

**AN INTERVIEW WITH
JAY AND FREDA WADSWORTH**

**An Oral History conducted and edited by
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**LINCOLN COUNTY TOWN HISTORY PROJECT
LINCOLN COUNTY, NEVADA**

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

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

While keeping alterations to a minimum the LCTHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;
- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

This is Robert McCracken talking to Jay and Freda Wadsworth at their home in Caliente, Nevada, February 27, 1990.

CHAPTER ONE

- RM: Jay, why don't you tell me your name as it reads on your birth certificate.
JW: Archie Jay Wadsworth.
RM: And what is your birth date?
JW: The 5th month, the 7th day and the 9th year. [May 7, 1909]
RM: Could you tell me your father's name and when and where he was born?
JW: My father's name was Benjamin Franklin Wadsworth. They called him Ben, and he was very popular, especially with the younger people. Many of them called him Uncle Ben.
RM: When and where was he born?
JW: He was born in Panaca.
RM: What was his occupation, Jay?
JW: We had 2 acres or a little more where the home was in Panaca. He was the youngest one in the family and he eventually ended up with the home. In fact he lived there with Grandmother. Granddad Wadsworth died well before my time, so he lived there with her and ended up with the family home.
RM: Did he farm on these 2 acres?
JW: He had a lot of garden there. When you raise a family of 6 kids - 8 of us all together . . . and at that time you had a milk cow and got your own milk. And you usually had a calf you could butcher, and a pig. This was normal for any family at that time.
RM: What did you grow in the garden?
JW: All kinds of vegetables. We always raised a lot of carrots because we fed a lot of them to the stock. And we had corn, potatoes, tomatoes, cabbage, radishes, lettuce, beans . . .
RM: Did you sell any of the vegetables, or did you just eat them yourself?
JW: Mostly we ate them, they may have sold some occasionally.
RM: Where did you keep your livestock?
JW: The horses and things? They were on the 2 acres.
RM: Did you have any other land?
JW: Yes.
FW: It was 20 acres, wasn't it, that your dad had . . .
JW: There were the 2 acres right there in town, and out at what they called the White Wash south of town about a mile, he had 20 acres, but he only farmed 7 or 8 of them.
RM: What did he grow out there?
JW: Alfalfa and potatoes and some corn sometimes.
RM: Did he sell those to anybody, or did you use those, too?
JW: Well, he'd sell some occasionally if there was a sale. But we always kept enough for our own use.
RM: How did he make his cash?
JW: He worked a lot for his brother Neph. That's the one you were talking about - there's quite a story about Neph. He was the oldest boy of the family and my dad was the youngest and Neph did a lot of contracting - working on the roads and hauling ore and that kind of thing - with teams. He had a number of teams. And Dad worked for him a lot.
RM: Oh, I see. What was Neph's full name?
JW: Nephi: Nephi John Wadsworth.

RM: He lived in Panaca too, didn't he?
 JW: Yes.
 RM: So Ben supplemented the family income by working for your uncle.
 JW: Yes. And he had several little jobs. For instance, they had what they call a water boss. The water from that spring up there was cut up into 64 shares. And he'd have to tell the people, "Your share's going to be tomorrow," or the next day or whatever. He also had to go turn it down to them.
 RM: I see. And he got paid for that?
 JW: Yes.
 RM: What's the name of that spring?
 JW: Panaca Spring's all I know.
 RM: What was your mother's name?
 JW: Mother's name was Nora Viola Bond.
 RM: And when and where was she born?
 JW: Illinois, wasn't it?
 FW: Yes. Calvin, White County, Illinois.
 RM: Do you have her birthdate?
 FW: She was born October the 5th, 1884.
 RM: Do you have Ben Wadsworth's birthplace and date as well?
 FW: Yes. He was born October the 7th, 1879, in Panaca, Lincoln County, Nevada.
 RM: How did your mother happen to come to Panaca, being born in Illinois?
 JW: I don't know just what her dad did when he first got there, but he was a saloon man. He had a saloon in Pioche and he also had one in Panaca that I know of. Nora's dad came for health reasons.
 RM: They allowed a saloon in Panaca?
 JW: Yes.
 RM: I thought being a Mormon community they might not have one.
 JW: [chuckles] They did.
 RM: What was the name of it? Do you remember?
 JW: It was called Cap's Place. What I really remember of it is . . . he stayed with us at Panaca. And Mother sometimes would send me down at noon and say, "You go down and tell Grandpa lunch is ready."
 I was 6 or 7 years old or something like that and I'd go down and tell him and he'd say, "Well, let's have a drink and then we'll go." And he'd sit me up on a stool at the bar and he poured me a shot glass of beer and he'd have his shot and we'd go home.
 RM: Is that right? Did you drink it?
 JW: Sure.
 RM: That's cute. Your mother didn't mind?
 JW: No - not that [small amount].
 RM: Did your father ever work in the mines at Pioche? I understand that some of the men supplemented their income by working at the mines in the winter.
 FW: No. He just hauled ore occasionally, didn't he?
 JW: Yes.
 RM: Whereabouts in Panaca did you live?
 JW: You know where Dotson's Trailer Court is?
 RM: Yes.
 JW: That was it.
 RM: Could you describe the house? Did you live in the same place all the time?
 FW: Your granddad had it first. He helped build it, didn't he?

JW: I don't know whether he built it or not, but I know the first part of it was logs.
 RM: The first part of the house was logs - perhaps built by your Grandfather Wadsworth?
 JW: Perhaps. And there had been 3 add-ons because [the original house] was just a room a little bigger than this room. And the funny part is, there were 4 rooms when I was a kid and they were all different heights. [chuckles] When you went from one room to another you either went up or down a step.
 RM: How many rooms were there in the house?
 JW: Four.
 RM: What was there? A kitchen, a living room and 2 bedrooms? How many brothers and sisters did you have?
 JW: I had 4 brothers and a sister.
 RM: Could you name them in order?
 JW: My sister was the oldest one in the family - Emma.
 FW: Then William Bond.
 JW: Then Clifford Monroe and then me (Jay). And then my next brother was . . .
 FW: Benjamin Leroy, but they always called him Dick.
 JW: And then the youngest brother was Carl.
 FW: Carl V. The V was just an initial. That was for Viola, his mother's middle name.
 RM: That's sweet. What was the school like that you attended there?
 JW: By the time I went to school they had a grade school building. Well, part of the grade school now goes back there and part of it, I think, was where the high school is. It was right in there.
 FW: It was just a little ways down the block from the fire hall, wasn't it?
 JW: Yes.
 RM: Freda, how long have you been in Panaca?
 FW: I came out in 1935, so I know a lot of it.
 RM: Yes. Jay, how would you describe family life when you were growing up in Panaca? What was it like?
 JW: Well, it was different than a lot of it is now, I'll tell you. [chuckles]
 RM: In what way would it be different?
 JW: Well neither Dad nor Mother ever allowed us to drink or anything if they knew about it. So there wasn't much of that going on. And they liked the church and did a lot of things for and in the church. They all did, but I don't know.
 FW: From what I know, the church and the family life and the school were all the recreation there was.
 RM: They were your whole life, weren't they?
 FW: Yes.
 RM: So it was more of a unified community, wasn't it?
 FW: I believe it was. And there was lots of visiting because almost everyone in Panaca was related. [chuckles]
 RM: When was the first time you came to Caliente?
 JW: I don't recall just what year it was but I know we come down in what they called a buggy, which Dad had. You could put 3 seats in it and it had a canvas top and you could let the curtains down. We came down in that to the county fair.
 RM: How old would you have been?
 JW: Oh, I don't know 8, 9, 10, somewhere in there.
 RM: What was that county fair like?

