and Berine Hults. Jim, Sr., was a mining man; he did a lot of contract mining and worked in the district there. And Berine was a real lovely sweet housewife and mother. And they bought one of those old stand-up phonographs, I remember. There were several that sold in the community. And they used the big, heavy, thick plate records Ä really heavy ones. This was after the tubular type [cylinders] but before the thin plates that we remember.

RM: Where did your father get the stock for the store?

JG: Supplies came principally out of Salt Lake City, Utah. The Union Pacific at that time maintained a freight service system, what they called LCB [Local Call Business]. His shipments would come out of Salt Lake and would arrive in Pioche the next day, after the car had been switched out and sent to Pioche from Caliente on the old Pioche line. Essentially he got 24-hour delivery by the railroad.
There was one particular restaurant in Pioche at the time and it's been there through all of the years. It's still there, and that's the Silver Cafe.

RM: Is it the one on the corner?

JG: No, it's right across the street from the Leader store. The corner is where the old Roy Orr Garage was where you turned to go north towards Ely, uptown. This is the next door up the street. And that was right next door to where my father's business was.

RM: OK, coming down the street, his was on the left, 3 doors up from the corner.

JG: Yes. There was a break between the buildings and there was a stairway that came down off the back hillside, from the 2 streets above the back. Johnny Papki was the proprietor of the Silver Cafe during those years. Johnny and my dad kind of liked each other and Johnny started buying his groceries and his meat from Dad and was really one of the better customers he had in the town because of the volume of usage of groceries and everything. And Johnny Papki played a part in our life for quite a lot of years after that. When Dad closed the Pioche store and consolidated everything into Caliente, Papki was still in business in Pioche. But shortly thereafter, he came to Caliente and set up a restaurant in Caliente.

RM: In addition to Pioche?

JG: No, he closed that one. This was about '32, '33, along in there. Things really were tough in the mining towns at

that time. Again, while there wasn't a whole lot of employment, at least people were steadily employed on the railroad and there was a paycheck every month. Johnny came to Caliente and set up, and again became a very good customer of my father's through the years there. He came into the store, and I don't know exactly when this was, probably '36, he came into the store one Saturday afternoon late and he said, "Jimmy, I think I owe you some money." Dad looked up his account at the store and he had a little bill there, and he paid my dad off, and the next morning he was gone. There were others there who didn't get paid off but that friendship of years caused him to not want to leave owing my dad.

RM: Do you know where he went?

JG: I don't know where he went. He came back to Pioche several years later, and again established a little business.

RM: Another restaurant?

JG: Yes. But he didn't last too long and then was gone. He was back in Pioche when I moved to Pioche and opened a store up there in 1948. So during the latter '40s and early years during the '50s he was back in Pioche with a restaurant. But then he left town again in the middle of the night and we never heard from him again. I have no idea where he went or whatever. But he was a colorful person and was part of the fabric of our lifetime.

When I was a kid, probably when I was 6 or 7 years of age in Pioche (now this was during Prohibition), it was quite well known that Johnny was handling the glassware Ä the flasks and the bottles Ä for the local people who were brewing. And as a kid, after the big weekend, Friday night and Saturday night, I would go out Sunday and gather up all the old empty whiskey flasks that I could find and take them in to John Papki, and they were worth a nickel apiece. That was pretty good money for those days.

RM: That was good money. Did you know John Franks? I interviewed him.

JG: You did? Before he died?

RM: Right. I had a good interview with him.

JG: Well, Johnny and his sister Dolly lived at the top of the hill where that stairway went up from the back of the store that I was talking about. He and I were very close friends. He was 3 or 4 years older than I, but Johnny made my first kite and helped me sail it, and he made my first pair of barrel stave skis and helped me learn to ski on them.

RM: Is that right?

JG: Barrel staves and siding slats.

RM: Describe how you did it.

JG: Well, barrel staves are curved so all there was to it was to take a barrel stave and fasten about a 5- or 6-foot piece of siding off of a house that already had the groove in it and fasten that with nails to the barrel stave and then you'd come back to about where you wanted your feet and he'd nail a piece of leather belt across the top for you to slip your shoe into. All the kids had barrel stave skis in Pioche at that time. We got a lot more snow then.

RM: Where did you ski?

JG: Behind the old A.S. Thompson building, where the museum is now, angling up the hill toward the streets up above, was quite an area. When snows were deep you could get a pretty good ski coming off down through behind those buildings. We didn't go out of town or up on the mountains or anything like that, it was always just around town, but we had barrels of fun as kids.

RM: What did you use for poles?

JG: Oh, old broom handles.

RM: Is that right? John wrote some really interesting stories, kind of Mark Twain-like, about his cousin Bud. Bud was kind of the Huck Finn and the protagonist, always leading the boys into some kind of devilment. Do you recall that at all?

JG: No. I've not read what he has written. I would love to read it.

RM: I hope that we're going to be able to publish it, because they're wonderful stories.

JG: He was a really nice guy. He was a nice kid as a kid and he grew up to be a nice man and he was a lifelong friend to the day he died. We never missed an opportunity to get together.

RM: You started school in Pioche then, did you?

JG: I did, in 1929.

RM: Where was the school? And can you tell me a little bit about what it was like?

JG: Well, my first grade teacher, Grace Devlin, was just beautiful. She was the love of my life, no question about it. Shortly after I was a kid in school there, she married Dr. McCall.

RM: Was he the local physician?

JG: He was the local dentist. His father was the local physician. Tecumseh, I think was his name, Tecumseh McCall. And the dentist was Quanah McCall.

RM: Is that right?

JG: Yes, this family all had Indian names. They came out of Oklahoma, I think, where they had been involved in some mixed breeding.

RM: OK, so they were part Indian?

JG: There was some Indian strain in their blood. In fact, Dr. McCall, the old man, and Dr. Hastings in Pioche were in attendance with my father when he came down with what is generally referred to as juvenile diabetes, although he was at that time 22 or 23 years old. His pancreas just quit on him. I can remember a story that he told many times Ä he went into what they call a diabetic coma, because he had such tremendously high blood sugar that it was killing him. He said he could remember hearing the voices and the people in the room but he couldn't move, he couldn't do anything. He said he remembered one of the doctors saying to the other, "Well, I don't know what's going on here, he's obviously going to die if we don't do something." And between them they decided to give him a shot of that new stuff that had just been put on the market a couple of years previously that was called insulin. And they did give him a shot of insulin and he told me that 40 or 50 minutes afterward he was sitting on the edge of the bed talking with them. It was that dramatic.

RM: Is that right? But they figured out what was wrong with him. That's pretty remarkable, isn't it?

JG: Yes it is. The old man was an all-around doctor. He did teeth, he did eyes Ä he did whatever you needed to have done, he took care of it for you.

RM: And probably a pretty good job, too.

JG: A very good physician, very good. And Dr. Hastings also was a good physician in the town.

RM: Did they have a hospital in Pioche?

JG: Not at that time, no. Years later the mining company put together a clinic type thing in Pioche. The old Dr. McCall and his son had an office up this street from the museum on the same side of the street. Just about up to where you turned to go up to that first street, there was a little building where he had his doctor's office.

RM: What happened to a person who got bedfast or needed hospitalization?

JG: They just took care of them the best way they could.

RM: They didn't go to the hospital in those days, then?

JG: No. The railroad always maintained a physician and a facility in Caliente and on occasion, if required, they would take them down to that facility in Caliente. Now, I don't remember exactly when this started, but it used to be in years gone by that if there wasn't medical services for a problem in Lincoln County, people quite often went over to Cedar City, Utah, to get medical help.

RM: OK. Now, where was your father getting his beef? Was he buying it locally?

JG: He was buying from local ranchers out in Ursine and . . .

RM: Do you remember who at all or anything?

JG: Well, the Olinghouse people. Now, I'm not certain of that, because the old man Olinghouse also had a meat market in Pioche.

RM: Oh, there were 2 meat markets?

JG: Yes. They had a ranch out in the Wilson Mountain area. A lovely ranch Ä I remember being there on 2 or 3 occasions Ä and they raised cattle out there and brought them in to Pioche for marketing. There were people out in Eagle Valley Ä Hammonds . . . I'm sure his sources were local, out in the outlying areas.

RM: Would he buy the whole beef?

JG: Yes, he bought the beef in halves. A little story that my mother used to tell was that in the meat market in Pioche, not too long after we arrived there, we had a meat cutter working in the butcher shop who had red hair. (The meat cutter had to have been in Delta, because my brother, who was 3 years younger than I, was born in Delta, but we had just moved to Pioche when he was born.) Somebody asked my mother where her son got that red hair, and she said well, we had a meat cutter there in the grocery store who had red hair. It was kind of a standing family joke.

RM: [Laughs]

CHAPTER TWO

JG: There were a couple of old-timers in Pioche that I remember so well who probably ought to be made mention of at this point. I don't know if you've heard the name "Ma Steward?"

RM: That name rings a faint bell. Maybe John Franks . . . please tell me about her.

JG: Well, Ma Steward had 3 sons, Jack and George and the younger one, I can't say his name right now. One of the boys was my age. In later years, after I went back to Pioche with the store in the '40s and early '50s, I had some very close contact with Ma Steward relative to her history and background. It turns out that her maiden name was Kiksmiller and she had been raised at a spring and ranch out near Pony Springs, if you know where Pony Springs is.

RM: No, I don't.

JG: It's about 29 miles north of Pioche on the highway to Ely. Of course the time I'm talking about now was back at the turn of our century, the end of the 1800s and previous to that. Ma Steward's family lived out there and they were a little bit nefarious. No one ever knew where they came from nor why, and they settled out in the area where they were and there were rumors Ä and all it would be were street rumors Ä that there was some rustling and other things that they might well have taken credit for. She was a tough old girl. I mean, she was really a tough one.

One time, after she got married and had her family and was in Pioche, in the late '20s, she had some old tin shacks that sat off to the side of the road that went down in front of what is now the power and light building. Then she owned a nicer home on the corner, the first street down. She used to rent those old tin shacks to the miners who were employed in the mine. And one of them didn't pay his rent one time and kept putting her off and putting her off, and she got mad and she took a shovel to him.

RM: Beat him up with it? [Chuckles]

JG: She would have. But he ran up the hill there and crawled up on top of a telephone pole. Crawled right up the telephone pole to get out of reach, so she couldn't reach him. And she says, "You s.o.b., I'll fix you." And she went back down to the house and got her ax and was about to cut him down when the local sheriff showed up and he took care of it. [Laughter]

RM: That's funny.

JG: But she carried a pistol on her hip until 1948, '49. She was from the old school where you packed your weapon on your hip and took care of your problems if you needed to.

I can remember her in Pioche in 1948 and '49, right after I'd moved up there and reopened the Pioche store. She was on the street and you'd see her there with her six-gun in a holster.

RM: Is that right? You know, I think she is a character in one of John Franks' stories.

JG: She very likely could be.

RM: The boys had decided they wanted to have a mine, as kids. So they're out and they dug a big hole Ä it was going to be their clubhouse and all that. It was pretty deep and everything. They temporarily lost interest in it, and after a period of time they went back to reactivate their thing and come to find out Ma Steward had placed her outhouse over their hole. And he said they didn't dare challenge her. [Chuckles]

JG: Yes. Nobody would challenge Ma Steward. She was quite a character. Just the memories . . . and then having been able to visit with her in the '50s when she was really an old woman, and spend some time with her and have her relate things to me that one just couldn't believe.

One story she told me was out at the Atlanta Mine district north of Pioche. You go up to Pony Springs and turn east across the valley and go on up over the top of the hill and down on the other side, and that was the Atlanta Mining district. It first started up around 1910. They were looking for gold out there and there were some tent shacks where they built rock walls and put tents over the top of them; about the only creature comforts there were were these tent things. One of them had been converted into a bar, which was natural and normal. And the owner and his wife were having problems with each other apparently, and she told a story of being there in the bar (or at least she knew what was going on), and she said that the husband was telling his patrons at the bar that he had had about all he was going to take from that old lady and said, "In fact, I think I'll take care of it right now." He picked up a shotgun from behind the bar and walked out to go over to his tent.

What he didn't know was that his wife had just been coming in when he was doing all this talking about what he was going to do, and heard him. She went back to their tent and got a six-gun and as he come through the flap of the tent, she let him have it. The story Ma related to me was she got several shots into him before he got to the floor. And it happens that he is the only man in the cemetery at Atlanta now. And his brag to his customers was, "I think I'll go home and start a cemetery."

RM: No kidding?

JG: Yes. So he went home and he started a cemetery. He's the only one who was ever buried there.
RM: So the camp didn't really last that long, did it?
JG: It was very short-lived. It was nonproductive ore until many years later. But, those were the kind of characters who used to be around Pioche at that time.
RM: Do you recall any other stories, or any other characters?
JG: I can remember an old fellow named Joe McDermott who lived on a spring out about 12, 13 miles north of Pioche, on the west side. And off to the left of the highway up in the foothills there's a little spring up there now. My dad, being in the meat market and grocery business in town, had known him quite well. We went out in the old '29 or '28 Model A Roadster one day. His place was fenced with barbed wire around it. We come to the gate, and it was one those let-down kind of gates. Dad said, "Now, just everybody sit in the car here. I'll be back in just a minute."

He got up and went to the gate and called him by name, and here he came out of his old cabin with his rifle laid across his arm. His eyesight had failed a little by this time, at least at that distance, and he walked out and said, "Who is it? Who is it?"

And my dad said, "It's Jimmy, from Pioche."

And he said, "Oh, come on in, come on in."

So we let the gate down and went on in and that cabin that he had had a lean-to on the back of it and the front part of it was made out of cedar posts with flattened-out five-gallon cans split open and nailed to the sides, and that was also the way he'd made his roof. The floor was dirt, and he had an old record player, similar to this one.
RM: OK, with the big horn on it.
JG: Yes, with the big horn on it. As I recall that afternoon out there, he kept that thing wound up and kept putting new tubes on it and the music was blaring and everybody was having a good time, and it was a good old visit. He took my dad out; he said, "Come with me, Jimmy." I tagged along behind and we went around the back where this lean-to was and he had a couple of nice big buck deer strung up. He wanted Dad to see what he had out there.
RM: Yes. It had probably been poached out of season.
JG: Oh, sure. He had the spring up in the foothills there on the property he was occupying and they came down there. He was a crazy old fellow with a big full-blown handlebar moustache, and he looked like somebody you'd expect to find behind a marshall's badge or something like that. He was that tall, staunch, stalwart type.
RM: Had he been a miner?

JG: I really don't know what he had been or where he came from. I wouldn't even hazard a guess. He could have been an outlaw, he could have been anything. I have a picture or two on my wall in the office in here that I bought at an art show because they reminded me so much of what I remember Joe McDermott looking like.

RM: What do you recall about the business aspects of running a store in Pioche, and that your dad operated there prior to when you opened your store?

JG: Well, in those late '20s and early '30s, everything was cash and carry. In fact, the store in Pioche was called Jimmy's Pioche Cash And Carry.

RM: There was no credit?

JG: No. And that went on until after he got down into Caliente, but he was not making money in Caliente. On several occasions he told me that he got to thinking about how they could improve their business a little bit and bring up the cash flow and finally he decided, "Well, I'm going to start offering credit to those people that are credit-worthy in the community." And that year, which was 1934, he made a profit, and he never had a year that he didn't make a profit any year after that. It was that switch from total cash and carry to a credit type operation that created the additional volume he needed to make the difference between a profit and a loss. That made the difference in the volume in business and the cash flow that put him on a profitable side. And even though every year Ä and I don't ever remember a year in the store that he didn't (or we didn't as the case may be, after I got involved with it) Ä have some credit losses, charge-offs, the increased volume was sufficient to carry those losses and still make a profit.

RM: Were most people pretty good about paying?

JG: Yes.

RM: When did they pay?

JG: Generally, the railroad paid every 2 weeks. They'd get their paychecks on, like, the 15th and the first. And there wasn't a bank in Caliente. The old Bank of Pioche in Pioche carried the merchants along up there, and Dad did some business with the Bank of Pioche after he moved to Caliente. In fact, I have a note here from Dan Ronnow who managed the bank there at that time, [attached to] a paid-off note, expressing regret that he hadn't been able to get together with the board and put together a loan of an additional amount of money that my father wanted to do something with. But he certainly did appreciate the fact that what he had gotten had been paid off in a timely manner and everything was just fine.

But Dad would act as the Caliente bank at payday time. He always drove to Pioche, got enough cash at the bank to bring down and have cash on hand in the Caliente store so that when those people got paid they knew they could come into his store, pay their bill and get their cash. It worked out very well. In fact Dad was a pseudo-bank there for any number of years.

RM: Oh, that's interesting. And what was the name of the store in Caliente?

JG: It became Gottfredson's Department Store. After Dad bought the store from Ben Douglas in 1931 or '32, he changed the name from whatever Ben had been calling it and it became just "Gottfredson's."

RM: And where was it located?

JG: The first store building was the last building on the end towards the depot on the business side of the railroad tracks up there.

RM: OK, that big, long . . .

JG: It was a 2-story building, on the end, and the store was in the bottom. The building was owned I think by Press Duffin, Sr. I think my dad rented the ground floor and Press had apartments upstairs that were occupied.

RM: What was he paying for rent, do you know?

JG: I really haven't any idea. It couldn't have been too much Ä $100, $150 a month or something like that.

RM: What kind of a margin did a store like that operate on in those days? I mean, what was the markup and so on?

JG: I didn't come into it until after he got out of the grocery business. Groceries are notoriously short on margin. You have to do a lot of volume in groceries to make any net profits. That's one reason why the grocery part of the business melded very well with the haberdashery, or the clothing side, when Dad took the Caliente store and combined it all. In those days, a third of the selling price in men's wear would be your markup. And women's high-style or fashion-type stuff would probably be a longer margin than that. Work pants and bib overalls and things that the working man wore, and shoes, carried a little less of a margin of profit. For groceries, I think 8 to 12 percent was the most you got.

Later, when I came into the business and we didn't have the grocery side of it, always every year we would shoot to do about 40 percent in our average markup. So 40 percent of the selling price would be our mark-on. And by the time we reconciled, took inventory, marked down soiled merchandise, covered our losses from theft Ä and you always had pilferage, even in those days Ä if we got below a third operating profit, we became worried. We knew we had a

problem. As long as we were above 33-1/3 percent and upwards towards that 40 percent average we shot for we knew we weren't losing too much.

RM: How did you know what grocery items to buy?

JG: We always carried the staple kind of things like canned goods, which came in cans just like they do now. He'd buy Carnation milk, for instance Ä I remember a lot of that. I remember string beans, carrots, all the stuff that you can buy in a grocery store almost today. They were the staple items that people needed.

RM: There weren't prepared foods in those days, were there, like there are now?

JG: No, everything was pretty much in the can. Before the Pioche Power and Light Company started generating power in Pioche, they had gas lanterns that hung up on hooks on the ceiling throughout the store, and they'd pump them up in the evening and light them. We always stayed open until late.

RM: When did you open in the morning?

JG: They generally would open the store at 8:00 in the morning, and it would be open until well after dark every night. That was 6 days a week. They weren't open on Sunday.

RM: Now, how long was the store in business in Pioche?