JW: Oh, they had lots of vegetables and stuff - the women bottled and canned all that. There were a few horses and cows and pigs but no big bunches of them. It was good for a day, anyhow. [chuckles]

RM: Were there any games or dancing or anything like that?

JW: Yes. Well, the dancing and games and things like that were just what they made up right there. There'd be some organization or something that would give a dance- it was usually on a Saturday night. But I didn't get to stick around much because I was too young. [laughter]

RM: Did you stay down at Caliente all night?

JW: No. We went back home. I think we got back around 11:00 or 12:00 at night.

RM: It would have been a long day, wouldn't it?

JW: Yes.

RM: How long did it take to go from Panaca to Caliente by buggy like that?

JW: Oh, 3 or 4 hours - I'd guess 3 hours.

RM: Wow. Did your family enter in any of the contests there - you know, the judging of the canning or vegetables or anything?

JW: Not at that time.

RM: Did you at a later time?

JW: My mother did.

FW: She worked a lot with 4-H.

RM: What was Caliente like then?

JW: It was a railroad town. Period. Before the railroad came they said it was just one big ranch. But the railroad came in and they put up their shops there and they had to have helper engines to help the trains up the hill, they'd go down as far as Carp and hook into the train, usually on the back end of it, and push it clear to Crestline. And sometimes they'd have 2 or 3 engines. So they had this helper crew that stayed right here all the time - actually, there were 6 or 7 crews [made up of] a fireman and engineer. Then of course they had the section gangs and all that, but it was strictly railroad, you might say.

RM: How many section gangs would they have?

JW: They started out with one about every 5 to 7 miles.

RM: This was in the early days when you were a kid? And the section gang was responsible for that section of railroad?

JW: Now down the canyon here about 5 miles is Etha - that was the next section down from here. And then Elgin down below that and then Leith would be the next one.

RM: Did the section gang live at its section?

JW: Yes.

RM: Would you describe the kind of housing that a section gang had in the '20s?

JW: Oh, I don't know. I wasn't in very many of them. They were houses that they could live in.

RM: Did they have dirt floors?

JW: No, I don't remember any dirt floors.

RM: Did they have plumbing?

JW: No. The water, a lot of times, had to be hauled in or at least packed from the creeks or a spring or something.

RM: How many would be in one section gang?

JW: Oh, I think most of the time 4 or 5.

RM: Were the men usually married?

JW: A lot of them were.

RM: Did they hold their jobs a long time, or were they kind of drifters who would work a little and then go on?

JW: Well, some of them stayed there for years and years.

RM: So there would be like 4 men and a boss. What did they call the boss?

JW: Section foreman. Now if there happened to be a lot of work that needed to be done on that section, they might have another extra man or two part of the time.

RM: Describe some of the things that the section gang did.

JW: Oh, remove the bad ties and put in good ones. Straighten the rails, try to keep them level, all that kind of stuff.

RM: It's hard work, isn't it?

JW: Yes.

RM: How many days of the week did they work?

JW: Most of the time 6, I believe.

RM: And what was a day? How many hours?

JW: Eight.

RM: And how did they get to the place where they were working?

JW: They used those hand cars.

RM: And they'd just take their equipment and everything they needed with them?

JW: Shovels and bars and hammers were most of what they needed.

RM: How many rooms would a house have that a man and his family were living in?

JW: I don't really know because there were different sizes. Usually the foreman had a pretty nice place because he'd be there with his family. And some of the others were big enough for families and some were not.

RM: What did they do about the kids going to school?

JW: They had a lot of schools close by. There were schools at Elgin and Etna.

RM: So each section stayed nearby.

FW: The last I heard a few years ago it took 5 kids to start a school. I don't know what it was then.

JW: It took so many kids to start a school. And of course, the school paid if you had to move that kid. If you had to send him from - let's say down here at Etna up to Caliente - the school paid extra for that.

RM: When you were a kid and first came to Caliente were there shops and stores here?

JW: Oh, there was the meat market.

RM: Do you remember the name?

JW: No. There was a store or two and a number of bars and that kind of thing.

RM: Was there a roundhouse where they worked on the trains?

JW: Yes, with a machine shop inside the roundhouse.

RM: Was this their main machine shop, here?

JW: No.

RM: Was it just one of several down the line?

JW: Yes, there was one up at Milford [Utah], one here and one in Las Vegas.

RM: What year did you start to work with the railroad?

JW: 1937.

RM: Was that the year you moved to Caliente? How did you get your job?

JW: I was working at that time when they were putting in the power line to bring the Boulder power up to Pioche. I was digging the postholes out here in Dry Lake Valley. We came down this morning and oh, that was one of the coldest winters I ever heard of. It was still storming so badly out there in the valley that they just shut it down. You couldn't work, you couldn't see. And so I came back to town. We got over the

mountain on the old truck - an old flatbed truck - and the men who were riding on it [almost] froze to death. We got over the mountain before they caught us and stopped us to turn around and come back. And down here . . .

FW: It's where Carl's Sandwich Shop is now.

CHAPTER TWO

- JW:** Well, we were back by there. And some other fellows and I were standing outside and a freight train started out of the yard. And it got up above the crossing there a ways (it was so cold that I don't know just what happened) and there went a freight car over that way. So there was one this one and then one that way - both off the track.
- RM:** Oh!
- JW:** We stood there and watched them and some of the fellows from over at the shop [came out]. And one of the fellows who was in the shop was a buddy of mine who I'd gone clear through school with -through grade school and high school. I saw him come out of there and I thought, "Well, I'll go up and talk to him." So I went up and told him how cold it was and that I didn't know when I was going to get to work anymore out on that line.
- And he said, "Why don't you go ask the boss." He said, "I think he'll have a job here for 10 days or 2 weeks for you." So I went and asked the boss and I got the job. [chuckles]
- RM:** Is that right? What was the job?
- JW:** They called it hostler helper. The roundhouse had a round table, and you pulled the engine on that table, then you turned it around for the different stalls in the roundhouse. My job was to service the engines that came in, put water and oil and sand on them and take them into the shop. Then any that had to come out, we'd have to bring out and check all over. This job was from midnight till 8:00 in the morning. But I could get down by those boilers once in a while and get warm - it wasn't like being out [in the open].
- RM:** Was the shop heated?
- JW:** Yes. There was a pit underneath each stall where you'd go underneath the engine and work, and the pit had steam pipes in it.
- RM:** I see. Now, when you put water in it, that was for the steam for the locomotive?
- JW:** Yes.
- RM:** And you put the sand in so that it could drop sand on the track, was that it? How much sand did they hold?
- JW:** I don't know, we never measured it, we just filled it. On top of the engines there was a place maybe that big around and maybe that deep.
- RM:** (Two-and-a-half feet wide and 1-1/2 feet deep?) And that was where the sand went?
- JW:** Yes. And the engineer could turn the sand on. It went down through pipes onto the rail.
- RM:** I see.
- JW:** And then in the cab, there was a sand box that stood about that high and about that wide.
- RM:** (About 3-1/2 feet high and 1 to 1-1/2 feet wide.)
- JW:** You got that full of sand because the fireman had to use it to keep his flues cleaned out on the engine.
- RM:** What would he do? Would he throw it in the fire box?
- JW:** Those fire boxes had a blower if it was just sitting still, but if it was working the suction of the pistons a-blowing out up the stack would suck the sand right through there.
- RM:** Oh, and clean it out?
- JW:** Yes.
- RM:** And it would clog up if they didn't do that?
- JW:** Yes.
- RM:** How often did they have to do that?

JW: Oh, it depended on how they worked their engine and so forth.

RM: Did you ever load coal in?

JW: We didn't have coal here, they did before my time.

RM: It wasn't mined locally, was it?

JW: No.

RM: When you were underneath the locomotive, what were you doing in servicing them?

JW: Well, most of the time you were just checking to see that everything under there was tight and in good shape. Each set of wheels had a big heavy bar that went up underneath the wheels - or I should say the bearing instead of the wheels. (It's there to hold that bearing.) And you had to see that the bolts were all tight and everything in place. And then they had what they call the drop pit. If you had real trouble with the engine and you wanted to take the wheels out from under it, you'd just drop it in, one set of wheels at a time. You'd move them over and pick them up.

RM: Did they require a lot of mechanical servicing? That is, were they prone to break down a lot?

JW: No, really not a lot. They had to keep up with wear and tear. For instance, the government had limits on how thick the tires on the wheels could be.

RM: You mean the wheel on the rail?

JW: Yes.

RM: So there was a legal aspect to it?

JW: A lot of it involved legal things.

RM: Did you work just on locomotives or did you work on cars, too?

JW: Just locomotives where I worked. The car department was different. It was outside and they didn't have any shop.

RM: Did you have a problem of hot boxes then? Why don't you describe exactly what a hot box is?

JW: Oh, in the hot box they had a brass lining that fit in a box that was right on the axle. And when something would happen, it would go through that brass into the iron and you were in trouble.

RM: What was the purpose of that brass thing?

JW: Well, it stood up better than iron. Of course, down in the bottom they had the box that had oil and waste. And the waste was against the axle.

RM: Oh.

JW: So when it got hot, the waste and oil caught on fire. Then you had a hot box.

RM: I see. But then the oil was for lubricating the bearing, wasn't it? Well, they gave you this job there but it was only supposed to last for 10 days . . .

JW: It lasted about 12-1/2 years. [laughter]

RM: So they just kept you on there? And when did you move down to Caliente?

JW: I'd only been working there less than a month, I think, and I went up to Panaca on my days off and Freda had everything torn up. I said, "What's going on?"

She said, "We're going to Caliente."

FW: It was such a cold winter.

RM: Where were you living in Panaca? Is the house still there?

FW: Yes. I'm trying to think how I could tell you. Do you know where Leo Wadsworth's home is - that old fashioned brick home that's right on the corner?

RM: OK.

FW: James is what they call it. But you turn at that corner and go up . . .

JW: If you're in Panaca going up, you turn left. It was just over a block.

RM: OK.

FW: It's just a little house. But the little house is moved and they built another house there.

RM: When did you get married?

FW: 1935.

RM: And where did you two meet?

FW: [chuckles] I had gone to California to visit my dad and I met Jay out there at Tracy, California.

RM: What were you doing there, Jay?

JW: Well, the year before, the brother just younger than I got connected with some people who were from down in that country.

He went down and got a job at the sugar factory which started in July and ran for about 6 months, each year, because that was when the beets were on. So I sent down with him that year and I got on there, too. And we went to a dance one evening down at Portuguese Hall and that's where I met her.

FW: When he came back the next summer we were married.

RM: Oh, so you worked there and came back.

FW: Yes. He came back to his home in Panaca at about Christmas time - along in there.

JW: Yes - I got home just [in time] for Christmas.

FW: And then the next summer he came back to Ulysses, Nebraska.

RM: And that's where you got married?

FW: Yes. That's where I lived. My mother and my 2 sisters and my brother were there at home. So he came back there. I was born in Kansas but moved to Nebraska when I was about 2-1/2 years old.

RM: Whereabouts in Kansas?

FW: Oh, at Council Grove.

RM: Oh, I know where that is.

FW: Well, it wasn't right at Council Grove. In those days, and until about 20 years ago, there was a little town out from there just a ways called Kelso.

RM: Yes, I've heard of it.

FW: And now there's a big dam over it. Just a few people lived there. But Kelso is where the
...

RM: And what were you doing in Tracy, California, again?

FW: I went out to visit Dad.

JW: Her dad and mother were separated and he was out there.

FW: Yes. He worked for the Dairy Maid Creamery till he retired.

RM: So you came home that Christmas. Did you two continue to write?

FW: [laughs] Yes. Well, we had talked about being married when I left, you know.

RM: So then you got married and Frieda moved to Panaca and you set up housekeeping. But then Jay got the job with the railroad and so you moved down to Caliente.

JW: Right.

RM: Where did you move to?

FW: It was at the other end of town. As you go out to the girl's school there was an old house and that was the only thing that Jay could rent.

RM: How much rent did you have to pay in those days?

JW: Fifteen dollars, wasn't it?

RM: What was your pay with the railroad?

JW: Three dollars and 5 cents a day.

RM: And you were working in the roundhouse?

JW: Yes. I was only hostler helper for a short while and then I got a job as a machinist helper in the shop. I'd been there 4 or 5 years or something and then they made a machinist . . .

FW: Well, you served your apprenticeship.

RM: What do you machine in a shop like that?

JW: We were making all kinds of pins, bushings, bolts - all that kind of stuff.

RM: So you were making all the parts for the engine. They didn't keep spare parts there - you make them instead?

JW: Always. Well, because there were so many different sizes. There were different kinds of engines so there were different sizes of engines, so their parts were a different size - especially the bushings. I made the bushings for them. They had a planer and a lathe, most of it was lathe work.

RM: Did you work there all through the war?

JW: That's what kept me working - the war. I was just the right age to go. And I said, "If they want me they know where I'm at and what I'm doing." But the railroad would keep those deferments for 6 months to a year ahead and say, "No, he's not going. He's not going."

RM: Yes. Because that was a critical railroad, wasn't it?

JW: Yes.

RM: Would you talk a little bit about the engines that they used on the line?