JG: From 1927 until 1932 Ä 5 years. There was a little longer than a year that he had stores both in Pioche and Caliente. But in 1932 he surveyed what he had done that year and he said, "Well, I'm losing less money in Caliente than I am in Pioche," so he closed the Pioche store and brought everything to Caliente. And that's when the grocery store started in Caliente. Prior to that it had just been clothing and shoes and this kind of thing.

RM: By groceries you also mean meat.

JG: Oh, yes.

RM: Would he do the butchering, too?

JG: No, we had a real fine gentleman who Dad hired who was working on the railroad and had butchering experience in his background, a fellow by the name of Hi Thompson. As you do business in Caliente, you'll hear that name a lot. Hi became very, very instrumental in that community through the years until his death about 12, 14 years ago. He had come out of Idaho and had gone to work on the railroad on a section gang because he had had a bad back and his doctor told him the only way he was ever going to whip that bad back was to get in and work it so hard that it got well. So he went onto a section gang on the railroad and was working with ties and various rails and heavy work. Then his back got better and he decided he'd like to get into something a little less strenuous. How they got together I

never did know, but he and Dad got together and Dad hired him, probably in 1934. And then he was our butcher until Dad closed the butcher shop and the grocery store in 1942 in Caliente.

RM: Why did he do that?

JG: Well, the war had come on and availability of materials, food and all of this stuff, was very difficult. Margins were narrow. You didn't have a lot of slippage. The Shell Oil distributor there, who was a gentleman by the name of Art Gentry, had decided to move to Fallon. Apparently he got a Shell Oil distributorship in Churchill County, or up in that area. He wanted out of the one in Caliente, so my father bought it from him. That was in 1941. Then in 1942 when he closed the grocery store Hi bought the Shell distributing system from my father and he was the Shell distributor in Caliente for the rest of his life. That was heating oils and gas and so on.

RM: Why did your father keep the clothing part of the store going after '42?

JG: That was his favorite business. Back in Utah he had worked for Ben Douglas, the guy who came out to Caliente later. Many times he told us about when he set up the Rochdale store in Delta. They didn't have enough money to stock the store, but they would get old empty boxes and put them up on the shelf and turn them upside down. If somebody came in and wanted a shirt, they could go right to the box that had the shirts in it and pull it out of all of the empty ones. That's how he kept his store looking like it was very well stocked and managed to build the business until the banks closed.

RM: Let me just back up and make sure I've got it straight. Your dad started off in Salina.

JG: Yes; he worked for a business there. This was prior to World War I when he was just a young kid of 16. And then he moved to Delta.

RM: And did he have his own store there?

JG: Well, he worked for Ben Douglas in Delta for a period of time. Then he and his partners started in the meat market business with what they called the Rochdale. The Rochdale was a meat market operation and it was the residue of that, after the closing of the banks in Delta, that he came to Pioche.

RM: OK, and he took that name, Rochdale, to Pioche.

JG: Yes. But that didn't last long. I think that only lasted about 6 months before he was in trouble financially to the point where he had to take out this bankruptcy that I mentioned earlier. Then when he re-started his business with a loan of $500 from his father-in-law, my grandfather,

he changed the name from Rochdale to Jimmy's Pioche Cash And Carry.

RM: If he went bankrupt early on, what made him think that he could make a go of it with a second start?

JG: I really don't know all of the particulars. I think when they moved out to Pioche they were so nearly out of money that they just didn't have the capability to cope with it. There were 2 partners in that business with him, one of them a brother-in-law and another a very close friend Ä Don Cram and Ray Tozer. Ray Tozer was married to my father's sister Ä my Aunt and Uncle Tozer. And Don Cram and his wife were very, very close friends of theirs, so Don and Ray and my dad were the ones who opened the meat market in Delta and ran it as the Rochdale. Then things went down there and I think it just about bled them white. So when they moved to Pioche they didn't have the wherewithal to get the start and really get going with it. So when the bankruptcy was taken out that eliminated the 2 partners. The new store was opened in my mother's name as the proprietor because he couldn't qualify with anybody because of the bankruptcy.

RM: So he went full, not Chapter 11.

JG: It was a wipeout. And it wasn't by choice; it was by virtue of the fact that he owed some creditors and there was no other way. It was the only route he had to go.

RM: When did the family move down to Caliente?

JG: We moved down there in April of 1932. I was in the third grade.

RM: You were very young when you left Pioche, then, weren't you? Do you recall anything else about Pioche? Was there a movie theater there then?

JG: Yes, there was, the old Gem Theater. I recall much about Pioche. I remember Saturday night parties. The theater had a big meeting hall/dance hall type thing in the top floor, and the theater was down on the ground floor. These parties went on from Friday through Saturday on the weekends, and I can remember that old building just rocking and rolling with people up there dancing and enjoying themselves. There were miners and everybody. That old building up there had a great big potbellied coal-fire stove, and it would get cherry-red. That's what they used for heat up there in the wintertime. How they ever kept it from burning down I'll never know. The building still stands and it still is a theater, I think.

RM: Yes, I think so. Did they have those parties when the movies were showing downstairs? It must have been quite a thing to be watching a movie downstairs with this wild party . . .

JG: I don't recall, honestly. But I do remember they held some hellish parties up there. Pioche was a party town. The mining man is a hard-working man and then he plays, and he plays just as hard as he works. He doesn't know any difference. Whatever he does, it's hard Ä he goes all the way with it. They always had big times.

I can remember several fight cards. In the summertime they'd put a big ring alongside of what's now a Christian church up there, and they had these fight cards on Saturday night. Most of the guys that fought in there were these miners. They played that hard, worked that hard, and then they wanted to fight.

RM: It was outdoors?

JG: Yes. Of course this was only in the summertime, because the weather normally wouldn't let you do that in Pioche in the wintertime. But there were some really beautiful fight cards that were produced in Pioche at that time. They brought miners in from up in the Ely district and all over the place Ä fighters.

RM: Then as the Depression took hold, mining just kind of dropped out there, didn't it?

JG: It did. In the early '30s it began to really drop Ä after 1930. It was that year, '30 to '31, when Dad was operating both stores. When he got through with 1931, as he told me, "I decided that I was losing less money in Caliente than I was in Pioche, so I better consolidate the stores into Caliente." He was hoping that bringing the grocery part into it would add enough volume and so forth to make it work.

CHAPTER THREE

JG: I've had a chance to rethink about the clothing that was in the store in Pioche. This is something my father told me in confidentiality and I want to tell it in a way that isn't offensive to anyone who might still be surviving up there. The Leader store across the street from where my father had his grocery store carried no groceries, no meats. They carried clothing, shoes, all the other paraphernalia that humans need, but they didn't carry groceries. When my father started doing business in the grocery business up there and it became quite evident that he was getting along well with it, Cohen, who was the proprietor of the Leader store, decided he would like to be in the grocery business and participate competitively in that business. My dad, of course, was a little bit peeved by the fact that all of a sudden he had some competition that he hadn't desired, but he got to thinking about it and he said, "Well, I guess the way to fight fire is with fire." So that's when he started to put a few clothing items into the store in Pioche, which became competitive then with the Leader store. I had forgotten about that. The reason that I remember now that they did have clothing is that I remember a couple of women stealing a couple of dresses one day. I think they went in the dressing room and they put these dresses on and then put their other dress on on top of it and they were trying to get out of the store without paying for the dresses. My dad and mom caught them and they took them back into their bedroom, which was right at the back end of the store in the apartment behind the store where we lived, and made them disrobe. There was quite a stink about it. I may be short of the whole truth of everything, but that's what causes me to remember that there was clothing in that store.

RM: Was there quite a bit of stealing?

JG: Not really. This was an isolated incident.

RM: How about kids shoplifting?

JG: You know, I really don't know. We had .22 bullets, we had ammunition, we had all kinds of stuff in that store as I recall, and I presume that on occasion something might have gotten lifted. But I don't know specifically. I was too young; I wasn't involved to the point of . . .

RM: Sure. Do you recall who the supplier out of Salt Lake was?

JG: John Scowcroft and Company was one of the big suppliers out of Ogden, Utah.

RM: Scowcroft was the clothing distributor?

JG: Yes. I don't know who the firms were that supplied him with groceries out of Salt Lake. Stravell Paterson was

probably one of them Ä that was a big wholesale concern. There were a lot of them up there, [including] George A. Lowe and Company.

RM: When you bought from a supplier was it cash with the order, or was it 30 days due, or how did they work that?

JG: With groceries, normally you had a 10-day due with a one percent discount or a half a percent discount or something like that, net due in 15 days. Clothing generally was billed at 1 or 2 percent discount if paid by the 10th of the following month, and due 90 days. But you could buy on credit.

RM: When you were unable to pay in 90 days, what happened?

JG: That's when the Intermountain Association of Credit men came out to talk to you.

RM: And who were they, now?

JG: They were an association of men who were all heads of the distribution companies in the Salt Lake City and Ogden, Utah, area. If you got seriously behind, they shut you down. In fact, that's what happened when my father had to take the bankruptcy.

RM: How would they shut you down? Would they take you to court?

JG: Yes, and force you into a bankruptcy situation or put the squeeze on you until you had to find a way to raise the money to pay them off.

RM: So they would physically pay you a visit.

JG: Yes. In fact, I have the records of one of those visits in that particular instance with my father. I have quite a lot of things that pertain to the business back through those years because he was a squirrel and kept a lot of that stuff, and I came by it and I'm a squirrel and I've kept it, too.

RM: Yes, I'm the same way. What else do you recall as a young lad living in Pioche? What do you recall about the community?

JG: It was an interesting town. School kids walked down the street from uptown towards the school below town in the mornings. On the right-hand side, about halfway down, there was an old rock building with a pitched roof on it and some trees alongside of it, I remember. A Chinaman lived in there, and I don't remember his name. I'd cross the street and go down instead of walking in front of his house. The older kids were teasing him Ä they were banging on his door and kicking on his door and every once in a while he'd pull open the door and he'd have a knife in his hand, which was not to be used, it was just his way of saying, "You guys get out of here." But it had me spooked

off to the point where I'd walk across the street rather than walk past in front of his house. [Chuckles]

We always had a lot of snow every winter, and everybody had tremendous fun in the snow.

There was a Chinatown there. While I was still quite young (I didn't get involved in this until just about the time we left Pioche), we used to go to Chinatown to buy our fireworks at the Fourth of July time. They had genuine imported-from-China firecrackers and rockets and stuff; everybody bought their fireworks from the Chinamen.

There was a Japanese laundry almost directly across that main street from the Chinaman's house that I mentioned. I'm not certain I'm remembering the name right, but it seems like it was Ishi. They had a couple of kids who were in school there, and they were there for many years.

RM: Were there Chinese children in the school?

JG: I don't remember any Chinese children in the school. Isn't that strange? But these Japanese children went to school there.

RM: Do you remember Missy Wah at all?

JG: Oh, Missy Wah was my dearest friend.

RM: Is that right?

JG: Yes. I remember Missy Wah when her husband first brought her to Bristol Silver.

RM: Is that right? Tell me about it.

JG: It had to have been in the late '20s. I remember my mom and dad and myself and my brother and sister being out there in the old car that Dad had at the time, and driving past and here was this young Chinese girl standing on the front of the boardinghouse Ä there was a porch along the front of the boardinghouse. I remember them commenting that this was the lady that Mr. Wah just brought to the United States from China as his wife. And then I don't remember a whole lot about her from that time until later, when I went back to Pioche in 1948. By then her husband had passed on and she had taken over the building and the food service that he had established at Caselton.

RM: So it wasn't at Prince, it was at Caselton?

JG: It was midway between Caselton and Prince. And when I went back to Pioche, I became very active in the community; I became a member of the volunteer fire department and we always had one annual party at Missy Wah's place. And Missy Wah shopped with me in the store in Pioche when I went back up there. There were just many, many occasions I had to know of and be in her presence.

Years later, when I married Alyce and moved out here to Boulder City, Alyce had some friends who lived across the street from us, in another area Ä Bill and Candy. I had a

motor home when I married Alyce, and Bill got hold of his friend's VHS camera. We took the motor home and made a trip up through Alamo and Hiko and then on up to Ely, and then back around and out to the Lehman's Caves and then back down and into Pioche, and spent a couple days in the Pioche area. And the minute we pulled into Pioche, I called Missy Wah on the phone. I said, "Missy Wah, this is Jim Gottfredson. Do you remember me?"

"Oh, yeah, I remember you. You nice boy. You a good boy. You had store," and talked to me in these terms. "I remember you."

And I said, "Missy Wah, I've got some friends with me. There are 6 of us. We would like to come out and have dinner with you."

"Oh, I couldn't do that! I haven't been to the grocery store, I don't have the food, I can't do that."

I said, "Oh, Missy Wah, you would make me so happy if you could do just one dinner for my friends and myself."

And finally she said, "Well, all right."

She gave me the time and in her way told me when to come out there. And we did, that evening, about 6:00 or 7:00; we went and had dinner with her. My friend took this camera and went all the way through and took films of her kitchen, back in the back and all the way through and took pictures of her. And that tape is still somewhere.

RM: Do you have it? I'd like to get a copy of that for archival purposes.

JG: I'm going to have to figure where that . . . but it turned out just great.

RM: It's a tour of her home.

JG: No, her restaurant.

RM: Oh Ä she was running a restaurant out between Prince and Caselton?

JG: Right. Her husband had had the boardinghouse and restaurant facilities under contract for the mines. And when he died, she took it over. By the time I'm talking about the mines were all closed down and all she was doing was special event dinners for people who wanted to do a birthday party up there or for some reason a group would get together and make plans. Usually they'd give her several days or a week or two's notice. But I called her that Saturday morning and she set it up for me; she drove into town and got the stuff. And that was the last time I saw her.

RM: Did she cook American or Chinese?

JG: Oh, the finest Chinese food you'd ever want. She would also do a scrumptious steak.

RM: Was it really good?

JG: Excellent. She was known all over this part of the West for the food that she served out there.

RM: Oh, is that right? I didn't realize it.

JG: Yes, that was her long suit.

RM: Did she learn to cook from Tom or did she bring it with her?

JG: I think she learned to cook from Tom. She came to this country as a teenage bride. I don't really know what her age was when she came over here, but she was young, very young. She probably brought some of the Old World skills with her in cooking, some of the Chinese dishes and that type of thing, but I'm sure that she learned an awful lot from Tom, too.

RM: Did you know Ed Snyder?

JG: Yes.

RM: Tell me about what you recall about him.

JG: Well, he was a forceful man.

RM: He had Combined Metals, didn't he?

JG: Combined Metals Reduction Company, yes. Ed was based really in Salt Lake City more than he was out in Pioche, but he came out there quite often. I can't right off the top of my head recall anything specific about anything that ever happened around him or anything like that, except that I remember the man. And I remember that his position was such that he carried a lot of weight around him, and you knew it. He had a younger brother who had problems with alcohol. He finally became a member of AA and got himself straightened up and did real well, and he was around in Pioche during the late '40s and the '50s when I had the store in Pioche.

RM: What about the Gemmills, did you know them at all?

JG: I knew Paul very well. I think the last time I saw Paul was on that same trip when we had dinner with Missy Wah. I had these friends of ours in our motor home out in the Bristol Mine area and we were showing them the big hole in the ground that had caved in through the years gone by. We were messing around in there and Paul came out of his house and walked down and wanted to know what was going on. (He didn't know who it was.) The minute he saw who it was he said, "Well, just be awful careful, we don't have any insurance to cover things that could go wrong over there." And I assured him we would.

RM: Was the hole that you're talking about at the Prince?

JG: Yes. There's a cave-in there. They had gone in underneath in the early years and stoped that all out underneath, and then it kind of got abandoned and through the years it gave way underneath and everything came in on top of it.

RM: I interviewed his sister, Betty Gemmill.

JG: The last time I saw her was in her little art shop there in Pioche. A very nice lady. I knew the Gemmill family very well.

RM: When you moved to Pioche from Delta (Delta's essentially an LDS community) there weren't that many Mormons in Pioche at that time, or were there?

JG: Yes.

RM: There were. I just wonder if you felt any kind of a disjunction, or was there any kind of prejudice or anything like that?

JG: No. There were other faiths there, too. There was a Catholic church in Caliente (there wasn't one in Pioche), there was a Lutheran church and a Christian church in Pioche, but there was also a very healthy LDS church there. My parents were direct descendants of families who were recruited by the LDS faith and their missionaries and came to this country back in the 1840s and '50s.

RM: Where did they come from? Are you German?

JG: No, I'm Danish. My great-grandfather was born in Denmark in about 1802, and my grandfather was born in Denmark in about 1848. He had an older brother born in Denmark about 1846 and a younger brother than that born there about 1850. They came to this country in 1852. They migrated into Pennsylvania to begin with and then started across the Plains to join their Mormon brethren out in the land of God. And my mother's families were both in the same situation; they came from England. There were 2 families, the Laws and the Bickleys. They were both emigres from England to this country in about the same time frame and circumstance.

RM: And they had all been converted by missionaries in their original homeland?

JG: Right. You hear a lot of talk about that, but, you know, when you get back into the things that were prevalent in the world at that time among people, there was a lot of oppression. There were a lot of people who just didn't have any freedoms or anything.

RM: Or no opportunity.

JG: No opportunity. And it wasn't only the Mormons who were recruiting as missionaries in those years, there were all of the faiths Ä the Catholics, the Christian Church Ä all of the faiths were recruiting people from those same areas. And the lure of this wondrous, marvelous place was beyond control.

RM: I think they were a bit predisposed to come here before the missionaries even approached them.

JG: Oh, sure, if they could have found a way. The missionary opened the door. But that's when they came to this

country. My great-grandmother died coming across to Utah. They got caught in a winter in about 1855, I think, on their way across, in Missouri. They went into winter quarters there. They had no money and my great-grandfather was out trying to make enough money to keep them all alive, and she died. She got one of the bad things that happened at that time in the way of flu or something, and died on the way across. He remarried later and had a second family. So there were 4 in my grandfather's family who were full brother and sister, and then there were another 6 or 7 who were halfbrothers and -sisters. But all of them were Gottfredsons.

RM: Are they all in the Salt Lake area?

JG: They're all over the western part of the United States now.

RM: Do you keep in touch with them much?

JG: Quite a bit. I have some family in Newport Beach Ä I go down and visit with them periodically. And I have some family in Salt Lake City; I keep very closely in touch with them. These are cousins of mine.

RM: So in 1932, I think you said, you moved to Caliente. That was really kind of a big switch. What did you think about moving down there? You would have been 9 years old.

JG: I never considered it a problem. I got a new group of friends, I was in the third grade and started in the grade school there and made friends rather readily, and got integrated real fast into the community. One of the biggest things I remember was these tremendously loud steam engines that rode up and down those tracks. One day we were walking up towards the corner drug store and one of those big steam whistles let loose over there on the railroad tracks and my little sister turned and broke and ran for home. I had a heck of a time catching her. And she was a little bitty thing, about 2 or 3 years old at the time. But I remember the railroading and the railroad and I remember the people who were riding the rails, people who were traveling throughout our country trying to find something that they could subsist with or use to get going again.

RM: Were there a lot of hobos coming through Caliente?

JG: On every train that came to town. It didn't make any difference if it was going east or west, they were all loaded with men who were struggling.

RM: Where would they ride on the train?

JG: The best possible spot was to find an empty car and be able to get inside of it and get out of the wind. But they rode on the ladders, on the sides of the cars, the tops of the cars . . . any place that they could get a secure enough

hitch onto that car that they could ride it and stay with it and, of course, those rides were hours long.