JW: Gosh, I can't tell you the names of the ones that were made, but I'll tell you the smallest ones we had were a 6000 class, as they called them. (This is just a number.) At that time there was a railroad to Pioche for hauling the ore down. And one of them would haul 12 or 15 carloads of ore. Then on the main line they had . . . I can't think of the name.

FW: Malleys?

JW: No, the Malleys were those great big ones. But anyhow, there engines were kept just for this helper job.

RM: About how many of those did you have, do you know?

JW: We had 5 or 6 or 7. Then for the passenger trains they had engines that went clear through. We didn't have very many of them here, but once in a while we'd have to take one off of a passenger train and do something with it. They had a 6-foot-2 wheel on them. They were built for speed. And then they had another one that was on the passenger trains. But it was a bigger, heavier engine. The engines on the freight trains were bigger and heavier, too. And eventually they got what they call Malleys, which had a double set of drive wheels - pistons - and we had them here. They were powerful. But [as you can see,] they were all different sizes, so that's one reason we had to make all the bushings and so forth right there.

RM: They had passenger trains and freight trains. Did they ever mix them?

JW: No.

RM: How many trains came through town a day?

JW: One time during the war we had 54 engines in and out of that shop - 50-some in a day.

RM: Serviced?

JW: That's right.

RM: Wow. What was a more typical day?

JW: Oh, I think around 30 or 40 or something.

RM: That many?

JW: Yes.

RM: But each one of those engines wouldn't be pulling a train, would it? They'd have 2 or more on a train, wouldn't they?

JW: Yes - those helpers.

RM: How long a string of cars did they pull in those days?

JW: Oh gosh, I don't know. Nothing compared to what they're pulling now, I'll tell you.

RM: Were you there when they converted to diesel?

JW: Diesel's what got my job. [chuckles]

RM: Is that right? Tell us about that.

JW: Well, they had those diesel engines - the first ones - on what they called the Challenger that came out of Chicago. It was a fast train to Los Angeles and it always had diesels on it. I got on once or twice while they were stopped here because they stopped for lunch all the time. And I kept saying all the time, telling Tom Marshall, "Them diesels'll never work here. They'll never do the job these coal burners are doing." He said, "Oh, yes they will."

It wasn't until they got diesels on the freight trains . . . this one night a freight train with some diesels on it came in and stopped because in one of the units the pipe had broken that pumped the fuel to the cylinders. So we grabbed the pipe off and went over to the shop and welded another fitting on it - braised it on -and went back and were just getting it on the engine when they had to go.

So the boss said, "You guys ride into Vegas, come back on the train in the morning." Well, by the time we got down here 4 or 5 miles we had that unit a-running. So I went up and got right up beside the engineer and told him, "I want to see what this thing'll do and how it does it.

And he said, "Well, got a good example right here." He said, "I haven't put any air under that train," (air for brakes going down the canyon) "because these diesels'll hold them back." In other words, he changed the drive motors to generators. And so, when he did that, why these generators were working in reverse.

We got down just about to Elgin and he had a sign that said, I think, 40 miles an hour and he was doing about 45. He said, "I've been on that 45 for about 5, 10 minutes." He said, "I'd better get off of it." Because at that time they had 2 guys - one in Vegas and one in Pioche - who could tell how fast a train was running down the track. So he put a little air under the train and slowed it down. And when we got on down this side of Vegas there's a pretty good little hump to get over and it was no problem.

Anyhow, we came back and it was only a day or two till the diesels came through and they were having trouble, but they were going east. It wasn't much trouble but the boss said to ride it to Crestline. So, I did as I did before - I got right up alongside that engineer. And he got up here around Big Springs and pulled down around 5 or 6 miles an hour and that diesel just kept going and going and going. Now with steam engines, if they got below about 12 or 13 miles an hour they'd spin out, so they'd have to cut the train in two and take it up in two sections. When I saw what it was doing up there on that hill, I knew that diesels could do it.

RM: [chuckles] Did they have to use helper engines with the diesels?

JW: They did at first. Well, they still do. There's just about one train a day going east and he'll have 5 or 6 units on the head end of it, but there'll be 2 on the back end a-pushing, coming out of Vegas. I don't know how far they go that way.

RM: When did you lose your job with the railroad?

JW: In 1948.

RM: What did you do then?

JW: Well, I went out to Timpahute for a few months as a machinist for the mill. They were milling their ore out there.

CHAPTER THREE

- RM: So you went out to Timpahute in 1948, and how long did you stay?
- JW: I think it was March when we moved out there. The trouble was that there was me and another fellow who were the mechanics for the shop and for the mine, too. And his wife was a drunkard, and she was the only company for Freda.
- FW: So I was fed up and Jay came home at noon for his lunch and I had already started packing. "We're going to town. I'm not going to take it anymore."
- RM: What did you do then?
- JW: We came into town and there was a job for a machinist in Ely on the Nevada Northern Railroad, so I went up there and got a job. I had it for a month or two and finally found a little place to move to and moved her up there. I had put in an application at Castleton at the mill there but they didn't have an opening at that time. So we'd just been up there for 2 or 3 days when my cousin at Castleton sent word up that he had a job for me. So I moved back and worked at Castleton for about 5-1/2 years.
- FW: We didn't live there. Jay drove back and forth.
- JW: We moved back to Caliente.
- RM: Where were you living in Caliente then?
- FW: Down in the other end of town.
- RM: Is the house still there?
- FW: Well, a remnant of it. It was built onto. It's much different than when we lived there. We lived there 12 years till we moved up here.
- RM: Is that right? Tell me about the operation at Castleton. What was going on there?
- JW: They were mining that lead zinc ore at Castleton. And they crushed it right there and it ran through the mill and they separated the zinc and the lead. They came out in a fine slurry of thick heavy mud. It was loaded on railroad cars and it went to Salt Lake to be smelted.
- RM: Oh. Was it a floatation mill? How many tons a day were they running?
- JW: Oh, I think at one time for a short while we got up to 1500 tons.
- RM: Wow. That was a big mill, in those days, still is a big mill.
- JW: Well, they had 3 of the big ball mills. And it was a mill that was built backwards. Where they could run the stuff by floatation - by gravity - they had pumps. When this stuff came out of the classifier, off of the big mills, they pumped it way up to the top. Then it came down and it would go down through the float cells. But anything that came off in the float cells had to be pumped back up there again. [laughs]
- RM: And they could have done it all with gravity, couldn't they, if it had been designed right.
- JW: Yes. But boy, they put a lot of tonnage through there, I'll tell you.
- RM: And you were the machinist - so you had to make parts for anything that broke down and that kind of thing. Did you have your own machine shop there?
- JW: They had a machine shop there, yes. I worked right in the mill as the mill mechanic at first. Then they found out I could run the machines and they took me up and I worked in the machine shop on special occasions or something.
- RM: You hadn't worked in a mill before, had you?
- JW: Just that little bit out at Timpahute.
- RM: Well, there you were working as a mechanic in a mill - you must have had a pretty good intuitive mechanical knowledge.
- JW: Well, I didn't think a guy needed much - just a lot of hard work.
- RM: [chuckles] What kinds of things would break down on you?

JW: Well, there at Castleton at one time I had to run 45 pumps from pumps that were pumping the . . . when you use, let's say, the brass from a case from a 6-shooter, it goes around and it can . . . a little bit. This was for the stuff that they used in the mill.

RM: When one pump was shut down was the whole thing down?

JW: No, no. But it had to be repaired - let's put it that way.

RM: Did you have a backup on everything?

JW: Yes. Nearly everything had a backup for it.

RM: I'll be darned. We used to have a small mill, but our didn't have a backup, when something broke down, that was it.

JW: That was too big an operation to shut down like that.

RM: So what happened? You crushed the ore and then it went into a ball mill?

JW: Crushed the ore and it came over . . . that was another thing they did. Anyhow, 200 yards from where it was crushed, it went up an incline on a belt and they had 5 or 6 big holding tanks up there.

RM: How fine were you crushing it?

JW: We crushed it down to three-eighths size. And of course it then went through the ball mill and it just came out as a thick mud.

RM: And then from the ball mill it went to the classifier?

JW: And then it was pumped up again. [chuckles]

RM: You mentioned there was a railroad. Was there another spur going out there? Where did that railroad hook into?

JW: Right here.

FW: You've probably seen some cars parked along there in front of the Hot Springs Motel. Well, that was the old railroad bed and it just wound on up to Pioche.

RM: What did it do, circle around Pioche?

JW: It went around Pioche and back to Castleton.

RM: I see. When did they clear that railroad out of there?

JW: About 3 years ago.

FW: It's been quite recently, but it didn't run for some time.

RM: When did they shut it down?

JW: Well, there wasn't any more ore up there at all. The only thing they had left was the fertilizer plant at Castleton - they'd ship a carload or two a month. So they just stopped running.

RM: Did you work at Castleton till they shut the mill down?

JW: Yes. In fact I went back a time or two. Some outfit would come and to run for a while. I went back, I think 2 different times, and showed them how to get that mill a-going.

RM: Tell me about the mine there. Was it a shaft or a tunnel or . . . ?

JW: Shaft.

RM: How deep was it, do you know?

JW: Well, the shaft actually went down 1400 feet. But at 1200 foot was where this a big stope of ore was - I don't know how many million tons it had. And also, there was a tunnel from there that went under the mountain over to Pioche.

RM: Is that right?

JW: You've been to and seen those Pioche mine buildings up there on the hill?

RM: Yes.

JW: They connected over there.

RM: Wow. How far would that tunnel have gone?

JW: Around 3 miles, I think.

RM: Is that right? They must have had a huge deposit under there, then. What did the ore run? Was it 10 percent or 15 or what - lead and zinc?

JW: Some of it was down at 5 percent but most of it was higher than that.

RM: When did they build that mill?

FW: During the wartime (World War II), didn't they?

RM: And how long did you say you worked there?

JW: I think I worked there till '54 or '55.

RM: What did you do then?

JW: Then I came back here and hustled around. I had some property and cattle in Panaca and I couldn't just leave and go to Vegas or someplace like that - I had to stay here. Anyhow, I ended up getting a job with the State Highway Department. There wasn't much money in it then, I'll tell you.

RM: What year was that when you started with them?

JW: Fifty-six or '57 or something. I was there till 1973 - I had 15 years with them.

RM: What was your job with them?

JW: Well, I started out here as a helper and they came one day and offered me a job out at Geysers. Do you know where Geysers Ranch is between Pioche and Ely?

RM: I've heard of it.

FW: Well, the station was on this side of that ranch.

JW: It was 52 miles to Pioche or 52 miles to Ely. And they offered me the foreman job there, so we went out.

RM: How long did you live out there?

FW: About 12 years. Oh, and we just loved it. There was another family in the yard with us - the helpers - and we loved it out there. It's a good place to live. You were right in the hills and you could hunt for all kinds of treasures.

RM: What did you hunt for?

FW: Glass bottles and all that stuff, you know.

RM: What else besides glass bottles?

FW: Well, it isn't supposed to be mentioned. It was arrowheads.

RM: Oh, that's not against the law.

FW: Why, yes.

RM: You can find an arrowhead somewhere. They can't stop you. Did you get a nice collection of bottles?

FW: Well, we did, but we got tired of bottles. We kind of got rid of those and went to arrowheads.

RM: Were there a lot of them out there?

FW: Yes.

JW: One of the things I liked out there was the hunting. I like to hunt. And you could look out your door or window a lot of times and right in the field next to us there might be 15 or 20 head of antelope. Or they might be a bunch of deer down there.

FW: And sandhill cranes and ducks and geese.

JW: You see all kinds of stuff in the field out there. And, of course, you get up in the mountains and there are deer and all kinds of things up there - cougars, coyotes . . .

RM: Did you see cougars out there?

JW: Oh, yes.

RM: So you liked being really out in the country.

JW: Yes.

FW: So many people thought we were out in the sticks, just living kind of primitive. But we had everything that we have here in town. We had our own light plant, we had all of our appliances and our freezer - everything.

RM: Did you have TV?

FW: Yes. But it came on a bounce from Salt Lake. The man in Pioche who was the TV man said by rights we shouldn't have it.

JW: We got 2 channels.

FW: But you know, it was enough to keep us going.

RM: Did you get lonesome at all?

FW: Oh, no, We were out there 2 years before the telephone came, so when we wanted to make a call we'd either have to come in to Pioche or go to Ely or up to Major Woods (that was a filling station up the road). But then we got a telephone.

RM: Tell me about what was involved in running that station there.

JW: I had 67 miles of highway to oversee.

RM: That was you and one other guy?

JW: There were always 2 of us there. Now, when they had a big job like laying new oil or something . . .

RM: Tell me what you did when it snowed. I've always wondered how that works.

JW: [laughter] You got on that snowplow and you plowed snow.

FW: Night and day.

RM: Did you listen to the weather report?

JW: Oh, yes.

FW: There was a 2-way radio in the house, so we always knew.

RM: Who were you talking to on the radio?

FW: The office in Ely. Well, the guys could talk back and forth on their trucks and I could talk to the truck or call Ely.

RM: I see. So let's say it's starting to snow. When do you go out and start plowing?

JW: Oh, when they've got enough snow on the road that it's maybe starting to bother the cars a little bit, enough that you could plow it off.

RM: What would that be - an inch or two?

JW: Oh, when it'd get 2 inches, why . . .

RM: And then just keep plowing as long as it snowed?

JW: As long as it snowed I'd keep a-plowing.

RM: How long would you have to plow?

JW: [chuckles] I thought they were going to fire me once. I worked 70-some hours straight.

RM: Is that right? Plowing! Just going up one way and down the other?

JW: Yes. It was one of those storms that lasted for 3 or 4 days.

RM: Oh! And then the wind?

JW: And the wind - yes.

FW: He would go out in one truck and the helper'd go in the other truck. They were alone in a truck.

RM: Was it ever kind of scary out there in those storms, where you could hardly see and . . .

JW: You're darn right you were scared. You'd run off the road a time or two and . . .

RM: What happens when you run off the road? How do you get back on?