RM: I don't know how they did it.

JG: I don't either. Down below Caliente on the side where the business district is, there was a tremendous large area of rabbit brush. Rabbit brush grows tall and willowy and it has a lot of yellow fluff up on the top of it, and that is where those hobos made their overnight stop. And they'd canvass the town looking for work. Every day somebody would knock on the door, offering to cut wood for you for a meal.

RM: Is that right? They probably didn't find many takers, did they?

JG: I think you might be surprised if you knew how much the heart of Caliente opened up to many of these people.

RM: Is that right? They'd give them a little food or something?

JG: Yes, and get them on their way to another stop. My mom was quite a girl. Somebody would knock on the door and they'd say, "I'd like to chop some wood for you," or "I'd like to mow your lawn," or "I'd like to do whatever I can for you." My mom would say, "Well, just get out there and cut me up some wood and I'll figure out if I can pay you for it or not," and they'd go out and chop up a day's worth of wood. Of course we all used wood stoves, both in the kitchen and in the heating of the living room. They'd chop up enough wood for a day's supply and Mom would give them something to eat. She'd fix them a nice sandwich or something to hang onto.

RM: What was the attitude of the railroad toward people hitching a ride?

JG: Economic circumstances at that time were so severe and there were so many people who had to get somewhere else in order to try to get something going for themselves, that there really wasn't much of any way the railroad could control it. They did try to inhibit it in every way that they could. We've all seen the movies with the bulls, as they called them, who had big nightsticks.

RM: Yes, you think about the hobos getting beat up.

JG: Well, that happened, but it didn't happen very much, as I remember.

RM: They kind of looked the other way?

JG: They tried to. I honestly think that the railroad understood that they had problems. I never saw anybody get beat or any real serious problems. The police in town were very watchful. But, you know, most of those people who were traveling that way were just common, ordinary people;

good people, really. They just had to have a break to get off of that treadmill they were on.

RM: Would they have little camps down at the south end of town like you see in the movies where they'd be cooking up a communal pot of stew or something?

JG: Yes, Mulligan stew or something of that nature.

RM: They were mostly male, weren't they?

JG: Right. There were a lot of men. In fact, I can't honestly remember any women. The women were home trying to keep it together while these guys were out trying to find a way to keep it together. Those were tough times, really tough times.

RM: Yes. I think it's hard for people nowadays to really understand it.

JG: They don't really understand it. Even I, having seen it and been involved in it when I was, as a young man, don't really understand it all.

RM: I grew up with a kind of a Depression mentality from my dad always talking about it, but I don't really appreciate it.

JG: I had the advantage of being a preferred kid in a preferred town. I never wanted for anything. I never went hungry a day in my life. And as difficult as it was in the business for my parents, I never really wanted for anything that I didn't pretty well get in some manner or other if I wanted it. So I was very fortunate. I grew up in a small town and my parents were well known and very well liked in the community and I just did very well as a kid.

CHAPTER FOUR

RM: Where did you live in Caliente when you first moved down there?

JG: The house that we lived in at that time has been razed and another building put in, but it was approximately where the post office is in Caliente. There were 3 houses side by side Ä one on the corner and then the one we lived in and another one. And then the Caliente Herald Printing Shop was next to that. Blue Front Mercantile Ä I don't know if you've heard of the Blue Front Mercantile or not.

RM: No, I haven't.

JG: They were a very fine, well-run, good, all-around department store operation in those years. They were well stocked, they had good people. They made ice in a special facility they had out behind the Blue Front. They had a big metal building out in back that they used for lumber and all of the different things.

RM: Were they competitors with your dad, then?

JG: In some areas. They had groceries and a meat market, so, yes, in some respects they definitely were competitors.

RM: Were you the two main stores in town or were there others?

JG: During the years that we're talking about, J.C. Penney had a store. It was a competitive enterprise, there's no question about that. So Dad didn't have all clear sailing; he had some good competition in town. But he was a man people knew they could depend on and a man who was friendly and had a gregariousness about him that was just captivating. And he was well loved in that community.

RM: Why don't we kind of walk through some of the business operations that were there in the early 1930s, besides the ones you've mentioned.

JG: OK. On the corner where you first come up to what is Company Row, running kind of to the north, was a drug store, and that was Tugie Trower and his wife. If you went north parallel with Company Row, up along the other side of the street, just past the drug store, the next building up the street and beyond the alley was a bar that was operated by a family named Olson. Then there was the old Zumpstien Garage on the next corner, and then there were some homes. On the next corner was Lester Denton's residence. He was my wife's grandfather and he had kind of a motel thing back behind that his wife took care of and ran. Across the street from that was the Shell service station. And that was about the end of the business on that side of the street going out that way at that time.

Then at the far end of the street, and on the right-hand side, just beyond the end of the Company Row homes, was the

Standard Oil distributorship. And that was a good business in the community. And coming back down, starting again from the corner going the other way, there was a little bar in operation next to the drug store.

RM: We're going . . .

JG: Now we're going west, out towards Las Vegas. Then there was a street and alley that went through to the back end of the Blue Front Mercantile that I mentioned a little earlier, and that was all Blue Front in there. Next to that was Dinkle's store, again a competitive-type operation to what my father had in town, run by a Jewish couple. That building later became a big restaurant, the State Cafe. Then there was a little home that sat back in there, where the proprietor of Dinkle's store lived. Then there was the print shop and then it was residences down to the next corner, where there was a Standard service station. And that was about the end of it going that way at that time.

Dr. Demman, the doctor who was maintained by the Union Pacific Railroad, had his clinic in the first big building on the end of Company Row right across from the drug store. Around behind were the car yards, the steam-generating operation and the roundhouse for the Union Pacific Railroad, all back up in that corner. In the late '30s, before they got power off the dam into Lincoln County, they operated big diesel engines up in there and generated the power for the community.

RM: Oh, that's where the power came from.

JG: Right Ä Union Pacific fed the power lines into the city.

RM: So you've got Company Row here, running north and south, sort of, and then you've got the drug store sitting right here, and this is where you turn. So over here is that row of buildings, that shopping center kind of, across the tracks?

JG: That's across the tracks on the other side. That's the other business district.

RM: OK. Where would the power station have been in relation to . . .

JG: Describing as you did the corner right here where the drug store is, this would be Company Row, and this would be the doctor's office, the first one, and they ran this way. Then the tracks came up here and back out this way. And all of this area up in here, and then the tracks would come on down . . .

RM: Oh, OK. So, instead of turning to go up to Pioche, you would just keep going straight up that way . . .

JG: Come around the end of Company Row and go around the backside of that. A lot of the old buildings and things

are still standing back there, but they're all out of use now. The Union Pacific doesn't . . .

RM: Is that where the roundhouse was?

JG: Yes. And all these tracks fed up into it. And the car yards were all right along in here. This is where they did car repair work.

RM: Oh, basically kind of behind Company Row.

JG: Right. And from there up to the mouth of the canyon going out to the east, towards Salt Lake City, on the other side of the tracks, going all the way up as far as you could go, the first little canyon you came to was where the Green Lantern was. Actually, before the canyon that went up to the Green Lantern there was a sectionhouse Ä some of the section workers lived in some houses just at the edge of town. Then there was the canyon that went up the hill to the Green Lantern.

RM: Was the Green Lantern a brothel?

JG: Yes, it was; the only one in town.

RM: Who ran the Green Lantern?

JG: It was a woman named Betty, but I can't give you her last name.

RM: How many girls worked there typically?

JG: I really don't know. I would say anywhere from 2 to 3 or 4 at the most. My dad sold Betty a work bench one time, a work bench being a new bed for one of them. [Laughter]

RM: Oh, a work bench! [Laughter]

JG: I came home from high school and I had to deliver the work bench up to the Green Lantern. I got it loaded in the truck and I took it up there and I took with me the bill for it, too. It was $62.50. We got up there and she opened it up so I could get in and I took the bed in and set it up for her in the crib, where she wanted it. I came out and walked out the back door and she came out with me and I said, "Oh, here's the bill."

Then she said, "Well, let's see, $62.50, how about if I give you $60 and you take $2.50 out in trade?"

I said, "Well, I might take you up on that but I just don't know how I'd convince my dad about what happened to that $2.50." [Laughter]

RM: [Laughter] That's great.

JG: So she gave me the $62.50 and I took it back to the store. [Chuckles]

RM: She wasn't working herself, but she had some girls there? Did you see the girls, were they good-looking, or how would you describe them?

JG: You wouldn't get much more than a glimpse of them. They stayed pretty well to the inside, but they were young girls and women. A world of wonderment to me . . .

RM: Sure, a young lad.

JG: But, anyway, that's one of the things that happened up there.

RM: Describe the interior of the Green Lantern. What did it look like?

JG: There was a set of steps going up to the front door and the house was rectangular shaped Ä it was longer than it was wide.

RM: How long would you say it was?

JG: I'd say it was probably 40 feet in length.

RM: And was it a frame building?

JG: Yes, set up on a block concrete-type foundation. You had to step up about 3 or 4 stairs to get up to it because the canyon came down under it. The back end of it was set down pretty close to the ground, but out in the front you had to walk up some stairs to get to the front door. If you went in the front door, you went in across a little porch, maybe 6 feet across, about half the width of the building, and I'd say the building was probably 20 feet wide. You stepped in the front door and here was the parlor area with nice cushion chairs and a bar at the end of it. And immediately out the back end of that part of the building you went into another room which was the kitchen area, and then into the back yard outside. And it was through that back door that I brought in the work bench. About halfway up the wall in this lounge room, on the left-hand side, was an opening into a hallway that ran the full length of the building behind that wall. And there were 3 cribs. I set that bed up in the center crib.

RM: Was it a double bed?

JG: Oh, yes. It was a metal spring, with a nice inner spring mattress on it and a metal bed frame with a headboard and footboard.

RM: Was it a fancy decor, or just simple?

JG: It was very simple. Even the furniture, as I remember, was nothing out of the ordinary Ä just overstuffed chairs and night tables and things around that just gave it a nice little parlor effect.

RM: Was it still there when you went back to Pioche in '49?

JG: Yes, it was.

RM: Is it still there today?

JG: No.

RM: Oh, right; it's not legal there, is it?

JG: They finally closed them up some years back. But it was still there in 1958, at which time I had gone on and had a store in Ely. I had developed a friendship with an ex-pilot of World War II who had access to a Cessna 182 and I dearly loved to fly, and he did too, so one day he called

me at the store and said, "Jim, I got to go down to Caliente. Wouldn't you like to ride down with me?"

And I said, "Oh, my gosh. I've got so much going here, I don't think I can take the rest of the day off."

And he said, "Well, I'm going to go in that 182."

And I said, "Oh, come on, be reasonable."

And he said, "Oh, come on and go with me. I need some company on this trip."

He was an insurance adjuster. So I put everything on hold and went with him and we flew down and landed in Pioche. On the north end of town there's a street that runs uphill with a wind sock and we landed there. He had some business he had to take care of in Pioche. He got that out of the way and then we took off and went on down to the Panaca airfield and landed.

And Pete Findley, of Pete Findley Oldsmobile, had the Y service station, I think at that time. Anyway, we rented a car from this Y service station and drove to Caliente, and when we went into Caliente he went right across the tracks right up the hill to the Green Lantern. We got up there and I said, "What the hell are we doing here?"

He said, "Well, you know, I didn't want to come down here and go up here alone. That's why I really tried to get you to come with me, just for my personal reputation. But I've got to make an insurance adjustment in here." [Chuckles]

The gal who was heading the place at that time had been in an automobile accident down between Caliente and Las Vegas on a highway someplace and had wiped out a car. He had to go in and do an adjustment on that particular accident and see that the insurance paid and everything. But I laughed like hell because he never did tell me until he turned up that hill what we were going to be doing in Caliente.

RM: By that time Betty was gone?

JG: Yes.

RM: I wonder what happened to her.

JG: I have no idea.

RM: That probably would have been the place where the young guys in town would get their early sexual experience?

JG: You know, I never did participate in it. It wasn't what I wanted out of life, and so I don't know. I can't honestly tell you which ones did, or if they did.

RM: The boys didn't joke about it in high school, or anything?

JG: Well, everybody had a story or two to tell about it, but . . . I don't know. I really think the big bulk of their patronage came from the railroads Ä the section gangs, up and down both ways from Caliente. I don't think the locals were their big suit, I think it was more the working stiffs who were on the building and bridge gangs

and so forth. I'll diverge here just a second, if I may, for a story about the Big Four brothel in Ely. It was one of two that were there.

RM: There was a Green Lantern in Ely, too, wasn't there? It came there after I left Ely.

JG: Yes. Anyway, I took over the store in Ely on February first of 1956.

RM: What store was it?

JG: It was the dry goods section of the old original Goodman Tidball store, which was the oldest store in . . .

RM: Right across the street from the Bank Club?

JG: Right across the street from the Bank Club and right across the street from the hotel.

RM: Oh, I know that store. You took that over?

JG: We bought that in 1955 and took over management of the store on February 1, 1956. I hadn't been in the store probably a week as the new owner, and here comes Betty (her name was Betty, too) from the Big Four. She walked in and introduced herself . . . And you'd have to know the guys I bought the store from Ä Dale Bell and his partner Ä they were a couple of real goers.

RM: By goers you mean . . .

JG: They were good for anything. They loved fun and they loved to have a good time and they got a big kick out of everything. They were not straightlaced in any manner or means, they were guys you could deal with. (Whorton was the last name of his partner; he was in Las Vegas at the time.) Dale Bell was the one we dealt with and we got to know Dale very, very well.

So in comes Betty, and she introduced herself and told me who she was, where she was from. She said, "Now, up until now, we've not had any problems with our girls coming in this store to do business." And she said, "We don't want to create any problems for anybody, least of all for ourselves in the community. And I just want to know if our girls will be welcome to come into your store and do business."

And I said, "You can make book on it. Yes, they're more than welcome, as long as they conduct themselves as ladies while they're in the store. Their money is as good as anybody else's and they can come in here any time they want when we're open."

We did a lot of business with those girls. I sold literally, through the years, hundreds of matched Samsonite luggage sets.

RM: Is that a fact? Hundreds of sets?

JG: That's a fact. Every time a girl would leave there she got a complete matched set of Samsonite luggage to leave town with, compliments of the house.

RM: Is that right? Compliments of the management at the Big Four. I'll be darned, that's interesting. How long were you at that store?

JG: I was there 10 years. About 6 months before I made the final decision to liquidate the store and get out of business there and sell the rest of my interest to my sister Dorothy and her husband Wes in Caliente, Roy Jett, who was the madame's husband (he was from Las Vegas) came in the store one day. He said, "You know, I got a hell of a problem up at that place we run up there. When the salesmen come through with these uniforms that these girls wear . . . "

RM: Little skimpy dresses?

JG: Yes, skimpy dresses with little frou-frou things. He said, "They just distract my girls and get them all screwed up. I've got to get rid of those guys and I wonder if you'd mind carrying some of that type of merchandise here in your store so our girls could come here and buy it on their time instead of having those guys come in and disrupt our whole business."

I said, "Well, Roy, I'll tell you something, if you will guarantee me no loss, I'd be glad to. I don't want to buy hundreds of dollars worth of merchandise and then have it sit here and nothing happen to it."

RM: Because no one else in town would buy it.

JG: Right. "So you've got to guarantee me, and your word's good enough that you will, guarantee me no loss."

And he said, "Guaranteed, no loss."

I said, "OK."

So he sent down the first salesman who came through and I got Stelle Hall, who was my ladies' wear manager and this salesman . . . and my wife didn't know anything about this at the time. We went up on the mezzanine in the back of the store and he showed us his wares. And poor old Stelle, she was just beside herself . . . she was a nice gal but she had a lot of fun with this thing. Here were these uniforms, they were called, so we picked out, I think, 15 uniforms.

RM: She was kind of putting the feminine input on it?

JG: Yes, and I put the male input. So we bought these and they were shipped to us and I paid for them.

RM: What did they cost?

JG: As I recall, I had an invoice that I paid for about $525 for 15. I sold one at my cost plus 10 percent, whatever that was, so it was $75 or $80 that I sold that to this one

girl for. She came in as he had said he would have them do. It was about that time, in that same year, that leotards became very popular, the long stretch pants that you put on. We had bought leotards for our ladies' lingerie department and we had a nice stock of leotards and these girls got wise to these leotards and they liked them better than the froulie, frilly stuff.

RM: You know, they used to call them trick dresses.

JG: So, anyway, I didn't sell any more. I still had 14 uniforms left when we decided to close out the store and get out of business. And I had never said anything to Roy. I just let the time go by. Finally one day, after I had had all my big liquidation sales and I got everything to a point where I was literally closing the door for good, I ran into Roy on the street. I said, "Roy, you remember we had a conversation about some frilly uniforms for your girls."

He said, "Sure, I remember."

I said, "Well, I bought some of those and I sold one. And then all of a sudden your girls don't want those anymore, they want leotards and other kinds of stuff, which we sold them, but I still got 14 of those uniforms and you told me you'd guarantee me no loss."

And he said, "Well, what do I owe you?"

And I said, "About $450."

He said, "OK. Put them in a box and let me have them. I'll take them up to Wells," I think is where he said. "Maybe my girls up there can use them."

RM: He had a joint up in Wells.

JG: In Wells, also. So I boxed them up and handed them to him. There's nothing written Ä nothing here except a handshake. So he took the uniforms with him and time went on and probably a full 9 or 10 months later, I had closed the store and moved to Las Vegas. But I was still up there once a month trying to collect some accounts receivable and close up some loose ends and so on. I was in the Nevada Hotel one evening and Roy Jett walked in. I was up there alone sitting at the bar having a cocktail before I went back to my place to go to bed. Roy Jett walked in and saw me and came over and sat down.

He said, "Jeez, I owe you some money, don't I?"

I said, "Well, we had an agreement."

He said, "That was $450, wasn't it?"

I said, "Yeah, it was."

He said, "Well, come on with me."

We went out the front door of the hotel and around to the side where there was a parking lot alongside of the hotel. Between that and the next building was a nice open space

and he had his big Cadillac parked in along towards the back end of the hotel. We went back through the alley and I'm thinking, "What the hell's going on here, anyway?" He popped the trunk lid on his car, and he had a valise that was about 15 or 16 inches wide, and deep enough for 2 $100 bills to lay end to end, just right. He lifted the lid and all I could see was $100 bills and there was no more room to put anything else in that case. He reached down and pulled 5 $100 bills off of one of those stacks, closed the lid and handed me the $500 and said, "Does that make us even?"

I said, "Roy, that makes us even except for one thing."

"Well, what's that?"

"Pick that valise up. Let's go into the hotel together. You put it into a safe in the hotel tonight. Because you and I know that money's there and nobody else does. And you get knocked off, I'm next in line."

So he said, "Oh, OK." So he picked up this valise and carried it in and put it in the hotel safe. [Chuckles]

RM: So that shows how profitable the business was?

JG: Probably.

RM: When was this?

JG: In 1965.

RM: That's a really interesting story.

JG: I've never forgotten that. He popped that lid on that case and here were $100 bills.

CHAPTER FIVE

RM: What kind of things stand out in your mind about growing up in Caliente and so on?

JG: In the early years, particularly through the '30s, one of the greatest things that happened in Caliente was the evening and early nighttime activities of the kids in the town. The city was lighted with power poles placed periodically up and down the street. If it were winter and we had had the usual good snow, you'd find maybe 25, 30, 35 kids up on either Denton Heights or Spring Heights or both, with their sleds coming down those streets at a terrific rate of speed. And everybody scrounged around and got old tires together and we'd build a bonfire on the top of each hill and use the old tires as fuel. It would get very cold at night, and then with the wind speed, you'd build the temperature effect. By the time you got back to the top of the hill you were ready to stop for a few minutes and warm your hands and get by the fire.

And I recall that the Ences lived on Spring Heights. George Ence was the barber there in Caliente. On cold nights like that, quite often they'd get their hose out and hook it up to the spigot and go out and spray that street with water. It would be frozen almost instantly by the time it hit the ground, so you really would generate some high speeds on those sleds coming down across those frozen streets.

RM: They did that for the kids.

JG: Yes. He has a son who's a dentist here in Las Vegas now by the name of Ence, and it isn't George, and I can't say his first name. That boy was just a baby when I remember him in Caliente.

In the warmer times of the year, the activity was always out in front of one of the blocks where the corner light was on and we were playing Run, Sheepie, Run or Kick the Can or Auntie-I-Over in the daytime on some house . . . Do you know what Auntie-I-Over is?

RM: No, I don't.

JG: You'd take a ball and get 2 or 3 kids on each side of the house and throw that ball up so that it would roll over the peak and down the other side. Whoever caught the ball on the other side got to throw it back. It was just a way of burning up energy and having fun at the same time, getting a little exercise.

RM: I know what Kick the Can is. What was the other one?

JG: Run, Sheep, Run.

RM: How is that played?

JG: Whoever was "It" (the first It was elected by the group) would hide their head against the pole in their arms and everybody would scatter and hide out someplace in the dark, and then the one that was It would go out and search for the sheep. Whenever he found one and could run up and touch him before he could get back and say "Safe" by the base of the light, he or she was the next It.

Another thing that I can remember very vividly because I had so much fun and enjoyed it so much . . . The railroad trains there were serviced from little yard buildings alongside the tracks and up and down the main part of the street there. There were 2 of those little one-room buildings that were right alongside the tracks just out across from the front of the home where we lived at that time. We'd sneak in there and there'd be a can of carbide and we'd dip our little shovels or cans into the carbide and get a can full of carbide and then we'd get a small size Carnation Milk can and a regular Campbell Soup can. The little Carnation Milk can would drop right down into the inside and fit quite snugly in the inside of the Campbell Soup can. We'd put a couple kernels of carbide in the bottom of the soup can with a little water, and then put the Carnation can in on top of it. In the meantime we would have punched a little hole in the back bottom edge of the Carnation milk can with a small nail. After a few seconds of building up that carbide gas in there, you could touch a match to the hole and that little milk can would sail out maybe 30, 40 feet.

RM: Is that right? Wow!

JG: That was quite a cannon. We'd get groups of guys on a field or an area, a blank, empty lot, and we'd set up our cans facing each other and bombard each other with milk cans.

RM: That sounds like a lot of fun.

JG: [Chuckles] Well, all the kids in Caliente did that. We had some marvelous times. You know, you talk about what kids do . . . Where the spur line railroad that went to Pioche crossed the creek as it came into Caliente, up in kind of the north end of town, just east of where the bridge now crosses the creek, was one of the ways we would get across to get over to the Plunge for swimming. Quite often in those days they used what they called torpedoes in the railroad Ä if they wanted to signal the engineer they would use a series of torpedoes. They'd set them on the tracks. They had a little spring wire that came off of them, they were square in shape and about a half inch to three-quarters of an inch thick and they were full of an explosive. Then the wires came around and together so that

they'd slip those over the track and lay the explosive part on the top of the track. They would set them at intervals so that you could get a series of 2 and 1, or 3 and 2 . . . by the spacing of them you'd get detonations that the engineer would hear. From that he was getting a signal about something that was up ahead or something that he needed to know. These torpedoes were generally used by section crews working along the tracks who wanted to give that engineer some advance warning that there was something up ahead he needed to know about.

Well, naturally, not all of those torpedoes got used up on the railroad. The kids would get ahold of one every once in a while. I remember one day a couple of kids and I had 3 or 4 of them. We got up on that old bridge that crossed over towards the Plunge going north to Pioche and we had a big bolt. I don't know where we got it, we found it somewhere along the railroad tracks or somewhere. It was a big, heavy bolt maybe an inch in diameter or a little more and it had a big square head on it. We found by slipping one of those torpedoes over the head on that bolt, that it fit it almost exactly. So we would stand up above and drop that bolt head down onto the concrete piling underneath where the bridge was secured. When that would hit that concrete it would explode and drive that bolt back up almost to where we could catch it. These were the things kids did for fun. [Chuckles]

RM: Why don't you describe the Plunge?

JG: It went through a couple of remodelings in the years that I remember it, but at the time that I first remember it, it was probably 100 yards up and to the right side of the tracks going to Pioche from where that bridge is that I described. It had a row of small change rooms that ran down what would be the right-hand side and across the end of the pool area with a nice concrete strip out in front of all of them. These were all set on concrete, too. Whenever you got to the Plunge to go for a swim, you had to pay a nickel or a dime or whatever they charged to get through the gate. But there would always be one of these change rooms that you could find open and get in and change into your swimming suit and leave your clothes in the change room and go swimming for all day, if you wanted to. And many times we did. When you were ready to go home you'd go back in the change room, dry off with a towel, get into your clothes and go home fully dressed. The pool was big Ä it was a very good-sized community plunge.

RM: It was community . . . ?

JG: Well, it was a privately owned thing and was run by some people who lived there. But that was a place in the

summertime where all kids got together and we had all kinds of water fun. They had a big high diving platform off the thing, and many of the kids got really good at diving and doing somersaults while they were in the air and the kind of things that go on around a swimming pool. I think the deep side of that pool was probably 9 or 10 feet deep and it gradually sloped up to the upper edge where you first came in the gate. At that point it was maybe 3 feet or something.

RM: It was natural hot water, wasn't it?

JG: All natural hot water. And at that time the water was a natural flow. They'd open the valves and it would just gush out into the pool. So the water was changed very regularly. And quite often on a day we'd be swimming up there the hot water would be coming into the inlet into the pool, and if you got a little chilly you could swim up against where that water was coming in and warm up in a hurry, because the temperature was, as I remember, 100 to 102 or -3 degrees.

RM: Did people swim there in the winter, too?

JG: Not as a regular thing, that I remember. They had indoor baths, spa tubs, that they rented to people who wanted to take a mineral bath. There were people who came from Las Vegas up to Caliente to bathe in those days.

RM: There's a pool and motel over there now. Is that in the same place?

JG: It's not the same place, but it's the same general area. That is a city pool now, owned by the city.

RM: I see. Did they rebuild the pool and everything or put it in a different spot?

JG: They put it in a different place. I think that other pool may still be usable. There's a family that lives over there and I know they rent out the motel units that are over on that old pool site, and I'm sure they do have hot tubs for mineral water and that kind of thing. Most of the water that you either went down and got for a well or that was natural flow in that area was hot water that came up from somewhere.

RM: You said at that time it flowed pretty naturally. It doesn't anymore?

JG: I don't think so.

RM: What happened to it?

JG: I think that usage has contributed to its diminished flow and I think that natural evolution of time may have . . . for instance, I described our times in the wintertime when we'd be sledding in the snow. They don't have those times anymore.

RM: Yes, it just doesn't snow that much, does it?

JG: Right. It's very rare. Once in a while you'll get a year that will give you a lot of snow, but you don't hardly ever see enough that the kids can do the things we did then.

RM: So they're getting less precipitation, which may mean less water flow.

JG: I have no idea where that water comes from, but it comes from deep because it's pretty hot.

RM: Are there any other things you'd like to bring up?

JG: You made mention of the apartments over there. I just might comment on the fact that I was the organizing general partner that put that deal together and built those apartments.

RM: Is that right. This is over where that pool is, right?

JG: Right. Those apartments were kind of a nostalgic project for me. We got them built and put in place in about 1975 to '78, somewhere along in there.

RM: Was it a commercial venture?

JG: Yes. And then the partnership sold it off to the people who now own it.

RM: Oh, I see. Was it financially successful?

JG: It was very marginal.

RM: What was your thinking in doing it?

JG: Just that Caliente needed some housing. Everything there was old and defunct and worn out, this was new housing that could be furnished to the Caliente people. At the same moment that we did that, the housing authority head down here in Las Vegas, Art Sartini, and a group of people decided they needed to put some senior citizens' apartments up there and did so at the same time. So actually we wound up overbuilding the town a little bit.

RM: And those units are still there.

JG: Oh, yes. The ones that they built are out beyond the hospital, going north toward Pioche, and back against the hill on the left-hand side. The apartments that we built were closer to the town and down just a little bit to the left of the highway going out of town.

RM: Was the swimming pool called the Plunge? What was its formal name?

JG: The Caliente Plunge.

RM: Was there a sign there that said "The Plunge"?

JG: You know, I don't exactly remember, but I'm sure there was a sign there.

RM: And you say it went through a kind of evolution . . .

JG: Yes. Anything that's subjected to constant water over years of time will deteriorate. The old pool got pretty badly deteriorated in some areas and they went ahead and tore it out and rebuilt it. I haven't been in it in the

years since that was done, but as a kid what I've described is what I remember it being.

RM: What are some other kid things you remember?

JG: Well, again, this is the younger age. There were always a couple of gangs in town Ä kids that hung out together Ä and they were always kind of rivalrous. Quite often those kids would split up into different groups and play cops and robbers or Indians and cowboys and this kind of thing. Nobody had any money to spend with big things. We'd take a piece of lumber, if we could find a piece of 1-by-6 or something and we'd cut out the shape of a rifle. We'd notch it towards the back end of the rifle and put a string in along the top of it and then we'd stretch rubber bands one after the other one. These rubber bands came from old inner tubes Ä somebody's tube had gone bad and you could always find a good section you could cut rubber strips out of. Then we'd stretch them up onto those so-called rifles and snitch the other end down into the notch with the string going underneath it, so that when you were ready to fire you pulled the string and it let those go one after the other. You could fire a half a dozen rubber bands out of one of those real quick. And that was the kind of toys that we had.

RM: You made your own toys.

JG: We made our own toys. We didn't have money to spend for fancy toys.

RM: What were some other toys that you made?

JG: Oh, I used to make teams of horses and a wagon out of Milk Nickel sticks and string and Coke bottles.

RM: Is that right?

JG: The Coke bottles, of course, were the horses, and you'd take string and tie a loop around the neck of the bottle up front and then you'd tie side strings back to the traces and put the traces onto the draw bar. You'd build that wagon up out of old pieces of wood and Milk Nickel sticks. They were very handy Ä they were sturdy but easy to work with and about the right size to do something with. I remember doing that as a youngster a lot of times.

Another thing we used to do was . . . I don't know that any of the other kids did this [chuckles], but I used to catch a pigeon with my BB gun every once in a while. Whenever I'd catch a pigeon, I'd clean it and dress it out and then I'd go home and get my mom to give me some vegetables and an old coffee can or something, and I'd go out in the back yard and build myself a mulligan stew out of pigeon meat and vegetables. I got more of a kick out of that than anything else.

RM: Was the pigeon good?

JG: Sure. It was very much like dove meat. And they still hunt and eat doves.

RM: Right.

JG: You just did a lot of things that didn't cost . . . We used to get little prizes in Crackerjack popcorn boxes. Maybe you'd get a little miniature automobile as a prize, you know. Then at Christmastime, we'd get those kinds of things for toys, little cars and things like that. And being in the dirt outside in your old dirty clothes and working with these little toys, you could always scrape a roadway around through the yard. In my case there was a big high bank behind the store of gravel and dirt, and I used to go and carve roadways in that bank. I had speedways and roadways and grades and everything, playing with those kinds of toys.

RM: They were little tiny cars from Crackerjacks, or a little bit bigger ones?

JG: Little tiny ones from Crackerjacks, and then we'd get hold of the bigger ones because of Christmas or birthdays or whatever.

RM: Did you buy things out of the catalog? Toys, or anything like that?

JG: Well, I never did, because my daddy had a store that carried toys at Christmastime. I was one of the more fortunate kids.

RM: You were one of the "rich kids" in town?

JG: That's right. And I remember one time commenting on that. One time my dad collared me and hauled me back to his office in the store and sat me down. He said, "Now, son, I got to tell you something. I had a man come in the store yesterday and talk to me about his kids and what their lifestyle was and how difficult it was that his kid was playing with my kid and my kid just had everything and he couldn't afford to give his kid anything." He said, "You got to be very careful and a lot more restrained in things that you do in that nature because we don't want to have people feeling that we're better or anything." It could have been any one of 50 or 60 fathers in town at the time. I never had any idea who it was, but I do know that there was some backlash. Not heavy or anything, but there was probably some resentment towards me. But I was very fortunate. My daddy was a good provider and no matter how tough times were, I never had any moments of feeling inadequacies as far as material things were concerned. Anything that was really serious and needed to be had or even a little frivolous, why I usually would benefit.

RM: And again, your store was a general store . . .

JG: A general store that carried everything, right. I just thought of a thing now that I'll have to tell you about my little mom. In our last session, I talked about Hi Thompson, who my father had hired as a butcher. This was when the store was still down on the corner, where Spring Heights goes up the hill. My mom was up there working one day in the store and Hi was back in the butcher shop, and Dad wasn't there. My mom was somewhat suspicious of a guy who was in the store. She had it in her mind that he was looking for a way to steal something and get out the door with it. So she kind of watched him pretty close and, sure enough, he made a pass at one of the display tables there that had stuff on it and then made a quick move out the door. My mom bolted out after him out the door Ä this was in the summertime and I guess it was just a screen door. She caught him just outside the door on the front sidewalk and she turned him around and said, "What have you got under your coat? What have you got under your coat?"
"I haven't got anything. I haven't got anything."
She ripped open his coat with her two hands, just ripped it open . . . the thing that triggered her was that there was a tag hanging below the corner edge of the jacket that he had on. So she ripped open his jacket and here was a clock of some kind that he had lifted off the counter as he went by and stuck under his coat. My little mom was only about 5'2", and not a big woman in bone structure or size, but she grabbed this guy by the coat and the collar and jerked him around, and she hollered through the door, "Hi, go get the sheriff while I hold this guy." [Laughs]

RM: Is that right? She had a lot of courage.

JG: She didn't back away from anything, my mom. She was a feisty little English girl and she was quite a girl. What else to talk about? Well, the railroad . . .

RM: I wanted to ask you about the servicing of the trains there. And tell us about the railroad's structures there.

JG: Well, the structures were just small one-room buildings. They had a facility where a yard worker could go and relieve himself if he needed to and then they had space where they could get in out of the heat or the cold, as the case may be, for a little bit. They didn't store things in them or anything. But there was always a can of carbide stuck in the corner over there, because they used carbide on the trains at that time.

RM: What did they use it for?

JG: I really don't know.

CHAPTER SIX

JG: There were probably 9 sets of tracks that ran up and down in front of the buildings in Caliente. When a freight train would come in, they would put a switch engine on the back end of it and start breaking down the cars that were laden with goods to be delivered to Caliente or to Pioche. Or maybe they wanted to rearrange their train so they could handle the rest of the trip from there to Los Angeles or from Los Angeles going the other way on out to Salt Lake and Omaha. Anyway, they would break those trains up and ship them back and forth on the different tracks, so there were always some trainmen and some flagmen, and the engineers and firemen who were running the switch engines that were working up and down the tracks. They would use those little buildings as a safe haven to go in and relieve themselves as well as to catch shelter from the great heat or the cold, whichever the case was.

There were just tons and tons and tons of ice in the old icehouse. And every day, winter and summer, they would take these carts in there . . . Describing the way they used the tracks that run directly in front of the depot, the track that was the closest to the depot ran kind of through a trough and a brick walkway that they had built on both sides. The brick walkway between that set of tracks and the next set of tracks to the outside was 8 or 10 feet wide. They had little 2-wheeled white carts with a handle on the back end of them and sides that flipped up, and in those they would put big blocks of ice.

And whenever they would service passenger trains **Ä** there were a lot of passenger trains that ran in those days, too **Ä** those trains would pull in along either side of that central divider on those first 2 sets of tracks and then the car service people would come along. They'd break those blocks of ice up into smaller pieces and put them into the various cars for cool water and whatever it was that they needed the ice for. It was a huge icehouse.

RM: Did they make the ice there, or did they bring it in?

JG: I think they brought it in. The only place that I know of that made ice in Caliente during those years was Blue Front Mercantile. They had a big ice manufacturing plant out in back of their store.

RM: Where were they located in town, again?

JG: Well, if you'll remember the descriptions that we went through the other day, the drug store was on the corner, and then going west towards the exit to Las Vegas there was a little alley between the first 3 buildings on the corner and the next couple of buildings, and then there was an

alleyway that went back to the back end of the Blue Front Mercantile property, and it was, of course, the next piece of property in there. It was directly between where the drug store was and what was, when I first came there, the Dinkel Store. It was a competitive store Ä it had clothing and all kinds of things Ä in the field where my father was working. But they didn't last too long. I think they left there probably in '35 or '36.

RM: Did the Blue Front Mercantile deliver ice in town?

JG: At one time in the early days they did. They phased that out during those years of the late '30s when people began to buy and be able to get refrigerators that were mechanically capable of keeping their food cool and making ice for them. In '33 or '34 my dad had Westinghouse refrigerators in the store. Those refrigerators were the first ones that came out with a hermetically sealed unit where they didn't have seals where the shafts went through the workings on the inside. The seals would leak and they would lose their freon (they didn't use freon in those days; they used a different refrigerant). They eliminated that seal around the pump shaft and that was what made it a very unique compressor and a long-lived appliance. The old pumps that they used prior to that just wouldn't hold up. The seals would hold for a year or two maybe and then you'd have to go in and tear the pump apart and put it all back together and recharge it. So the domestic refrigerator per se really didn't come into being until about the mid-'30s. And that's about the time the Blue Front began to phase out their ice business.

RM: I see. So by World War II you couldn't get ice there?

JG: No, they were out of business I think by World War II. Or, if not by the time the war started, they certainly were by the time the war ended. Because I came back from the service at the end of the war and went into business with my dad in the store Ä bought a third interest in the business Ä and I know they weren't making ice at that time. But I remember as a youngster in Caliente, going back around through that alley and getting into the back area, and there'd always be a chunk or two of ice that you could get your hands on. I don't understand now why kids would like to do that, but it was great to go back there and find a piece of ice lying around and watch it melt down.

RM: Did people do any cooling in the summer there?

JG: There were fans.

RM: No swamp coolers?

JG: Not in the sense that we think of swamp coolers. That didn't get to be a way of cooling the house until probably wartime or shortly after. As a youngster, though, I

remember many a burlap sack surrounding a little enclosure where they pumped water up to the top of it and let it run down across the burlap and evaporate. The evaporation of water in the burlap would create a cool interior inside that box.

RM: Yes, we did that.

JG: If they had something perishable, they'd put it in there for a little while.

RM: How did people heat their homes in the winter?

JG: In the early days it was wood. There was ample supplies of wood in the immediate area around Pioche and Caliente.

RM: Did some people go out and gather it and sell it locally?