JW: One time I had to call for help to come pull me back. But I'd feel the truck as it went off. And I'd stop just as quick as I could and back up and out of it if it was possible. What did happen to me was the people at the ranch out there came and cleaned all the brush off out from the station. It was about 1/4-mile from the highway down to the

station and it was uphill. But anyhow, they cleaned the brush off, so when I plowed to put a windrow of snow, it immediately blew full. I went down to the gas station one night to gas up and so forth, and I couldn't get back up the road. I tried and tried and tried and there was too much snow and I couldn't go through it. I had to call Pioche, and they sent out one of their big 4-wheel-drive plows. And they could come down through it, where I was trying to go up through it.

- RM: What kind of a plow did you use? What was your truck? Was it a F-W-D [Four-wheel-drive], a Dodge?
- JW: There weren't very many F-W-Ds - they had some but I didn't have one out there.
- RM: Yours was a powerful machine, wasn't it?
- JW: Oh, yes. They'll plow.
- RM: Did it handle well? I mean, did you feel safe or did you feel like you were a disaster waiting to happen when you drove it?
- JW: Well, you had to watch. You had to be damn careful. They finally sent me down a new International truck with automatic transmission. And they had sanders that would hold 3 yards of sand that they put on these trucks and then fill them full of sand. And I tell you, you could do some pushing. I went up one night and stopped right at Major Woods - that's right at the bottom of the summit up there - and here was one of these big trucks. Well, he came out of Vegas and he was loaded with stoves. And he had his front wheel off of the oil and couldn't move. I came up by him and he said, "Could you help me get back on the road?"
- And I said, "Yes, I think I can. Let me plow the snow out first."
- I plowed the snow out and then I had sand and I sanded where I plowed it out. Then I got over there and hooked the chain on him and he said, "Well, let's go."
- RM: You were pulling him?
- JW: Oh, I was pulling him. But that truck I had, as little as it was . . . when I got him back up on the road where he could go and got his wheels on the road, I just pulled him up a little ways and stopped. He said, "Man, what have you got in that truck?"
- I said, "It's just an automatic."
- He said, "You know, you were pulling me, truck and all, before I got any power on it."
- RM: I'll be darned. Did you have to help many people who were stuck?
- JW: Oh yes. Sometimes there'd be a bunch of them.
- FW: One night, it'd been snowing all day and down by the mountain from our house - Dutch John - and Jay came onto a car off of the road and down the ditch with 3 girls in it. They were showgirls from the Strip and they had been there a long time. And of course they weren't dressed for that cold weather.
- JW: They were headed for Elko.
- FW: And Jay plowed on down and then he brought them up to the house.
- JW: Well, they were down off the road quite a ways.
- FW: He brought them up and they had supper with us. They said, "Oh, it tastes good." Because they'd been all day without eating.
- And so Jay went out and plowed and they stayed all night with me.
- They were such nice girls - they were singers. They cam from the Strip, but they were going to Elko for a few days. And then they were going overseas, but I can't think where it was. They told me how old they were. One of them was 30 and the younger one was 24. But they were just lovely girls.
- RM: You don't remember the name of their group, do you?
- JW: They didn't have one, I don't think.

FW: No, I don't think so. They just were by themselves. [chuckles] You know, when we went to bed (we had 2 bedrooms but we were painting and everything was piled into the other bedroom) we had a davenport that made out into a bed. All 3 of them slept together and I got out the sheets and the pillowcases and the covers. They said, "No, don't put sheets on. You'll just have to wash them."

But I said, "Oh, it isn't much trouble." So I fixed them their bed. And then the next morning I had breakfast for them and they had sent in to Ely, and they were coming out to pull them in. One of the girls just had on high heels with no toes in them. She would stand by the stove trying to keep her feet warm. And I had some boot sox and I said, "Would you wear a pair of these if I give them to you?"

She said, "Oh, I sure would."

RM: That was sweet.

FW: And we fitted them all out. They went on into Ely.

CHAPTER FOUR

- FW:** You know, out at a place like that you have many experiences and kind of funny things that happen. One day I was at home and our mailbox was up on the highway about a quarter-mile from home. I noticed a car that just turned in and came tearing down the road. And they drove to our house and stopped. And there were a young man and a young lady, and they came up on the porch just so out of breath, and they knocked and I went to the door. They said, "Can you tell us about that geyser down there?" (All that land down farther is old dry lake bed.)
And I said, "There's no geyser down there."
And they said, "Oh, yes there is. It comes up just like Old Faithful."
I said, "No, that isn't a geyser, that's just the dust."
- RM:** They thought a dust devil was a geyser?
FW: Yes.
RM: That's funny.
FW: And you could just see how this part of the world . . . And one of them said, "How long have you lived here?" And at that time we'd been there 4 years. I told them 4 years and they said, "Well, maybe there's one down there that you don't know about."
And at that time we had a jeep and we just had gone all over. So I knew it but I said, "Well, maybe so." And then I said, "Which way are you going?" (Their license was from Minnesota so I thought they'd probably go through Ely.) They said they were going through Ely and I said, "Well, if you're going through Ely you could stop at that little museum or one of the lobbies of the hotels and ask them if there's a geyser out here." [laughter]
- RM:** That's funny. Did you worry about criminals stopping there and so forth?
FW: No, because we had a good dog.
RM: But what if they shot the dog or something?
FW: No, we never were afraid. There were cars that'd come in, but none of them ever molested anything.
RM: Were there people who'd stop in the middle of the night and wake you up needing help or anything?
FW: One night there was a truck that stopped and Jay was out working and the man knocked at the door. I didn't turn on the light. I just asked, "Who is it?"
He said, "Is this Geyser Ranch?"
And I said, "No, that's on down the road about not quite a mile." And he said, well, he had a truckload of cattle to take there.
One weekend we had gone to Salt Lake and the helper's wife told me that her husband had gone to work but she had locked the gate (it just was a padlock). She said a car drove into the gate and stopped. Well, this old dog of ours went out there and just kept going back and forth at the gate, just a-growling. And so she went out to see what it was, and it was 4 men and their license was from Clark County. They wanted gas and she said, "No, I can't give you gas."
And they said, well they'd come in and get it themselves.
And she said, "No you won't."
And one of them said, "Well, I'll shoot the lock off." You know, it was just on a chain there and padlock.
- And she said, "Well, I've got a gun, too." And the dog just kept growling and they left. That's the only time that we ever had anything like that.

RM: I guess a person's fears are more exaggerated than the real situation.

FW: Yes. Now, maybe if one of the families had been there alone and the husband was gone, you would be [afraid]. But there was always the neighbor there - of course just the 2 women and the kids.

RM: Were you raised in Kansas, or Nebraska?

FW: I was 3 when we moved to Nebraska and I always lived on a farm.

RM: Well, being raised on a farm in Nebraska, what was it like coming to the desert here?