JG: Yes. Every fall, without fail, we would hear the whine of the power-driven saws cutting wood and stacking it. There were 2 or 3 commercial situations where they went out and hauled in wood all summer long. Then in the fall they'd cut it up and stack it and deliver it to people's houses. The first house we lived in in Caliente had a wood shed right out at the alley in the back end of the lot, and they'd come along and open up a trap door on the back side of the shed and shove our wood in. When I got home from school it was my job to go out and dig some of that out and cut it up into smaller pieces and bring it into the house so we had wood to heat in the big living room stove and the kitchen range that my mother used.

RM: Why do you think people didn't use more coal? With the railroad, it would be easy to . . .

JG: There was coal there, and some did use it. It was a little more expensive than the wood was. It was less expensive to go out and cut a load of wood and haul it in in an old truck than it was to go buy a load of coal. But coal was used there. I can't integrate this exactly, but there were times when I had coal to bring into the living room stove so that the coal burning in the living room stove would keep the house warm, at least that part of the house. The bedrooms were always cold. You never had a warm bedroom to go to in the wintertime, because you just couldn't get the heat to it.

RM: Did people use homemade quilts, mainly, in those days?

JG: Yes, by all means.

RM: You probably had commercial blankets, too, having the store.

JG: Right. I recall years and years later a really good friend of mine who was a rancher in central Nevada and had some sheep, and sent wool from those sheep into Ogden, Utah, to be knitted into some beautiful blankets. He and his wife shared a few of those beautiful 100-percent wool blankets

from their sheep with my wife and me; I think we still have one or two of them.

RM: Do you remember the rancher's name?

JG: Yes, Clare Whipple. You asked about a man by the name of Whipple in Pahranagat Ä well, Clare was his uncle. Clare was what I would describe to you as a genuine old cowboy. He was only about 15 minutes out of birth and into the saddle as a kid. He was an accomplished horseman by the time he was 6 years old.

RM: Where was his ranch?

JG: Sunnyside, between Hiko and Lund. That's now a game preserve. His home ranch is still privately owned, right on the edge of that game preserve. The ranch just to the south of his became part of the game preserve.

RM: So just right out of Hiko, right? There's a wildlife refuge there now, but this is farther north?

JG: That's much further north. I'd say . . . 50 miles from Hiko up to Sunnyside, and then another 30 miles to Lund, and then another few miles on into Ely.

RM: In terms of the school, was it several grades to a room, or how did they do that?

JG: At the time that I was there, I went to the third grade in one room, the fourth grade in another room, and the fifth grade in another room.

RM: So each teacher had one grade.

JG: Right.

RM: Were the teachers local people or did they have to hire them from the outside?

JG: Most of them were local people.

RM: Most of them were women, weren't they?

JG: Yes. There in the Caliente school I'd say probably 3 out of 4 were women, but when I was in the 6th grade we had 3 male teachers Ä Craig Mackey, Golden Hollingshead and Frank Wilcox. When I was in the seventh grade, Frank Wilcox became the principal of the high school in Panaca and moved up there. The next year I don't recall any men being hired into the school, so there were 2 the year I was in eighth grade, Craig Mackey and Golden Hollingshead.

RM: And that would have been at the time when it was a local school district. Caliente probably had a pretty good school because they would have money from the railroad, wouldn't they?

JG: The Caliente school as I remember it was very well equipped, had good facilities, had no problems (at least that I was aware of) from the standpoint of supplies, material, and things to work with. And they had a good athletic program in the school, and a good school band. It was a pretty darn fine school for a youngster to go to. I

can't find many shortcomings in it, everything being considered.

RM: Did they use corporal discipline there Ä did they spank the kids or anything like that?

JG: Well, the favorite form of discipline was the whipping off of a piece of chalk at somebody that was not doing what they were supposed to be doing. It was quite interesting. Golden Hollingshead and Frank Wilcox, in the years he was there, got pretty adept at grabbing a piece of chalk off the chalkboard and flinging it . . . and many times you'd see a desktop go up like this [laughter] and then chalk would ricochet off of that and spin around. Every once in a while one would spin around and fly out the window, and then everyone got a big kick out of it.

RM: But they didn't spank kids that misbehaved?

JG: Golden Hollingshead was rough on the kids in the basketball program. Boy, he demanded their attention, he demanded their discipline. If he didn't get it, he'd grab one of them by the shoulders and kick them in the britches and set them up back on the stage to sweat out a few minutes before he'd let them back in the ball game and that kind of thing. But everything considered, they were good administrators, and I don't recall what you'd consider corporal punishment or anything like that.

RM: In schools at that time they did use it. I went to one where you'd have to go out and cut your own switch.

JG: And lay yourself over your desk while they hammered you with it? Well, I don't recall that kind of activity in our grade school, or high school later on. They were strict and they demanded your respect, and they got it, generally speaking. I think all the kids very highly respected the teachers. Good people; good, good people.

RM: How long did your dad keep the store then in Caliente?

JG: Until the day he died. As I said a few minutes ago, I came home from the service at the end of World War II.

RM: Why don't we talk about how you got into the service. You were going to high school in Panaca, right?

JG: Right. I went through and graduated in the spring of 1941.

RM: How did you get back and forth to Panaca?

JG: By school bus.

RM: It was a regular school bus?

JG: Yes, and there was a bus that came down from Pioche and brought the Pioche kids to Panaca, and there was a bus that came from Caliente up to Panaca every day and then they returned in the afternoon.

RM: Talk about riding that bus.

JG: That was always a fun time. It was a social time for the kids. We all knew each other very well and enjoyed each

other and we had a lot of fun jabbering and talking and doing the things kids do. During the last couple of years of my high school there were actually 2 buses from Caliente. Babe Denton was the bus driver on one of them, the old black bus, we called it Ä it was the older bus of the two. I always tried to ride that one because I liked to be in the bus where Babe was. He was a congenial fellow and the kids really liked him and respected him, and we had a good time. He let you go far enough that you could have a good time, but he didn't let you get out of line to the point where it got roughhousing and that kind of thing. But that was the method of bringing the kids down from Pioche and up from Caliente.

RM: What time did you leave in the morning?

JG: Normally around 7:00. They drove the bus around town, stopped at every such-and-such a corner, and you'd be there at that corner when the bus came along and that's where you'd get on. Then you might hit 3 or 4 more stops before you actually headed out of town. The last stop on the way out of town always was just beyond the bridge where it crosses the creek in Caliente, and there were some Indian boys that went to school. The Indian camp was over against the mountainside across what would be the west side of that roadway, right back against the mountain. It's still there. Some of the boys who were riding that bus with me are still the boys who are there.

RM: It's on the left going out?

JG: Yes, the newer swimming pool you spoke of earlier, where the apartments were we talked about Ä just beyond that, against the hill, there's a little kind of a draw that goes back up into the foothill, and they live up in that area.

RM: What did that Indian camp consist of when you were growing up?

JG: It consisted of about 5 or 6 families. Most of them were named Pete. Wes Pete was my age, and he went all the way through grade school and high school with my class. And there were a couple of other Pete boys Ä Dan Pete; Carl Pete, the middle boy, who's a little older than I am; and Willard, who was younger. There were 4 boys in that one family and a couple of girls. The bus would stop out there and they'd come and get on the bus. Then a little further up we'd stop again for a little gal by name of Acklin. Her parents were long-time Caliente people. They lived back over behind where the hospital is. At that time, they had a little kind of ranch house over there. This little Acklin gal was about a year older than I, I think. And that was the last stop for the bus going out of town before we got to Panaca.

RM: Were the Indians Shoshone?

JG: Yes. That's what's generally referred to in this area as Shoshone. I'm not sure. There's a Paiute tribe that was intermingled in there, but I think they were Shoshone Indians.

RM: How did their families earn a living?

JG: The older men would work anyplace they could get a job, generally on a ranch someplace. The mother of these Pete boys, Queenie, did laundry, and also home cleaning.

RM: She did laundry at the white people's home?

JG: Yes. She would do the laundry and clean the house and that kind of thing. She made enough money and was much enough in demand that it provided her with a living all through her life. Years later she was still working with my mom. When I was in Ely, I think, she was still working for my mother.

RM: What kind of homes did they have?

JG: They were just lean-to shelters, made out of 2-by-4s and tin cans and whatever they could scrounge up to build them out of.

RM: Did they have electricity?

JG: In later years they brought electricity into there.

RM: And you say the camp is still there?

JG: The old homesites.

RM: Do Indians still live there?

JG: Oh, yes. Willard Pete, the youngest of the Pete boys, still lives there. Carl, I think, died not too long ago; he and his older brother both are dead. And I think I heard that Wes had died. Wes was my age.

RM: How were the Indians regarded in the community? Were they kind of on the margin socially, or were they pretty well integrated?

JG: I have to think in trying to remember those times that there probably was some reservation in some areas, but as far as we kids were concerned, they were part of our gang. They were just another kid. I never had anything but honest positive feelings as far as the kids were concerned. And it was the same way with the Huertas, who were the Mexican family that lived in town there. One of the boys was my age and one of them was older, and they had a daughter. As far as we were concerned those guys were just part of the group. They were just kids in town. We all did things together. Again, I was in a fortunate situation. I had things many other kids weren't able to have. So I'm not sure that my perspective is totally similar or the same as the perspective that other youngsters might look at it from.

RM: How did the Huerta family earn their living?

JG: He was a section [hand] on the railroad.

RM: It was unusual for a section hand's family to be living in town, wasn't it?

JG: It was. I say he was a section hand, but I don't think he was really a section hand. I think he worked over in the yards, the roundhouse and the car [yard].

RM: Oh, OK. He wasn't out on the line.

JG: He wasn't up and down the tracks in that sense. There were a couple of other families Ä the Takaharas, a Japanese family there. He worked on the railroad up and down the tracks. They lived up in the east end Ä the business end Ä of town, just beyond where you turned to go up to the Green Lantern, in a little section house. And there were a couple of other families that lived up in there. There may have been Mexican families that lived up in there, but they came and went. They moved from one place to another; they weren't permanent residents.

RM: Was Takahara permanent?

JG: He was permanent.

RM: Did they have children?

JG: Yes. They had a daughter who was in my year in school. When the war hit and they started gathering up the Japanese and putting them into these camps, there was some question in the community as to just what might happen with the Takaharas. He was released from his job with the railroad Ä they wouldn't let him work there. But to my knowledge he was not put into a camp. I have some knowledge of that because my oldest son was born in August of '44, and that year my dad and Mr. Takahara got together and Dad struck a deal with him to go in and remodel a little garage house on the corner, a block further down on Main Street from my folks's home. That was to be a place for my wife and our child to reside until I came home from the service, which she did. Takahara worked on that remodeling job . . .

RM: Is that what he did in place of the employment on the railroad?

JG: Odd jobs around town, any place he could find something; that's exactly what he did.

RM: So he was reduced to odd jobs, from his job on the railroad.

JG: Yes. He suffered financially from the war.

RM: How many children did the Takaharas have?

JG: Just 2 that I can remember Ä one my age and one younger.

RM: And then the Huertas Ä how many did they have?

JG: They had 3 or 4. There was a girl that I wasn't really too [well acquainted with], and then they had 3 boys.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RM: Were there any other ethnic groups in the community during this period?

JG: There was one colored couple. They lived out at Peck, which was the first section house area on the way to Pioche from Caliente. I really never did get to know them too much; they weren't in town a lot.

RM: How about other ethnic groups Ä eastern Europeans or Italians or Slavs?

JG: Oh, there were Italian background people there. The Amantes were Italian, and Joe Columbo, who was an old-timer there, had a bar. He was the father-in-law of Don Rowan of the Rose Don Dancehall. There were others too, but my memories of that aspect of the life there weren't vivid because, at least on my part, when I looked at people like that I didn't think of them as Italians or Mexicans or Indians Ä they were just people. There was a family there through the years that I was there by the name of Ferraris, and the father's name was Barney, as I recall. I don't remember his wife's name, and their son Claude was one of twins . . . his brother had drowned in the creek when they were little kids. That was before I came to Caliente. Claude's father had a typical Italian temperament, and Joe Columbo did too.

RM: You mean volatile.

JG: Could be, if the circumstances were just right. At the time that I'm talking about, in the mid-'30s, they lived side-by-side, in some homes behind the row of business buildings where Joe Columbo had his bar. During this particular incident it was raining cats and pups, and the rain was coming down off the hillsides behind these people's houses. They were out digging little troughs and ditches so the water would run around their property and off instead of running into their property and flooding it. I don't know who was digging the ditch in such a manner that it was shoving the water off onto the other's property Ä one of them apparently was, because they got into a shovel fight. They were actually swinging shovels Ä there was really bad blood. For as long as the Ferraris continued to live there, there was bad blood there, all because of some water coming down. That was maybe the straw that broke the camel's back, but that's what set off this conflagration.

RM: Did the Italians work for the railroads?

JG: I think Ferraris worked for the railroad, but Joe Columbo had a bar there, the Shamrock.

RM: As long as we're talking about bars, why don't you name some of the bars during that period.

JF: There was the Shamrock, and the Amantes had a bar called the Caliente Bar. And there was the Northern Bar, the Buckaroo and the Corner Bar, down on the corner going up to Spring Heights. That was all on the one side of the street, that I can remember. Those bars expanded and contracted; they came and they went through the years. At one time the building that had previously been the ZCMI store in Caliente became a bar; I don't remember the name of it. Over on the other side of the tracks there was the 93 Club and the Cozy Bar. Then there came to be the State Cafe and State Bar, and they had a little casino back in alongside of it.

RM: Did most of the bars have gambling?

JF: Oh, yes. Particularly there would be slot machines, there'd be table games Ä 21, craps Ä and occasionally roulette. Most of them were poker game-type operations with maybe a 21 table or two in there.

RM: What was Denton's bar's name?

JF: The Caliente Club.

RM: What about hotels?

JF: The Cornelius hotel was on the corner where the drug store is now. There were some rooms available out at the Plunge and there were some rooms available that Les Denton had there, some cabins. Down at the end of town on your way out to Las Vegas, quite a ways out there was another little motel-type operation. When I first came to Caliente the Union Pacific had a big hotel down where the depot is that they ran, and also a beanery. It was a nice place to go to have dinner, or lunch as the case may be. They put up all of their crews that were moving back and forth across the tracks. The guy who had this other bar in Caliente was named Mercie. The old man's name was Joe, and they had a couple of kids, Kelly and Joe, about my age and my brother's age, who grew up in Caliente.

RM: The hotel where the railroad put up their people must have had a pretty good turnover. I imagine there were quite a few guys coming through and laying over, weren't there?

JF: Right. At that particular time, when that was really in its heyday, Milford was the turnaround point on the east, and Las Vegas was the turnaround point on the west, and a lot of the crew members would live either in Milford or Las Vegas, and they'd come to Caliente and then they'd lay over a day and then go back.

RM: What was the name of the hotel they stayed in?

JG: That was the Union Pacific depot and hotel Ä and motel. (They had some rooms that ran all the way down along the

west side there that they used for crew members, and they were just like motel rooms.) But in conjunction with the big hotel and the depot, they had a beautiful beanery where they served food to their crews and anyone else who wanted to come.

RM: And the hotel was also open to the public?

JF: Yes. You could get a room there if you wanted to come to Caliente, say from Salt Lake City, and had a day's business and had to lay over.

RM: There weren't any motels at that time except for . . .

JF: Well, this one out on the west end of town that I mentioned was a motel, and I can't remember what they called it. Then the units that were over at the Plunge might properly be called motel units. And Les Denton's cabins were somewhat of a motel in the terms that we think of a motel. But that was about the size of it in Caliente during those '30s.

RM: What about drug stores Ä was there just the one drug store, or did they have more than one?

JF: Originally, there were 2 Ä the one on the corner, and then there was another one over on the side of the street where my dad's store was that Lester Burt operated. They served beautiful malted milks and milkshakes and ice cream products and all that kind of thing. They had beautiful old antique service facilities in there. Later, Burt moved to Las Vegas from Caliente and Frank Wilcox took over the business. He was the principal of the high school, and that was a side thing for him. His boys, I think, would take care of it, and his wife.

RM: Were the drug stores on about equal terms in terms of merchandise and patronage and . . . ?

JF: No. If you wanted to get a prescription filled you went to the drug store on the corner. If you wanted an ice cream cone or a float or a milkshake or an ice cream product you could go into the other. I don't ever recall them really having prescription drugs.

RM: What about the availability of magazines and newspapers? And what were some of the magazines that were available locally at that time?

JF: I would say that [magazine sales] pretty much concentrated in the corner drug store. And the magazines that were available were the street magazines, The Saturday Evening Post, Collier's . . . the old magazines that were printed in those times. They always had racks full of those and racks full of newspapers from Las Vegas, Los Angeles and Salt Lake City. The Salt Lake Tribune and the Deseret News in Salt Lake both had distribution routes throughout the county. The way the railroad ran their trains they could

print those papers and put them on the train and the next morning they were being distributed in Caliente.

RM: I remember in Tonopah in the early '60s they had a remarkable availability of newspapers. You could get the Sacramento Bee, the San Francisco Examiner, the New York Times, the L.A. Times, Vegas and Reno newspapers . . . was it that way in Caliente?

JF: It was that way in Caliente and Pioche both. Of course, we had 2 papers in the county at the time, too. We had the Pioche Record, and then we had the Caliente Herald, which was the Caliente print shop. That was operated by Phil Dolan and Evan Edwards in the years that I remember.

Edgar Nores, who is a whole story in his own right, ran the Pioche Record up in Pioche for years. One interesting story about Nores Ä this happened during the '30s. He was elected to a county post, justice of the peace, and was subsequently prosecuted for misusing funds and was convicted and deposed. But at the next general election he ran for a county commission post or something and got elected. [Laughter]

RM: They didn't hold it against him, then. [Laughter] That's funny. What other kinds of shops were there in town?

JF: J.C. Penney had an outlet there.

RM: Why don't you list the kind of dry goods stores? There's J.C. Penney, there was your father's store . . .

JF: There was my father's store, there was the Blue Front Mercantile . . .

RM: RM:
Now what was your father's store called again?

JF: Just Gottfredson's Department Store. And then during parts of these years there was a Sprous Reitz store in Caliente where lower-end things and clothing could be bought . . .

RM: That was a national chain, wasn't it?

JF: It was a large chain, yes. Up at the other end of the street, during a part of this time, was the Underhill Store, which was one of the old original businesses in Caliente. It was there long before my father came here.

Old Mr. Underhill died in the early '50s, maybe, but the demise of his store came about in the late '40s or early '50s. I got my first pair of Levi Straus overalls from him. And my dad didn't carry ammunition in the store in Caliente for a number of years and I used to buy .22 long rifle shells for my .22 from the Underhill store. There was a grocery store in Caliente that was a chain out of the Salt Lake City area, Allen's Cash, that was in opposition to Dad and to the Blue Front Merc and groceries.

RM: Were there any car dealerships in town?

JF: No, not in those years. There was a Roy Orr Ford dealership in Pioche, and interestingly, that was the first Ford dealership ever established in the state of Nevada.
And there's an interesting story about Roy. You'd have to know Roy Orr to really appreciate this man. He was of the old school, and the old fabric. The story goes that some fellow pulled his Model T up Ä this was in the early days Ä alongside the garage, got out and started changing tires on his car. Roy was curious, and he looked real closely and saw that the source of these tires was Sears and Roebuck, and they'd been shipped in from Salt Lake City. (Roy sold tires for the Model T.) The guy got out and pulled his wheel rim off of his wheel and took the rim off of the old tire, put the new tire on the old rim, put it back on the wheel, and went over to pump air into it to fill it up and there was no air. And he stormed in wanting to know what the hell kind of service station this was that he couldn't get any air. Roy looked at him right straight in the eye and said, "Where'd you get your tires?
He said, "Well, I got them at Sears and Roebuck."
And he said, "Well, you get your goddamn air from Sears Roebuck too." [Laughter]

RM: There was probably at least one barber shop, wasn't there?

JF: In Caliente there were generally 2. When we moved from Pioche to Caliente, a fellow by the name of Lariman Ousley had a big stake truck, and he hauled our personal effects, and all of the remains of the Pioche store, down to Caliente at the time the 2 stores became consolidated.
Lariman's wife Lillian was a very, very pretty, beautiful woman, a very well-built and handsome woman. There were a number of years there during the '30s that she had a barbershop in what later became an office area for Lloyd Denton, but at that time it was a little barbershop underneath the marquee in front of the Gem Theater there.
A lot of the men really adored going down to that barber-shop and getting a shave. She was well-liked and respected, and she did good business in the town.
The last barber who was there before he and his family moved to Las Vegas was George Ence, who I mentioned earlier. He had a barbershop there with a couple of chairs Ä I don't recall the other barber's name that was there Ä but there were 2 of them working the chairs. He had a shoeshine stand in his shop, and at one time I shined shoes for him.
I spent quite a bit of time in my high school years in the evening running moving pictures at the theater for Lloyd Denton; this was before the old theater burned down. I think you know that story.

RM: Yes. [It's in Ralph Denton's oral history.]

JG: They rebuilt it, and I was there working for him at the time they rebuilt it. They had the most modern state-of-the-art projectors, and it was really a fun experience for me to have an opportunity to work that job at the theater. In the old days, before the old theater burned, the equipment had been well used over a number of years, and it was primitive compared to what we had in the new theater. I worked there for a couple of years. I remember running "Gone with the Wind" through so many times, and I got so sick and tired of it, that I don't care if I never see it again.

RM: What year did they rebuild the theater?

JG: Probably 1940 Ä either '40 or '41, but probably '40.

RM: Were you pretty far down the line in terms of when you'd get a movie?

JG: No, they had good distribution. Thompson had the theater up in Pioche, and Lloyd Denton had the theater in Caliente, and I think they contracted together for releases.

RM: How often did they change the movie?

JG: I'd say at least twice a week. We'd run maybe Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, and then Wednesday, Thursday and Friday Ä it would be about like that. When "Gone with the Wind" came I think it was there for an extended stay.

RM: Did they show just one movie or did they have double features?

JG: Just one movie, generally one of the Pathé-type news performances, a couple of comedies and maybe Tom Mix or one of those cowboy serials.

RM: Did they have a Saturday afternoon affair for the kids?

JG: There was always a matinee on Saturday. I remember in the early days, when we first were there, they gave away all kinds of plates, bowls, and so on, so if you went to enough movies you got a whole set of bowls and a whole set of plates and a set of cups and saucers all to match. That was one of the gimmicks that they used to bring in [customers].

RM: Do you remember what the cost of admission was?

JG: I can't honestly say that I remember, but I don't think we ever paid more than a quarter to go to the show as kids. I don't know what adult admission was.

RM: Did they print a flier for the month, or something, of what the [movies would be], as some of those old towns used to do?

JG: No. Occasionally they'd shoot a flier around town on a particular upcoming event. They always had the big poster things in the glass out in front, and on the marquee in later years. The early one didn't have that on the marquee.

RM: How many seats do you think there were in the theater?

JG: In the old theater I would say there were probably 150 seats. In the new one, where they built it in an amphitheater with the chairs all the way around, there might have been 200 or more.

RM: It was probably well patronized, wasn't it? Going to the movies was a big activity.

JG: It was the only game in town, other than the bars. If you didn't want to go to a bar and you wanted to be out someplace, you went to the theater, unless there was a dance going on at the high school or at the grade school gymnasium. Quite often there would be a community dance in the gymnasium.

RM: Did they have a concession stand at the movie?

JG: Oh, you could always buy a candy bar and some popcorn, that kind of thing. That's about as complicated as it got.

RM: So we're kind of up to high school. Is there anything that stands out in your mind about Caliente or Panaca in your high school years?

JG: The memories of my high school years are so profuse, it's hard to kind of segregate them one from the other. We always had something going on. I was involved in the athletic program at the high school. I enjoyed the athletic games Ä baseball, basketball, football Ä there was always something going on and you were always participating in it. One of the great things that we used to do, particularly when the weather was nice, you'd kind of congregate out on the lawn in front of the high school in the sunshine and sit out there and visit back and forth with each other, roughhouse a little maybe, a little wrestling maybe, something like that. Nothing rough, but good, convivial communications back and forth between the kids.

We used to play a lot of softball out on the ballfield during those hours. In the younger grades, the first couple of grades always had some intramural teams, [depending on] the season it was, baseball or basketball . . . we didn't do that so much with football because it was generally in the colder part of the year. We had a good football team in high school. That was a big part of every boy's life in our high school. Lee Liston was our coach, and he was a man you could look up to. He commanded, and got, your respect, and always did an excellent job with the kids in the athletic program there.

Professor Wilcox was a musician in the early years in Caliente. Prof Wilcox and his brother from Pioche performed in what was called the Caliente Community Band. They used to have a concert down on the paved area out in

front of the depot on Sunday. The town would come down and form groups around and listen to this beautiful band. They had good musicians and they knew what they were doing. So when we got into high school this became another rather important activity in the high school.

CHAPTER EIGHT

JG: When we got to high school another important activity was the school band. A lot of the students participated in it. I have what's called a tin ear, and I can't play anything, nor sing, either. But I sure enjoyed listening to it. Elaine Denton was an outstanding voice in our school, and she had **Ä** she has still **Ä** a magnificent voice.

RM: Is that right?

JG: Yes. We had just all kinds of activities going on. And Joe Theriot, who subsequently came to Las Vegas and was in the Vegas school system, was kind of a drama teacher type person in the English department. They always put on plays and would have assemblies where there'd be skits and all kinds of things. Every day was absolutely full of things to do, and a great group of people to be doing it with.

RM: OK. I wanted to back up to describe the town a bit more. What were the gas stations in town there in the '30s?

JG: Well, on the corner where the bank is now was a Standard station. Darryl Mayhew had the station and Buck Fulton worked for him in the latter part of this period of time. There was a Shell service station up on the way out of town towards Pioche on the left-hand side. There was another Standard station down in the lower end of town on your way out towards Las Vegas. Now these were in the later years of the '30s; in the early years of the '30s there was still a single pump over in front of George Center's garage and service station right alongside the post office and the Gem Theater on the main street. I can remember pumping gas out of those old gravity-feed, glass-globed pumps that were there. In fact, I have one of those that I managed to scrounge out of a place out on Highway 66 down here called Ed's Camp that I'm caring for right now. As soon as I can get in a position where I can demonstrate it . . . But those are basically the service stations that I remember in town.

RM: And did they do mechanical work too?

JG: The Shell station did some. There was a garage in town called Zumpstein's Garage that was a big garage where you could go in and you could get heavy mechanical work done. George Center had a garage over on the business side of town (I mentioned the pumps that were there) that was a big garage. I can remember going in and looking at the cars that he had stored in there and the cars they were working on inside that garage as a youngster. Mostly at the service stations you got the water checked and the oil changed, and that kind of thing, and the mechanical work was done at the other garages.

RM: The main roads were paved, weren't they? Was Highway 93 paved?

JG: Not when I first remember it. It had no oil and no paving between either Pioche and Caliente, or Caliente on out towards Las Vegas. You got clear down here to Highway 91 before you had paved roads.

RM: Is that right? When did they pave it, do you recall?

JG: The first 19 miles sticks in my mind, out of Caliente coming west toward Las Vegas. That was probably done in the mid-'30s **Ä** '35, '36. My second wife's father was with the highway department at that time, and he was instrumental in that job being done. About that same time they began to do the highway from Pioche and into Caliente. That was spread out over a period of years. You'd go along and it would be paved and then you'd go to dirt and then it'd be paved again.

RM: What do you remember about the spur line going up to Pioche on the railroad?

JG: It was an integral part of the railroad's operation in Lincoln County, and they maintained it. A train went to Pioche about 6 days a week.

RM: It went up and came back?

JG: Yes.

RM: Did passengers ride it?

JG: Yes. In the earlier days that was one way to get there. I remember back in my time in Pioche to the point when the narrow gauge out to Jackrabbit from Pioche was still in operation.

RM: Now, where is Jackrabbit?

JG: Jackrabbit's north of Pioche about 12 miles up in the mountains on the west side of the highway. They hauled ore down from the Bristol Silver mining area as well as the Jackrabbit mining area. Bristol Silver's on the other side of the mountain and they had a tramway that they sent the ore over. They then dropped it in Jackrabbit, where they'd dump it into these ore cars and the little narrow gauge train would haul it all into Pioche. In the early years it was processed and milled down at the big mill below town on the Pioche side of . . . Subsequently, for as long as it lasted, it was processed over in the Caselton milling operation.

RM: Then you had a spur that went around the side of the mountain, didn't you, to Caselton?

JG: All the way around to Caselton, and then Prince. I think originally the track that went around to the Prince Mine might have been narrow gauge. (Prince Mine was there long before the Caselton Mine.) But it still was served out of

the Caliente spur line to Pioche, for the ore-handling and the supplying of goods and services.

RM: When did they shut that spur down?

JG: I think it was during the early '50s, when they quit running trains. It was probably while I was in Pioche, with the store there. I opened the store in Pioche, again Ä a reentry into the Pioche market with our stores Ä in 1948.

RM: OK, let's go back to your graduation from high school. When was that?

JG: In May of 1941.

RM: And then?

JG: I went almost immediately to Salt Lake City and started in the LDS business college, where I stayed until the end of December. I came home in the Christmas period and I didn't want to go back. I wasn't particularly happy with the schooling that I was getting there and what I was doing. I really thought I wanted to be a mechanical engineer. I always was good with my hands; I could always work well with machinery and with equipment. For instance, in about 1938 I was walking down the alley a block or so up the street from where we lived, and here in the back yard of a fellow by the name of Christianson was an old Overland automobile coupe. It had just been driven in there and stopped and parked and never moved back out and the years had gone by and the tires had gone flat. I saw Mr. Christianson on the street one day, and I said "What'll you take for that old car out in your back yard?"

And he said, "Oh, gosh, I don't know."

And I said, "Will you take 5 bucks?"

And he said, "Yeah, I'll take 5 dollars, and sign over the slip to you."

So I went and hit my dad up for 5 bucks and he was kind enough to give it to me and I went back there and bought that old car Ä this was about my first year in high school. All I did was go in with a hand pump and pump the tires up. They held air and I got in and turned the engine over a few times to make sure there was oil and then I put some gasoline . . . it had a reserve tank up on the dashboard on the inside of the engine compartment. The way they worked it in that particular automobile, your gas was pumped from the tank up into the reserve tank and then it drained down Ä it was gravity-fed. So I filled the reserve tank with gasoline and got a new battery and put it in, and turned that sucker over, and it started, and I drove it out of the back yard of that man's house.

RM: For 5 bucks.

JG: For 5 bucks, plus scrounging up a battery and pumping some air into the tires. And that was my hallmark for the rest of my time in high school. That old car created great times. I took the top off of that old roadster and made an open-air roadster with a back seat and a front seat in it.

RM: It was a convertible, was it?

JG: No, it wasn't a convertible. It had a steel top, but I didn't like it. I wanted it to be a roadster, so I cut it off with a hacksaw. Took everything but the windshield; I left that on. But that old car gave an awful lot of kids an awful lot of fun during those next 3 or 4 years until I went into the service. Anyway, I thought I wanted to be a mechanical engineer so to speak, so I stayed home and I worked in the store.

While I was going to school in Salt Lake that first year, December 7, 1941, happened. On a Sunday. I remember very well where I was, who was with me, all that was done that day. The war got started and when I came home the end of that month I decided I wasn't going back to this business college; I really wanted to go to the University of Utah. So I worked in the store with my dad until September, and then I went into Salt Lake and enrolled in the University of Utah. I went to school there through that winter's period. I met the lady that I was going to marry right after I got into town in September of that year and she and I were married the first of March, 1943.

RM: What was her name?

JG: Fay Hutchings. She was from Lehi, Utah. We were married on the first of March '43, and I went into the navy immediately. I just volunteered and went in. We were married on the first of March '43, and on the tenth of August '44 our first child was born. And that led to the necessity for this little apartment being renovated down at the end of the block from my folks' home. I served almost 3 years and was discharged. Thanksgiving Day of 1945, I came home and then I joined my father in the store and bought a third interest in it on the first day of January of '46.

Rm: In Caliente? Where were you in the military?

JG: Well, I went through boots at Farragut, Idaho, and then I went back to Ames, Iowa, the University of Iowa, and took a crash course in diesel mechanical work. I went from there to Mare Island, California, where I had my orders to go on board the ARS-5 Ä ARS stood for auxiliary repair ship. An auxiliary repair ship was a ship that would go out and be stationed at some location in the Pacific theater and would service submarines and surface ships, and do the mechanical things that need to be done to keep them in service. When

I got down to Mare Island, and got to poking around trying to find the ARS-5, I found out they hadn't even laid the keel of the ship yet. [Chuckles] So I goofed around for about 6 weeks down there until they finally caught up with me.

Then they sent me to Terminal Island in Long Beach Harbor and from the Wilmington Boat Works there I went aboard a brand new subchaser, 110-foot-by-27-foot vessel; all wood. It had 2 radial, 1200-horsepower General Motors diesels for propulsion, and 2, 2-cylinder 271 General Motors diesels and generators for power supply.

RM: Power supply for the boat?

JG: Yes, for the boat. And that was where my responsibilities lay, with those 4 engines and other mechanical aspects of the ship. We went out and shook the ship down and broke it in and checked it all out and got it functional and were assigned, after a 6-week shakedown period, to Treasure Island at San Francisco; and then from there to Monterey, California. We did coast patrol with this subchaser. We had the latest that was available in terms of undersea detection equipment and surface-to-ocean missiles and all of the firepower that you could stack in a ship that size. We went to Monterey and we operated there for a few months.

And then we were assigned into the Pacific; our first target was Eniwetok. We went to Pearl Harbor on the first leg of that trip and refilled and refurbished and then went on west in the Pacific to Eniwetok Island. We worked around Eniwetok in antisub work there for a period of time and then went down to Tarawa, worked around there for a period of time, and then went still further west over to the Palau Islands. If you knew your history of World War II, there was a big battle at Bloody-Nosed Ridge, a big battle, where the marines took Peliliu Island in the Palau group, and that's where we stopped that next time. Once between Eniwetok and Peliliu we went back to Pearl Harbor and had new engines put in our ship and then went back out. We wound up at Peliliu and were reassigned to go to Guam, where we were to be converted from a subchaser to a minesweeper. We were on our way between Peliliu and Guam when the first bomb was set off in Hiro-shima. Of course we got that right away over the wire, the intership communications. What we didn't know was that we were about 100 miles from where the cruiser <u>Indianapolis</u> had been torpedoed after having delivered that bomb. They were on their way to the Philippine Islands after they dropped the 2 bombs off that were subsequently dropped . . .

RM: They dropped them off where, at Tinian?

JG: Tinian. The naval operations in Saipan, Tinian and Guam were almost contiguous with each other.

RM: There's very little water between them?

JG: Well, there's open sea between them, but they're close by. Particularly when you're talking about B-29s and the flight times and so forth. It was my understanding that they stopped and dropped those first 2 bombs off in Tinian. And we were on our way to Guam, which is in that same general area. Then we heard the news on the second bomb, and that the war was over. We were still at sea and we finally came into Guam and pulled in there and they converted us to a minesweeper. But the need wasn't there anymore.

We learned later that the big invasion of the Japanese Islands was to have taken place November 1st of '45. They had us and others like us assigned to the role of mine-sweeping in advance of the troops who were going to go in to Kaiushu, the southernmost of Japan. Kaiushu is, I subsequently learned, split by a river that runs a long ways north through the middle of it. There's a delta or emptying area where it empties at the southern tip, and our commission was going to be to sweep in and go right on up that river as far as we could go. And then when we couldn't go any further we'd just do whatever the hell was the best we could do. And the marines and the combat troops were going to be right on our tail behind us. I was very happy to learn that the war was over.

RM: Probably the bomb saved your life.

JG: Yes, very likely. I hear people talk about the devastation and sadness of it all, and I appreciate all of that, but by the same token I was in a position to know what the terrible toll was probably going to be if we'd had to complete our mission.

After that I went up to Okinawa and was in a big typhoon early in October that came through there and pushed our ship and many of the others up onto the beach. They finally tugged us off and put us into the dry dock, and we got it repaired and I left my ship on the 3rd of November to come back to the States to be discharged. On the 3rd of November, when I was supposed to be chugging up the river.

RM: What was the name of your ship?

JG: Just SC-1368, SC for subchaser. It didn't have a name, per se, other than that. There were so many of them, they just numbered them.

RM: Why was it made out of wood?

JG: It solved some problems from the standpoint of mines and detection equipment because of the metal hull. The

difference between a wood hull and a metal hull was important in the type of service that we were doing.

RM: So it wasn't a metal shortage, it was for a practical purpose.

JG: Right.

RM: They must have really had some good millwrights building those things.

JG: They did a good job. We had a ship that was extremely seaworthy. We went through a couple of typhoons at sea, and some very rough weather Ä some strange circumstances, a lot of things Ä and it never gave us problems that we couldn't live with and handle.

RM: What did you do when you got discharged?

JG: I was back in Caliente Thanksgiving Day, November of '45. And then the first of January I became fully involved in the store in Caliente. There was not much of a transition period . . . I was there when the railroad decided to change their steam engines to diesel engines in '47.

RM: What went through your mind when you heard they were going to do that?

JG: It was really a traumatic kind of an experience, because it changed everything.

RM: You knew it was the end of Caliente as you'd known it.

JG: Yes. And it was. It's never been Caliente as we knew it previous to then. By the end of '47, we knew we had to do something. We needed to get out and protect ourselves as far as the store was concerned. We came to Las Vegas and looked around, and we particularly looked around at an area out on Fifteenth East and Boulder Highway Ä Fifteenth and Fremont area Ä and decided against that.

RM: Which was out in the country? [Chuckles] You say "we." You and your dad?

JG: My dad and I. Our wives were part of our business Ä we were all partners together Ä but Dad and I were making the decisions at the time. And we went to Fallon, we went to Yerington, we went into Sparks. We looked at all of these as possibles for a place to open another outlet, to kind of help . . . But it came down to the expediency of the 25 miles between Caliente and Pioche, and Pioche was going pretty good at the time.

RM: The mines were operating.

JG: The mines were operating. Caselton Mines were employing people and things were whistling right along. So we went back to Pioche. I went up there, and I think we opened that second store on the 28th of May of 1948. We bought the old Thompson Building and completely remodeled it in Pioche.