FW: [chuckles] Oh, well, I had never been out here or anything. And as we were coming into Panaca that [first] night we were out on the old pass summit a way, but we could see alight off in the distance. And Jay said, "Well, if we hurry up we can get to Panaca before the lights go off." And I thought, "My word, where is he taking me?" Because I came from just a little town, but the lights never went off. But then he told me . . . that was before Boulder power came in and they just had a diesel and the diesel just ran part of the time. But they had late lights that night because the bridge club was meeting.

RM: Isn't that funny.

FW: And on Monday they would turn the power on for about 3 hours - or 4, if you were lucky - in the morning. And if you weren't through [with your washing when] it would go off [that was too bad].

RM: Did everybody wash on Monday?

FW: Oh, they did. [chuckles] In fact, with those machines all running at the same time the power was always low. Now on Tuesday they'd turn it on about 2 [hours] for ironing. But then in the evening they would turn it on for 2 or 3 hours.

RM: Did you have any adjustment problems coming here?

FW: No, I don't think I did. I just thought, [chuckles] "Well, where's he taking me to." But no, we lived close to Jay's folks and his mother - in fact all of his family and I - got along very well. And that helps, you know. I think I adjusted to this country very well.

RM: Jay, how was it they did the book on the family?

JW: Well, I know the one gal.

FW: All of the LDS are quite hard-working about finding genealogy. It was some of the younger cousins in the family who put in the most work at it and got it together.

RM: Oh. Let me just mention the title. The title is George Allan Wadsworth, Pilley to Panaca. And it's by Helen Free Vanderbeek, Gateway, Pratt, Baltimore, Maryland, 1983. So it was some of the younger cousins who got it together?

FW: And then all of the relatives who had anything in regard to it would loan their stuff. Did they say it took 10 years?

JW: She actually worked on it 10 years.

RM: It took her 10 years? I believe it.

FW: And then about 4 or 5 years ago the books were all complete and they sold them to us.

RM: Yes, it's a very good book, I think.

FW: Yes, it is.

JW: Looking at that every once in a while [you find a lot of] information.

FW: The mother of that girl told us at one of our meetings that one of the editors from back east had called and she said, "How much are you going to sell the book for?" And Myrtle Joy said, "Well, to the relatives and the first. . . we thought \$25." And she said that woman just screamed at her and she said, "Twenty-five dollars? Why, we've sold books that aren't near as complete and as good as that one for over \$60." She said, "That is such a well-organized book."

RM: Yes. How many copies did they sell, do you know?

FW: I don't know but I think it was 300 or more. I say 300 or more because they had to guarantee the printer 300 to get it printed.

RM: Oh, yes. Well Jay, after you quit the highway department in '73, did you retire?

JW: I retired.

RM: Did you miss it?

JW: Yes. But I also liked to go hunting when I wanted to go and I didn't have to ask anybody or anything. And we did a little traveling and so forth. It's just been a year or two ago that I had this damn trouble - well, I had the trouble before, too.

FW: In the last 2 years.

JW: I had a prostate operation. In fact I had 3 of them. And they found out I had cancer and . . .

FW: And now he has emphysema, which is sad.

RM: What caused the emphysema?

FW: Thirty years of smoking. And then the doctors had told him that working in the shop around all those fumes and out on the highway in the dust and stuff might have contributed to it.

RM: Tell me about some of your favorite hunting spots and talk a little bit about hunting here in this part of Nevada.

JW: Oh, if you want deer, they're most anyplace in this part of Nevada.

RM: Are there still a lot of deer in this area?

JW: Quite a few deer. Of course the elk are further north up in White Pine County. Well, there are some in Lincoln, but they don't hunt them. And antelope are up there. So most of my hunting has been up in that area - north of Pioche, let's put it that way.

RM: What would those mountain ranges be?

JW: Wilson Creek, Wheeler . . . what's the one there by the ranch?

FW: Well, the one that went up to that little cabin. I can't think of it.

RM: Is there pretty good hunting over around Mount Wheeler?

JW: Oh yes.

RM: That's national park now, isn't it?

JW: Yes.

RM: What kind of game do you find over there?

JW: They've got elk and deer and antelope - they've got the whole works.

RM: What's your favorite animal to hunt?

JW: Oh, I guess deer. I hunted them more than anything else. But I also like to hunt mountain lion.

RM: Tell me about that. How do you do it?

JW: Well, you get with somebody who's got some dogs that have been trained on them - to hunt them. Then you go out and look for tracks - in the snow, mostly. And if you can find tracks that look fairly fresh, you turn the dogs loose. And the dogs'll find him if they can. It doesn't take dogs long to put a mountain lion up a tree.

RM: How long does it take?

JW: Well, there's no telling how far off he is and how long you had to look to find the tracks.

RM: When you find tracks are you usually able to tree the cougar?

JW: If they're fresh.

RM: What do you call a fresh track?

JW: Well, on dry ground most of the dogs can't follow it. It has to be damp or wet. You put him up a tree and at first we could take him alive. So we had some stuff to give him to put him to sleep. Anyhow, he'd get up the tree and you had a pipe with a cable on it to

make a loop. You'd get the pipe out there and get that loop around his neck and then pull it out of the tree and catch it - by the feet, usually (hind foot). Pull it up off the ground and he can't go very far with just his front feet.

RM: What do you do with him then?

JW: Well, they had a good market down at Thousand Oaks, California, for a while for the live ones.

RM: What did they do with them?

FW: Put them in zoos.

JW: Yes. Send them to zoos and things. And then a fellow who ran the zoo up in Salt Lake - was in charge of it - took a bunch of them. We'd put them in a cage and weld the cage so they couldn't get out and we'd ship them to Salt Lake. Or sometimes you'd haul them down in a pickup.

RM: What did you get for one?

JW: I really don't know what they were. In fact, I myself didn't sell them - I was there to catch them.

RM: How many have you been there for?

JW: Oh gosh, 6 or 7 or something like that. I had quite a time with them.

RM: Did you ever do any trapping?

JW: I tried. I'm not much of a trapper.

RM: Describe Caliente when you moved here in '37. What did the town look like then?

JW: Well, the hotel down here hadn't been built too long. And it had a pretty good business because people from up north came down here to catch the train and so they had to catch their ride going back. So the hotel did pretty darn well.

RM: And you said that they stopped here for lunch on the passenger trains. So they had a cafe here where all the passengers could eat?

FW: Down at the depot, it was. They always called it the Beanery.

JW: And the railroad had their offices down there. And of course they were also handling the freight express that came in there - people were always picking that up and so forth. The offices were there and the Beanery, as they called it, was in there. I know they handled 75 people - they could seat that many and more.

RM: How long did they train stop for?

JW: Usually 20 minutes.

RM: They served 70 people in 20 minutes?

JW: Oh yes. It was all made up.

RM: Were there just railroad people living in town then?

JW: Mostly. Also in the depot there were 40 or 50 rooms upstairs where the railroad men stayed. Then during the war when things were really going, they built another building about that size right off to the west of it. They called it the clubhouse. I think they had about 100 beds over there - rooms for railroad men when they were in town.

RM: Now which railroad men were staying there?

JW: We used to change crews here all the time. For instance, the crew for the train that came from the west - from Vegas- would get off here. And so there'd have to be another crew from Milford [Utah] to go on.