An interesting thing Ä in that old store, they had the big rock walls that were typical of the early-day mining camps and they had combined 2 buildings into one and put a roof over the top of them. The old shelving and the fixtures and everything that were in that store were constructed of old native pine. And a one-inch board in those days was cut one full inch. All of the lumber that we stripped out of that building in remodeling was that old native pine lumber. Our contractor, the guy who did the remodeling for us, was Clyde Mathews. He was from Panaca, and he was a craftsman with wood. He had all the equipment and tools and everything to do the right thing with wood. So he reworked all of that old original pine into what we now consider one-by size, and some of them were 12 inches and some of them were 10 inches. And all of the shelving and display cases and everything that are in that museum building that was to be our new store when it was finished were all reconverted from that old native lumber. And all the lumber in there now is that same old lumber that was native cut.

There were two areas that they took lumber from in Lincoln County. One was on the Highland Peak across from Caselton, and the other one was in the Ely mountains south of Caliente up in the old Ely sawmill area.

RM: And that's where they got their lumber in the early days?

JG: That's where they got their lumber in the early days. And I strongly suspect that my forebearers who were out in Lincoln County were using teams and wagons in that kind of a business at the time, hauling lumber, alfalfa or hay, probably. In fact I know in one account they did talk about hauling lumber. So I suspect that they were involved in some way in . . .

RM: And years later you reworked it.

JG: Yes, one thing that I remember, the windows in the back had very ornate, beautiful casing around them, which we removed at the time we remodeled. And when we pulled one of them off of the back, on the left side in the back of the building, on the back side of it, there was inscribed in there, in black Ä looked like it'd been burned on with a torch or something Ä "Salt Lake City Utah" and then a date, "1874."

RM: Is that right? That wasn't the site of your dad's store, was it?

JG: Originally? No, Dad's store originally was across the street and down a little bit where there's a building on the corner. It still stands. It doesn't resemble in any way the building that my dad had his store in, but it's still there and it's the original location. There's an

open area there, between the cafe and the first building. The first building was his store.

CHAPTER NINE

JG: I was thinking about that old Thompson Building this morning while I was taking a shower. I can remember when we were doing the remodeling, I worked my way up into what would be the attic, and it was very obvious from what you could see that there had been 2 buildings side by side. They'd each had a hip roof over them. And then, when they combined the building into one big building and opened up between the two, they went over the top of both buildings, then or at some later date, and just rebuilt a whole roof structure over the top of both of them. We did have a little problem in a spot or two with leakage, but not a serious amount. But to try to go in and rebuild those roofs and do things could be quite a chore.

RM: Did you keep the store in Caliente going at this time?

JG: Oh, yes, the Caliente store continued to operate. And it was during the time that we were remodeling that building in 1950 that my sister and her husband, both graduates of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, decided that they were going to put their marbles together and get married and do the rest of their life together. At one time, my younger brother had been given an opportunity to and had been active in the Caliente store. Originally, I said I bought a third interest in my dad's Ä that's not quite correct. I bought a 25-percent interest.

RM: What did it cost you, can you say?

JG: Yes, he was rather generous. I think he sold it to me for about $7,000 or $8,000.

RM: It was worth that much?

JG: Oh, yes. And I paid that off over the next few years out of profits from the business, which is an easy way to work. It isn't everybody that gets an opportunity like that. My younger brother, Robert, was offered a 25-percent interest in the business. He started to work with us, and things got going, but he had some problems. He liked to gamble and he liked to booze a little. He finally backed out and closed out his interest in the store.

RM: Did your dad own the building in Caliente?

JG: Yes, he did. He bought that from Charles Culverwell at the time the Amantes moved out and came to Las Vegas.

RM: Did your dad have his store when the Amantes were there?

JG: Yes, but he was in a different location down at the end of the street.

RM: Oh, and then when the Amantes moved out then he moved in.

JG: Then he moved up into what was the Amante saloon.

RM: So it had been a saloon when the Amantes had it and your dad converted it to a store.

JG: Right. To continue, it was originally my father's intention that he would retain a 25-percent interest, and each of his 3 children would each have a 25-percent interest, and as a family unit we would own the business. By 1950 it had become apparent that Robert was not ever going to be interested in being a part of the business. Somewhere about that same time my sister Dot and her husband Wes were married, and at that point we increased our percentage to a third and Wes and Dot bought a third interest and my dad and mom retained a third interest. From that time on, we operated as an equal partnership in the business.

RM: Regardless of where the store was.

JG: That's right.

RM: Then you kind of took charge of the Pioche branch.

JG: I did. In fact, I went up there and it was my baby. I ran it and managed it and developed the business and it did very well the first few years, too. Then in the early 1950s, the mine down at Caselton began to run out of fairly good ore, and the price of zinc and lead and silver declined considerably. Times were real tough in Pioche.

RM: Did they run out of ore at Caselton?

JG: Well, they ran out of ore that was commercially feasible, where they were getting it from the depths that they were getting it in the mines. The process of pumping the water out of the mines and the tunnels and the shafts, and sending the men and equipment down there to do the work, and bringing it all back up to the surface got to be prohibitive because of the decline in the price of ore and a declining grade value in the ore. They converged on each other. By 1952 Pioche had made a big turnaround and was on the rocks.

While Caliente wasn't a whole bunch better than it had been, they had survived and recovered from the original shock of the railroad change, and were making money. I was making money in Pioche with the store there, but by 1955 things had gotten tough enough that we decided we'd better try to copper our bets one more time.

RM: What does "copper our bets" mean?

JG: It means put your money on the table. If you want to make a bet you'd better have your money out there. So, guarantee our bets. In other words; try to guarantee our own bets. So we, again, looked all over the state and again finally decided that it should be Ely that we would go to.

RM: Why did you select Ely?

JG: Proximity was probably the major factor. It was as close as it was. Second, it was wheeling and dealing. But in the mining industry, again.

RM: Why didn't you consider Vegas, or did you?

JG: Well, we looked down in Vegas. We felt maybe . . . I say "we," and I have to be honest with you and tell you that my dad was 90 percent and I was 10 percent in a decision that was made like that. He was the authority. We had discussions early on in our partnership and we agreed that, no matter what the circumstances was, everybody was going to go at least 60 percent of the way in the problem, trying to get it solved, and not have any disagreements between us. We operated on that level.

There was a store in Ely that was for sale; it was the Bell and Whorton Store . . .

RM: What was his thinking in not wanting to go to Vegas this time?

JG: I think he was afraid of it; I think it was too big.

RM: Too different.

JG: Too different. Too overwhelming for small town people. Ely was more in the area of the kind of thing that we [specialized in]. But anyway, we did finally work out a deal with Dale Bell and Glen Whorton to buy the Bell and Whorton Store in Ely.

RM: Were they elderly and retiring?

JG: That about puts the finger on it.

RM: And Ely was still going good then, wasn't it?

JG: Ely was going good. When we took that store over on the first of February in 1956, there were about 3600 men employed in the mining industry there.

RM: Did that include the mill at McGill?

JG: Yes, that would include McGill and Ruth and all of the area county, as far as the mining industry. But in addition to that there was really a very large and very reliable, strong cattle and sheep industry there. There were some pretty darn good-sized operations in the county, and they all centered into Ely. Most of them became very good customers of mine as the years went by. The Paris family out at Cherry Creek brought herders in, which was a common practice from over in the Pyrenees Ä they'd bring in the Basque herders and put them out on the range and they'd be out there for 6 months before they'd even let them come to town the first time. When they'd come to town they'd give them some of their money and they played and roared and hooted and hollered and then they went back out on the range.

RM: What was the name of that family?

JG: Paris, Bert Paris and his family.

RM: Cherry Creek is south . . . ?

JG: North of Ely, about 40 miles. There were several Basque families that were very prominent. Gogachia was one of the Basque families that we did a lot of business with, and we did a lot of business with the Parises and others.
At this point I met a man who became a very personal close, good friend of mine who had the big spread down at Sunnyside Ranch, and that was Clare Whipple. Clare and his wife and my wife and I became real close friends and did many, many things together in the years to come.

RM: Did you change the name of the store?

JG: Yes, we did. It was Bell and Whorton and we changed it to Gottfredson's Department Store. We were very, very well received.

RM: It was clothing, wasn't it?

JG: All clothing and shoes. When we first came there was a grocery store on the corner and then a hardware store, which was Hall's Hardware, and then ours. And we had interior doors that opened between the 3 businesses.

RM: So there were 2 stores between you and the Bank Club, originally?

JG: Right. The one nearest the Bank Club on the corner was a grocery store and the one in the center was Hall's Hardware Store, and then there was our store. At one time that had all been the Goodman Tidball Store. And when Goodman Tidball sold out in 1948 or '47 they divided it and sold it as 3 different [operations]. So what we acquired when we came to Ely was the clothing end of what had been the old Goodman Tidball store in Ely. We had the nicest store in town, we had the best lines of merchandise . . . all we had to do was go in and prove to the people in White Pine County that we were worthy of their trust and business. That we still had to do. But as far as the organization of the business is concerned, it was in place. It was a nice, easy way to make an entry into that town. And we did, and we managed to maintain profitability in that store; as long as we kept it there it was profitable. A very nice store.

RM: How long were you there?

JG: In 1963, I decided I wanted to get out of the business. In the meantime, my father had died in 1961.

RM: And he had kept the store in Caliente going right up to the end?

JG: Yes, right. The store in Pioche had closed in the interim of that time. It got so bad in Pioche . . .

RM: Oh, you didn't close it down when you went to Ely?

JG: No, it stayed open. We hired a young man out of Ely to come down and manage that store, and he was there a couple of years after we left.

RM: When did you close the Pioche store down?
JG: I think '58. Things got so bad there that there was just no way. It was that time, I think in 1958 or '59, that we got together as a family and donated the Pioche store building to the county with the proviso that they would maintain a county museum and library on the premises.
RM: Is the library in the same building now there?
JG: I think not. I think they put the library in another building up the street, but they've essentially complied.
RM: Was the building worth quite a little when you donated it? That's quite a donation.
JG: Well, how do you define worth?
RM: Yes, you probably couldn't have sold it.
JG: We probably couldn't have sold it, so maybe it didn't have any worth in that respect. But on the other hand, it was a very substantial building and we had completely remodeled it only a few years previously. So it was in good condition and good shape. We had it appraised and donated it to the county, and that gave us a charitable deduction tax-wise.
RM: How did you come up with the idea of the museum?
JG: My father died in October 1961. He had been diabetic for many years, and he was beginning to have the kinds of problems in his eyes that most long-time diabetics have, and he was gradually becoming legally blind. He could still, in the latest times of his life, determine shadows and definitions to a degree, but it was shadows and light and dark areas. In the last 6 years of his life he started using the idea of creating a museum as a thing that he could do with his eyes, and still function. He and Mom did a lot of it together. He got scrounging around all of those old Lincoln County barns and chicken coops and basements, and he came up with about a dozen old treadle organs that had come into the county back in the 1800s with immigrating families. Out of that dozen, he refurbished and had available to start the museum 6 or 7 old treadle organs that he had refurbished; he had done it all by hand himself. And it became his desire that there be a home for the treasures that he had reworked.
RM: He found these organs in . . .
JG: Chicken coops, barns, covered with dung . . .
RM: When did he start scrounging around like that?
JG: Probably in 1953.
RM: Is that right? And he found them that late out in these barns?
JG: Well, they were junk. Some of them were covered with chicken dung so thick they didn't even know what was under it, and this kind of thing.

RM: And he taught himself how to repair them?
JG: Well, yes. As I described myself a while ago, my father was extremely adept with his hands Ä mechanical things and so forth. He used that talent in refurbishing and restoring those old organs. Some of them came out of basements. If you look at the history that he put together on each organ it tells you pretty much where it came from and who it belonged to and that kind of thing. He got them into fine condition and he wanted a home for them.
RM: So the idea of a museum grew out of the idea to find a home for the organs that he had refurbished.
JG: Right, on his part, number one. And number two, the necessity of finding a useful purpose for the building in Pioche.
RM: Not the one in Caliente?
JG: No. By this time the one in Caliente had kind of turned around; it was coming back and getting stronger and better. All of that initial shock and the reverberations had worn off and things were happening. There were a lot of people who lived in Caliente and went to work at the Test Site.
RM: So the Test Site was important in Caliente's coming back.
JG: Yes it was. Very important. As soon as they started testing it began to affect the possibilities for Lincoln County employment. They came in the back door through [a different route].
RM: They probably stayed out there at their camps, didn't they, and came home weekends to Caliente.
JG: Yes.
RM: But it was a significant thing in terms of Caliente's economy? JG:
It surely was. And still is today. But anyway, that's how that museum came about. In the process of that, and in the process of the years of finding these old organs, he found many, many other treasures in places you would never even dream of them being. And he worked with the people who were instrumental in donating or committing for display those treasures to the museum. That was his swan song in this world, and he loved every minute of it. He got a lot out of his life that he would not have gotten any other way.
RM: Who else was instrumental in helping him put this whole thing together?
JG: I was not there. I was in Ely at that time, and I honestly can't give you an answer. I'm sure he got a lot of help from a lot of the old-timers, from a lot of his old friends that he could call on, and the knowledge that they had. Emery Conway, for instance. Emery was raised down on the Conway ranch below Caliente about 4 or 5 miles, and the

original Conway home still stood, and was still furnished as it was back at the turn of the century when they set up the old Conway ranch and built that building and furnished the house. Everything was still there intact and in apple number one order. So, I'm sure with Emery's help, my dad and Emery arranged for a typical room out of that home with all of the original furnishings and everything to be built inside of the museum building in Pioche. They transferred all the furnishings and trappings and everything else to that room, and it's still there today.

RM: I remember it. The organs are in there, aren't they?

JG: Well, that was a direct contribution from my father. But the building was donated on behalf of the 3 partners Ä my father and mother and my sister and her husband and my wife and I.

RM: What's your sister and her husband's name, again?

JG: Dorothy and Wes Holt. My sister has since passed away, but Wes is still there. Wes and my sisters' children are the ones who are now running the Caliente store.

RM: Oh, so the Caliente store is still in existence.

JG: Still in existence, and you should go there Ä and be prepared to see great things when you do.

RM: Is that the only big store in town?

JG: That's the big store Ä it stretches all the way along the street.

RM: Yes, I've been in there. It's a great big thing. That was your store.

JG: Well, that was initiated by a $500 loan back in 1927.

RM: I'll be darned.

JG: But anyway, I decided I didn't want to be in the department store business anymore.

RM: Was the business going down at all?

JG: Oh, it was a constant battle in Ely. We no more than got settled into that store and began to get acquainted in the community and things were going pretty good when all of a sudden Consolidated Copper Mines were purchased by the Kennecott Copper Corporation. Consolidation took place and that eliminated about 400 or 500 people immediately.

RM: Where was Consolidated?

JG: Consolidated was up at Kimberly.

RM: Oh, that was a different company.

JG: A different company entirely. Kennecott operated the big Ruth pit but Consolidated was up on the southwest end of the property.

RM: Just as an aside, do you know anything about the Ruth and Kalinsky shafts that they sunk and then came and undermined them? It left a big pit there, right?

JG: Well, I think it ultimately just all caved in on them.

RM: I was up there 12 or 13 years ago, and I was looking at this huge pit and I asked a fellow, "Could you tell me where the Ruth and Kalinsky shafts are?" I wanted to go see them because my dad had worked in them.

He said, "Well, they're right out there in the middle of the pit."

JG: The mining that you're talking about happened years back, between the Ruth and the Kalinsky.

RM: Well, he was working there in the '50s . . .

JG: They hired a big highway construction operation based in Fallon, Silver State Construction Company. They stripped all of that off the top, and that's how that pit got there. By this time Kennecott had consolidated everything, and they were in a position where they could mill ore of lower grades than previously. When the underground mining was going they had high-grade ore down there, but they came to the end of it. Then they decided they could strip off the top of all of this, which they did, and they open-pit mined it. And that's what created that big pit. But that pit goes way back into the '30s.

RM: The original pit, yes. So you soon encountered problems with things being up and down and whatnot . . .

JG: By the middle of '57 the two mines had consolidated, and then this big stripping operation had gone on. They'd gotten down to where they were now into ore, and they brought in these huge trucks for hauling that low-grade ore, and every one of those trucks laid off 10 people. And they brought in a lot of those big trucks. When we first got up there, as I mentioned before, there were about 3600 men employed there in the mining industry. We were down to around 15-1600 by 1958. So in 2 years' time we lost almost half the people who were employed in the mining industry.

And then, commensurate with that, the cattle and sheep industry was getting tougher and tougher and tougher, for several reasons. Climatic conditions contributed a great deal to the problem because we didn't get the rain and snow that we'd had previously. So they were having to cull their flocks, and cut the number of head they could range. So simultaneously with the mines having big troubles, we were also seeing big troubles with the ranching industry. It got to the point where it was just touch and go.

And it seemed (and it seems today) that every time things started to look up a little bit, the unions in Ely would call a strike, or threaten a strike. They didn't have to call a strike, they just threatened it and everything went to hell in a handbasket. It's like our economy today Ä everybody's just afraid to do anything.

CHAPTER TEN

JG: In late '57 we put on a big program to raise $75,000 to go up on top of the mountains and put a television relay system in, and we brought television to White Pine County for the first time in 1958. I worked very, very strongly in that program. In fact, I was the chairman of the group that did it. We were shooting for $100,000. We didn't hit our goal quite, but we did raise $75,000 to finance the installation and managed to get it all done.

RM: What year did you sell out, then?

JG: I liquidated in 1965.

RM: Did you close the store, or did you sell it, or what?

JG: No, I didn't sell it. The building was leased. I still had some time on the lease which I paid off over the period of the few months that were left, but I shut the store down, liquidated, and everything we didn't sell I brought to Caliente and put in the Caliente store. After that consolidation had been done I sold my interest in the Caliente store to my sister and her husband, and they paid me for it through the years.

RM: Then what did you do?

JG: I came to Las Vegas.

RM: And what year was that?

JG: I moved physically to Las Vegas in '64, in June, but I didn't close the store in Ely until the early part of '65. I was going back and forth periodically to close things out Ä I think I told you a story about the guy with the money that took place in late '65.

RM: So you made a big career change. Was that tough to do? How did you look at that?

JG: The most difficult part emotionally for me, in doing it, was not the changing of my personal business interests, because I was ready. The saddest part of it all was the disintegration of the years and years and years of organization that had gone into the store there in Ely. We had the finest lines of merchandise available . . .

RM: Why don't you mention some of the merchandise you had?

JG: Well, we had Florsheim shoes, for instance. Levi Strauss was one of our biggest; Arrow shirts. In our women's ready-to-wear departments we had the finest lines that were manufactured and distributed out of the West Coast. Gossard in foundation garments for women, which today is still one of the biggest and strongest; Vanity Fair, which is another . . .

RM: Yes, I remember it as being a quality store.

JG: Really. And the saddest part of it all was to watch those lines disintegrate and go away from that location, because

they'd been there for so long. And so much time and energy had gone into bringing them together. That was where I really got some heartfelt thoughts.

RM: What did you do when you came to Vegas, then?

JG: I established a little business that had an electric lamp bulb franchise with General Electric. Nevada Light-Right, Inc., was the name of that. We did that in '65 in Las Vegas, and operated till I sold it in '72 to some people in California.

RM: How did you happen to get into that?