RM: And then they would go back to Milford?

JW: Yes. Then when there was a train down, this crew would get on and go to Vegas.

RM: Why would they change crews here? It doesn't seem like the train had gone that far.

JW: Well, they didn't go that fast in those days.

FW: They changed crews in Milford, too, didn't they?

JW: Yes.

RM: OK. So a crew would come from Vegas and change here. That'd be about 200 miles?
 JW: Yes.
 RM: So a train'd be about an 8-hour trip. Did it go about 25 miles an hour?
 JW: Well, in the early days they used to figure an 8-hour day was 100 miles. So there were quite a lot of people.
 RM: Now who would lay over?
 JW: The engineer, fireman, conductor and 2 or 3 brakemen.
 FW: And the mail carriers.
 JW: Yes, they changed here, too.
 RM: Who were the mail carriers?
 FW: They just rode in the baggage car. [The sorted and stacked the mail.]
 JW: They were government.
 RM: So they were watching the mail?
 FW: Yes.
 RM: How about porters and people like that? Did they lay over here?
 JW: No.
 RM: Every train had one engineer?
 JW: One engineer.
 RM: And how many firemen?
 JW: One fireman.
 RM: What did the fireman do? Did he shovel the coal in?
 JW: Well, there were times that when they had coal burners and they shoveled it in. But when I got here it was oil.
 RM: Oh, I thought they burned coal. They were oil-burning steam engines, then? I'll be darned. But they had to have a fireman to watch all that?
 JW: Oh, yes.
 RM: And then, what was the job of the brakeman? I never quite understood that.
 JW: Well, let's say they had to pick up some cars here. There'd be one of the brakeman where it was cut off and the other one would go with the engine to pick up the cars or whatever it was and bring them back and hook them together. There weren't any radios like they have now. You did it by hand signals.
 RM: The term brakeman, then, means he breaks the cars.
 JW: Right.
 RM: Oh, I thought it was the guy putting on the brakes.
 JW: [laughs] Yes, they used to have to get up there and they had a wheel.
 FW: They'd tighten it up with those stakes.
 RM: And how many conductors were there?
 JW: One.
 RM: And what was his job?
 JW: To see that the other guys did their job, and that the train went where it was supposed to go and did what it was supposed to do.
 RM: And then they all had a caboose, didn't they?
 JW: Yes.
 RM: Who rode in the caboose?
 JW: The conductor and at least 2 of the brakemen.
 RM: Oh, I see. And did you have switchmen living here in town?
 JW: Yes, they had switching that worked 24 hours a day. There was an engineer, a fireman, a conductor and 2 helpers on the switch engine all the time.
 RM: Could you discuss some of the stores in town at this period?

FW: There was Gottfredson's Store, you know. They have that one today but when I came out here they had a little store in where Sears is - just a small little grocery store.

RM: And what else was there?

FW: There was the Blue Front over by Carl's Sandwich Shop. And there was a Red and White. Gottfredson finally bought there - isn't it where he is now? Then we had a bakery and that was between there and N Street. And there was a dry cleaner. And, course, Allan's was here when I came out.

JW: Oh, we had the Caliente paper - the Caliente Herald, I think it was called.

JW: They were over there where that real estate man is - in that building.

RM: Before Boulder Dam power came in, what did they use for power here?

JW: The city built a power plant out here run by steam and coal. They furnished the city and the railroad power for a long time. Then finally the railroad came in and took over making the power using the generators down there. Then, of course, the Boulder Dam got built and that was the end of that. But the county had quite a big shop down there where those boilers were - those generators.

RM: They weren't getting the coal locally, were they?

JW: No.

RM: Where was it coming from?

JW: Out of Salt Lake.

RM: Oh, out of Helper, [Utah]? What supports Caliente now? Are there still a lot of railroad people in town?

JW: There are some. Not very many. The girls' school over here's the biggest thing, I think.

RM: Is that right? [That's a correctional facility.]

CHAPTER FIVE

- RM:** Jay, you were going to tell me how it was you came to be born in Caliente.
- JW:** Well, my folks were living over in Modena, Utah, running a motel. Mother fell when I was close to being born and hurt herself and she was afraid that I was probably hurt, too. There was a doctor here and a woman who had [a little hospital set-up] in her home, but she was a nurse, like. And so she came down here when I was born.
- RM:** Otherwise you'd have been born a Utahan, wouldn't you?
- FW:** And you know, Jay's dad lived with us for about 8 years, and he had brought some stuff here. After he passed away, Jay said to the rest of the family, "Come down and take what you want." Well, there was a bundle of cards left, and I didn't go through them - just picked them up and put a rubber band around them. Three or 4 years ago I got that out one night and we got to looking through the cards and there was a card that Jay's mother had written to her kids at home. She had the 3 older ones then and she wrote, "Dear Babies." The card was dated May 14. She was anxious to get home to the rest of the kids.
- RM:** Oh, isn't that sweet.
- FW:** And we didn't know it was there until just a few years ago.
- RM:** Do you have any more good stories?
- FW:** He has one he likes to tell.
- JW:** When I came back from California and word got out that I was going to go to Nebraska, a relation of mine down on the street corner one day asked me, "What are you going to Nebraska for?"
- Well, I had the wedding ring in my pocket.
- RM:** That one you have on your finger right now?
- FW:** No. This was the one Jay gave me. We renewed our vows when we had our 50-anniversary. And these 2 rings were separate but I'd worn this one through and that's why I had them soldered together.
- RM:** But you had the ring in your pocket?
- JW:** I showed it to her and she said, "Oh. You're going to get married. How did you know a girl back there?"
- And I didn't want to stop and explain to her and so forth so I just said, "I advertised."
- RM:** [laughs]
- FW:** And I didn't even know that for a year afterwards. When we went to Ely he told me.
- JW:** Well, I forgot all about it. And a year or so later I was up by Eagle Valley working with some fellows and one of them said, "Jay, is that right - how you got your wife?"
- And I said, "Yeah, how is that?"
- "Oh, you advertised."
- I said, "Yeah." I didn't say any more.
- RM:** That's funny.
- JW:** In Ely one day - when we first went out to Geyser, in fact -one of the fellows who worked in the shop at Ely had died and they were having his funeral. We went in and Freda said, "Well, I've got the house and things all straightened up pretty good. I'll go with you." So she did. And after the funeral I said, "Well, let's go down to the highway office. I want to get some blanks."
- So we got down there and I said, "Well, come on in, because you're going to be talking to these girls that's in the office here. You're going to be talking on the radio to them all the time." So we went in and I introduced her to the girls.

One of the girls said, "I'll be sending you a card" (an application to operate the radio).
She said, "No, maybe I got one in my desk here."

FW: (A card on how to run the radio.)

JW: So she went through her desk and dug out this card and asked Frieda where she was born and all this. And finally she said, "Well, how did Jay meet you? I don't think he's ever been out of Lincoln County."

FW: And you can imagine what he chirped up and said. [laughter]

JW: I never said any more.

RM: Frieda, did you convert to LDS?

FW: No.