JG: [Chuckles] It was a dream of a neighbor of mine. I moved into a new area in Las Vegas, just to the north of Desert Inn road and about where Pawnee runs up through there. There was a brand new tract of homes just completed, and I bought one of them. The guy who bought the one next door to me was a fellow by the name of Douglas Moon. And Doug Moon was an account executive with KLAS-TV. Doug had a dream; Doug's dream was all of those light bulbs that he could see shining in every marquee and everyplace. He wanted to get into the business of selling light bulbs in Las Vegas so badly, but he didn't have any money. And [he was aware of] the tremendous opportunity that lay there in terms of specialized projection-type lamps for the shows at the hotels, and special equipment Ä all of that kind of stuff. So we got to talking about it, and in the meantime I was a stockbroker. I was licensed as a stockbroker by this time. I got my license as a stockbroker in '63.

RM: That's what you decided to make your transition on.

JG: Yes. I was selling stocks and bonds on kind of a part-time basis and trying to get my feeling for the community, and we got acquainted with my neighbor and we'd sit out on the patio and have a barbecued steak or something and talk about this fantastic opportunity. So we contacted General Electric and they went with us on a franchise for GE lamps, but not exclusive. We put in a specialty distribution company called Nevada Light-Right, and Doug went out and sold it. It was a good operation. We had all of Del Webb's organization. And I mean all of it Ä San Francisco, Fresno, Phoenix, here, Lake Tahoe. We were feeding all of their light bulb products to every one of those facilities. We did business with the International Hotel when it was built, we did business with the Stardust, we did business with the Desert Inn. We put every light bulb in every socket in Caesar's Palace when they opened it up. It was 18,000 some-odd dollars worth of just light bulbs. We had a pretty nice little business going. My son and son-in-law got involved in it, and ultimately it led Ä at least in the case of my son-in-law Ä to his being extremely successful

in the electrical representative business. He reps lines to users. (He moved to Reno to do that.)

RM: And then you sold that when?

JG: In '72. And I went full-time then in the stock brokerage business, which I did until my wife died in '81. That kind of put a whole new slant on the world for me.

RM: What did she die of?

JG: She had a very virulent lung cancer, and she wasn't a smoker. It was just a real strange thing. And it took her very rapidly. Then Alyce and I were married in '82, and Alyce had an 8-year-old daughter at that time, and didn't want her to go to school in Las Vegas, so I closed out the Las Vegas operation and came to Boulder City.

[Tape is turned off for a while]

JG: You heard that Charlie Culverwell was sheriff in Caliente for a number of years. This story happened when I lived in Pioche. My wife and family and I had taken a vacation Ä it was in the early '50s Ä and we'd gone over to Lake Tahoe. Through friends of Elaine and Bill Eardensohn we got a cabin up at the lake, and we went up there and stayed. On our way back, late at night, we were coming from Reno across to Fallon and then on over to Austin, to Eureka, Ely and then to Pioche by highways 50 and 93. There's a way station just east, over the mountain from Austin. We hit that way station about 1:00 or 1:30 in the morning, and I was needing coffee pretty bad, and it was open. I stopped there and went into the little way station, and there was a guy behind the bar. As soon as I walked in the door I said to him, "Got such a thing as a cup of coffee here?"

He said, "You bet I have." He turned and started working his way around to the coffee pot, and it became obvious to me at that point that the man was sight-impaired, if not blind. But he did find the coffee pot and a cup and he poured my coffee for me and put it over in front of me. And we got to talking a little bit.

He said, "Where you from?"

I said, "Oh, I'm from Pioche."

"Oh, yeah, I know that country over there, I know that country. I was there years ago."

"The hell you were. What were you doing over there?"

He said, "Well, I used to follow some of the old mining camps around a little bit. I did things that made money and managed to stay alive."

And I said, "What were you doing over around Pioche?"

He said, "Well, I was really out at the Silver Queen mine. You know where the Silver Queen is?"

I said, "Well, it just happens to be that I do know where the Silver Queen is. There's nothing there now but old remnants of a couple of buildings."

And he said, "Yeah, but back in the 1920s, I was there. They were trying to get that mine open and get it going. And I had a little tent saloon in town." And he said, "Pretty good little business." He said it was Prohibition time.

I said, "Yeah, that would have been during Prohibition."

"Well," he said, "we operated till the sheriff showed up and when the sheriff showed up he came over . . . " And he said, "You know Charlie Culverwell?"

I said "Yeah, I've known Charlie Culverwell for a long time."

"He was sheriff at the time. So he came into the saloon and made it very clear to me that he'd be back in whatever period of time, a couple weeks or three, and by then he'd expect me to have enough cash together to cover my cost of doing business as an unlicensed business here in Silver Queen." And he said, "So I said 'OK.' I got things going, I got as much booze in the place as I could and I sold everything I could sell and I liquidated right down to where I didn't have anything left in the place but money. A couple of days before the sheriff was due to show up, I packed up my money and left town. He never did catch up with me." [Laughter]

And here I am, in the middle of the night, talking to a guy who's obviously sight-impaired, maybe blind, in the middle of a little joint out there in the center of the state of Nevada. He's telling me about my sheriff [laughs] and how they operated. And I really believe that's the way they operated in those days.

RM: Was Culverwell saying that he wanted a pay-off?

JG: Yes. It was the cost of doing business.

RM: And so this man was gone before he could get it.

JG: Yes. And the Silver Queen Mine didn't last very long.

RM: Where was the Silver Queen?

JG: If you go north out of Pioche to Jackrabbit, you take a dirt road to the left and go around the point of the mountain and go due west across Sunnyside. Down on what would really be the south end of the Muleshoe country, or in that vicinity, up on one of those mountain ridges that jut up out of the desert floor out there, was this old Silver Queen Mine. My good friend Clare Whipple's father, who died at the age of some 90-odd years, had staked that old Silver Queen Mine the first time it was ever staked, and had sold it 3 or 4 times to promoters. Every time he sold it to a promoter, the promoter went out and promoted

something being done in there Ä some dirt moved, or this or that, then it'd all go to hell in a handbasket because there wasn't anything there.

RM: Just looked like there might be?

JG: And old Mr. Whipple would come back in and pick up the remnants when it was gone, and a few years later [chuckles] he'd sell it again. I think he told me he sold it 3 times. This particular time was probably the middle time. [Laughs]

[Tape recorder is turned off for a while.]

RM: We're talking a little bit about Jim's personal experience with nuclear fallout from atmospheric testing of atomic weapons.

JG: At Eastertime of 1953, my wife and family and I came to Las Vegas from Pioche to see our good friends the Eardensohns. (We always tried to get together every few weeks.) And also to see the bright lights in Las Vegas, of course. We had completed our weekend of having fun and enjoying each other's company, and were headed home and we decided that rather than get out of here late on Sunday night we would get up early the next morning. This was Easter Sunday of that year. We would get up early Monday morning and drive on up to Pioche. It was only about a 3-1/2- to 4-hour drive and, rather than get up there in the middle of the night and be tired and everything else, we decided to go up in the morning. I had people who would open the store and operate it till I got there, so that wasn't of any concern.

We got up bright and early, got in the car and were on our way before daylight, out of Las Vegas going north up towards Glendale Junction, where the highway took across and went back up to Lincoln County at that time. We got up just up north of Apex maybe 2 miles, where the big sheetrock mining operation is up there. All of a sudden nighttime became daylight Ä bright, brilliant daylight. And over a period of a few seconds it gradually faded away and went back into dark. The sun was on its way up and as we traveled further north and got up to Glendale Junction to cut back across to go into Alamo, the daylight began to come upon us. And it was a windy day. There was a lot of wind and dust flying around Ä I remember that specifically.

When we got up to Alamo, right where the Standard station is, down at the main street in Alamo and the highway, we were stopped by people from the Atomic Energy Commission. They flagged us down and stopped us, and asked us to get out of the car, please, and they were running radiation counters all over the car and all over us. And everybody

was hotter than a firecracker. It was just really sending those readings out the window.

RM: You mean everybody in the car?

JG: Everybody in the car, the car itself, the whole thing. So they told us to proceed as rapidly as possible on into Caliente, and to stop at a particular garage there, Bob Olsen's garage at the time, and have our car washed down thoroughly. They said, "We'll take care of having your car washed down." Which they did Ä they had somebody there. We unloaded all of our baggage, and they made us take everything that we had in the way of clothing over to the cleaning shop and have it cleaned or go through a washing machine and have everything washed thoroughly and freshened up. We all had to go take showers, and they said, "We suggest you take a good long shower and soap yourself off good everywhere, at least twice during the course of the shower. And don't put on any of the clothing that you had with you; you're going to have to get new clothing there." And so we did; we got new clothing at the store and went on our way on to Pioche.

And that's was the end of it, until . . . I've been watching this stuff going on in Utah, about the downwinders. About 2 years ago, I think, I was watching some kind of documentary that was on television having to do with this stuff, and all of a sudden there was a picture of my car, at that stop in Alamo.

RM: No kidding.

JG: No kidding. Unbeknownst to us, they were filming what was going on there. And I'm absolutely positive it was my car. It was a 1953 Chevrolet, Belaire, and I bought a brand new one when the new models came out in '52, and it was a mustard-colored car with a white top. I'm sure it was my car sitting there. But by the time I realized that it was there, the shot moved on to something else. So somewhere in the files is that footage, I'm sure.

RM: That's really interesting. They tell you to wash it off, but where is it supposed to go? I mean, the radiation doesn't suddenly disappear, it goes into the ground or the sewers or whatever. I'm wondering if that couldn't have been related to your wife's cancer.

JG: That's what I've said.

Alyce Gottfredson: His sister died of cancer too.

RM: She did? What kind?

JG: Bone cancer.

RM: How old was she?

JG: Forty-eight, I think.

RM: It sure makes you wonder . . .

JG: It sure does.

RM: Did she get any exposures that you know of?
JG: Oh, yes. We lived in Caliente, Pioche and Pioche . . .
RM: Did Caliente get a regular dusting . . . ?
JG: Oh, regular, yes. Every time they shot one of those suckers that was the normal flow of the wind. And that's also the same carry that went on over in southern Utah, that everybody's up in arms about over there.
RM: Oh, really?
AG: There are quite a few articles that I have copies of that tell you about Caliente and the fallout.
RM: Oh, great. Did the people in Caliente notice a high rate of cancer? Have people ever commented on what seems to be an inordinate occurrence?
JG: Not in conversations with me, but it's a general topic of discussion up there, I think.
RM: I know they feel the same way in Alamo.
JG: Well, from the Test Site where they were setting those bombs off, across to the northeast, that's the direct line Ä across Alamo, Caliente and Pioche and over into southern Utah. Anyway, that was one occurrence where I know damn good and well we got pretty heavily exposed.

[Tape is turned off for a while.]

JG: When they first started setting those atomic bombs off at the Test Site, it was general practice, when we knew or heard that a test was going to be set off in the morning, to get up early in the morning and stand out and watch for the flash that would come from it. And then count down until you'd hear the rumble of the explosion.
RM: We used to do that too, from Reveille Valley. We were north, and we didn't get too many dustings. But at that time everybody was out looking for uranium, and they were going crazy around the whole valley there because they were getting high readings on the Geiger counters and scintillators. Everybody thought there was uranium everywhere out there and it was nothing but fallout.
JG: Well, I guess we've learned an awful lot about radiation and what it can do to the body, in the years that have gone by.
RM: Yes. I think, in fairness to the government, nobody fully appreciated . . .
JG: I think that's absolutely right.
RM: At the same time, I think they were slipshod in a lot of their practices and everything.
JG: I'm sure they were.
RM: And I'm not sure there haven't been coverups and dishonesty.
JG: Oh, I'm sure there's been plenty of that. There always is when you get into a nasty situation, where you're talking

about government and bureaucracy and all the things that go on. You always got coverups. You always find it extremely difficult to get to the bottom of something in an honest and straightforward way.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

RM: Jim, could you say a little bit about the role that radio played in life in Caliente in the '20s and '30s?

JG: My first memories of radio would be in my grandfather Law's home in Delta, probably about 1929. That radio had what was called the cat's whisker tuning system. You had to move this little fine wire around on the crystal to find where the signal was in order to tune it in and listen to it. I remember listening to that radio in my grandfather and grandmother Law's home in Delta, back that early Ä in 1928 or 1929. By the time things got around to where we were doing business in this type of merchandise in Caliente . . .

RM: You didn't deal with them in Pioche?

JG: Well in Pioche, if you'll recall in the narrations prior to this, we talked about the Columbia record player and the record players. Those were the things that were selling in the Pioche time, through the late '20s. There were not that many radios at that time.

By the early 1930s radio had become much more available in the rural areas. You could hear more stations Ä KSL in Salt Lake and KNX in Los Angeles and KFI in San Francisco and so forth. Out in the middle of the desert where we lived, daytime radio was virtually nil. But at night and in the early mornings you could get fairly good radio reception out there. And big sets became popular. The superheterodyne circuitry that was developed in the early '30s became a very popular part of the radio world. You could get a big powerful set Ä maybe it'd have 12 or 15 different amplifying tubes in it. They'd bring that sound through on the radio and it was really pretty good, everything being considered.

But more important to the areas where we lived out in rural Nevada was the development of the record industry, and the improvements that were made in records. By the mid-1930s my father was selling combination sets that had nice radios as well as a record player built into them. So that in the daytime if you wanted to hear music and you couldn't receive the radio signal you could always turn the phonograph on. And they became a very popular item in the Caliente store. We sold a lot of them through the years from '35 until I left to go to war, years later.

I'll tell you an incident that you might find interesting. My father normally came into the store in the morning around 8:00 or 8:00 and opened the door and got everything ready to go for the day. He normally was the last man out. And when they checked up at night in the store, they would

take whatever cash there was. There was no bank to put it in, and it wasn't safe to put it in the safe because they blew safes in those days when they robbed the place. So you had a huge big inventory of merchandise and you would select at random a place to put the money Ä in a box or under a shoe box or under a shirt box or someplace Ä and it became relatively safe insofar as everything was concerned but a possible fire. Because it wasn't likely that anybody who got in or broke into the building would be able to find that packet, randomly hid.

Well, my dad closed up the store this one evening and he looked around and finally picked out a nice big console radio set that was sitting over on the other side of the store as a place to hide the money for the night. He went over and slipped the money in through a round hole that was in the back that let air into this radio set. He slipped his hand in through there and dropped this little money packet alongside of the chassis, the inside of the combination radio-phonograph.

Well, something held him up the next morning, and he didn't get to the store as early as he normally did. And Hi Thompson, who we've talked about previously, opened the store that morning, and he no more than got the store open and one of the Mexicans that lived in the house up at the far east end of town, in one of those railroad section houses, walked in the door and said, "I want that radio. I been looking at it and I want that radio and I'm ready to pay for it and take it right now."

Hi said "OK, I'll take the money and I'll deliver it right up to your house and you can have it this morning." So the man bought the radio and paid for it and Hi put it on the truck and took it up and installed it in his house, turned it on and it played and everything was just fine.

He came back to the store, and about that time my dad walked in the store. He looked around and said, "Hi, what happened to the radio that was standing over here?"

And Hi said, "Oh, I sold that this morning, Jim, isn't that great?"

My dad said, "You sold it? You delivered it already?" And he said, "Yeah, delivered it and playing like a dream up there." [Laughter]

Dad didn't say anything more, he just went out and got in his pickup truck and he drove up to the guy's house and knocked on the door, and when this section crewman answered the door, my dad said, "You know, you bought a radio this morning at the store."

He said "Yeah, I did, it's great, it's playing, it's beautiful."

And Dad said, "Well, I need to get the serial numbers and the model numbers off of the back of that. Hi forgot to get the information. I have to have this so we can be sure and get your guarantee in place on it."
So the guy said, "Oh, come on in."
Dad went in and dragged it away from the wall and reached in and picked out that little packet of money and then pretended to be writing some numbers and stuff down and slipped it in his coat pocket and walked out and the man never did know that he had several hundred dollars in the back of that radio. My dad talked about that for years. [Laughter]

RM: Your dad handled it real smoothly, didn't he? He could have panicked. That was a small fortune then.

JG: It sure was.

RM: When you went back to the store in Pioche, record players were changing about that time, weren't they?

JG: Yes. They were getting a lot more sophisticated.

RM: The long play records were coming in, weren't they?

JG: First we went through the phase with the 45 rpms Ä the smaller ones with the larger center. But that didn't last too long. And then we got to the big long-playing LPs, we called them. The record department in all of our stores was always one of the most profitable departments.

RM: How did you know which records to sell?

JG: In those days they had the top ten hits. They promoted the thing all the time and those top ten revolved around. And everybody just about had to have everything. And there was an awful lot of country-western; it was very, very popular during that period. I'd say probably 60 percent of our sales would be involved with country-western type music, the balance being in popular music of the day.

RM: Was it mostly the kids who bought the records?

JG: Mostly the young set. The active kids that listen to music, the be boppers. It's the same today.

RM: And there never was a town in Lincoln County that had their own radio station, was there, like Ely did?

JG: No. So we were always receiving the radio signal from a long ways away. I guess in the years beginning in the late '40s we began to get KSUB out of Cedar City, Utah; it would come on with quite a bit of strength. We were able to receive KSUB during most of the daytime in Lincoln County. By evening it went away and you got KSL out of Salt Lake or KNX or KFI or some of the big, many-megawatt power stations. In the daytime you couldn't get those but you could get Cedar City's radio.

RM: Was listening to the old radio shows a big thing?

JG: It really was. Television didn't come to Lincoln County until after 1960. So all of the entertainment at home was done with radios and phonographs, or the movies.

RM: Do you folks remember a program, "Lucky Logger Dance Time?"

AG: I wasn't in Caliente at the time, but I listened to it where I was.

RM: We used to listen to it, too, out at our mine in Reveille Valley, but I was wondering what station that was on; do you remember?

AG: It had to have been a Los Angeles station.

JG: KFI? That very well could be. KFI was a station we could get in our part of Nevada in the evenings and at night. KNX, KSL, even KOA.

RM: XELO? Out of Del Rio, Texas?

JG: I never listened to it, but I remember you could get it. There really was not a great amount of change. Just an improvement in the techniques is the major thing that occurred through the years, until finally we did get into the world of television. Talking about those old nighttime programs that everyone used to listen to . . . Every night on KNX now between 9:00 and 10:00, and then again the same program between 2:00 and 3:a.m., they present two one-half-hour excerpts of one of those old nighttime shows. And quite often on Saturday night they'll have the Jack Benny show and the George Burns and Gracie Allen show.

RM: Where is KNX? That's L.A., isn't it?

JG: Yes Ä 1070 on your dial.

AG: Tom Mix, Hopalong Cassidy . . .

JG: Other week nights they do other old-time radio shows. It's a lot of fun. Oftentimes if I wake up during the night and Alyce does the same thing Ä we've got a radio on each side of the bed, and an earpiece Ä so if I'm awake at maybe 2:00 I'll just turn that radio on and listen to KNX and catch those 2 old radio half-hour programs together. I especially enjoy the ones on Saturday night because they were the biggies, they were the real comedies Ä Jack Benny and George Burns.

AG: Sometimes it doesn't come in real clear; sometimes it's real spotty.

JG: Well, a lot can make a difference in just where you are in your community, too, whether it'll come in clearly or not. They have those big 50,000 watt stations or something like that . . .

RM: Did you ever listen to KOA?

JG: Denver? Yes. And KOB in Albuquerque. Both of them will come in here on our radios.