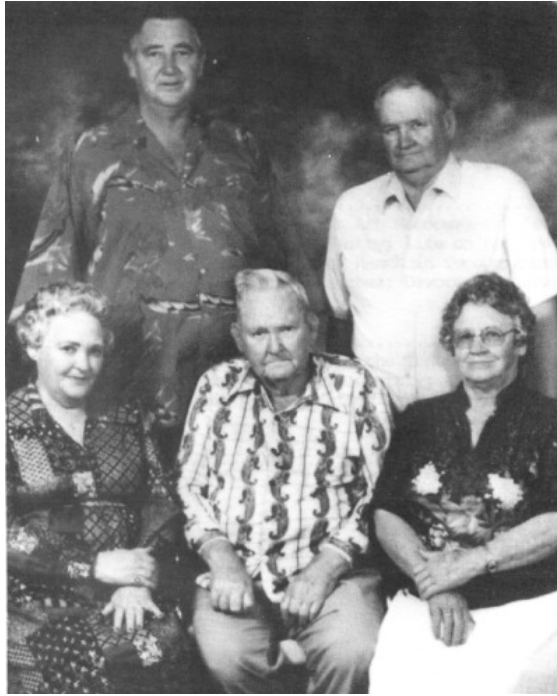


An Interview With
PHYLLIS ISHMAEL BELL

An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken

Nye County Town History Project
Nye County, Nevada
Tonopah
1987

COPYRIGHT 1990
Nye County Town History Project
Nye County Commissioners
Tonopah, Nevada
89049



Frau left, standing: Dewey and Len Ishmael - Sitting: Louella Ishmael Cox, George Ishmael, Phyllis Ishmael Bell - circa 1979

CONTENTS

[Preface](#)

[Acknowledgments](#)

[Introduction](#)

[CHAPTER ONE](#)

George Ishmael's early days; living in Ash Meadows; the Ismael family; working in Death Valley and Beatty; life on the Post Ranch; dismantling Rhyolite; the China Ranch in Tecopa; marriage; Harry Gower; the Pahrump and Manse Ranches; Devore, California; the Dick Bell family in Smoky Valley.

[CHAPTER TWO](#)

The Ishmaels - hard-working and strong; the Tonopah & Tidewater Ranch; World War II; burial in Beatty cemetery; a meteor in Ash Meadows; an odd accident; Grandfather Ishmael and Aunt Beulah.

[INDEX](#)

PREFACE

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

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

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

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

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

Appreciation goes to Chairman Joe S. Garcia, Jr., Robert N. "Bobby" Revert, and Patricia S. Mankins, the Nye County commissioners who initiated this project. Mr. Garcia and Mr. Revert, in particular, showed deep interest and unyielding support for the project from its inception. Thanks also go to current commissioners Richard L. Carver and Barbara J. Raper, who have since joined Mr. Revert on the board and who have continued the project with enthusiastic support. Stephen T. Bradhurst, Jr., planning consultant for Nye County, gave unwavering support and advocacy of the project within Nye County and before the State of Nevada Nuclear Waste Project Office and the United States Department of Energy; both entities provided funds for this project. Thanks are also extended to Mr. Bradhurst for his advice and input regarding the conduct of the research and for constantly serving as a sounding board when methodological problems were worked out. This project would never have become a reality without the enthusiastic support of the Nye County commissioners and Mr. Bradhurst.

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

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

--Robert D. McCracken
Tonopah, Nevada
June 1990

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

A survey of written sources on southcentral Nevada's history reveals some material from the boomtown period from 1900 to about 1915, but very little on the area after around 1920. The volume of available sources varies from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Tonopah's first two decades of existence, and the town has had a newspaper continuously since its first year. In contrast, relatively little is known about the early days of Gabbs, Round Mountain, Manhattan, Beatty, Amargosa Valley, and Pahrump. Gabbs's only newspaper was published intermittently between 1974 and 1976. Round Mountain's only newspaper, the Round Mountain Nugget, was published between 1906 and 1910. Manhattan had newspaper coverage for most of the years between 1906 and 1922. Amargosa Valley has never had a newspaper; Beatty's independent paper folded in 1912. Pahrump's first newspaper did not appear until 1971. All six communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities after their own papers folded, although Beatty was served by the Beatty Bulletin, which was published as a supplement to the Goldfield News between 1947 and 1956. Consequently, most information on the history of southcentral Nevada after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

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

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

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

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

The town history project is one component of a Nye County program to determine the socioeconomic impacts of a federal proposal to build and operate a nuclear waste repository in southcentral Nye County. The repository, which would be located inside a mountain (Yucca Mountain), would be the nation's first, and possibly only, permanent disposal site for high-level radioactive waste. The Nye County Board of County Commissioners initiated the NCTHP in 1987 in order to collect information on the origin, history, traditions, and quality of life of Nye County communities that may be impacted by a repository. If the repository is constructed, it will remain a source of interest for hundreds, possibly thousands, of years to come, and future generations will likely want to know more about the people who once resided near the site. In the event that government policy changes and a high-level nuclear waste repository is not constructed in Nye County, material compiled by the NCTHP will remain for the use and enjoyment of all.

--R.D.M.

Robert McCracken interviewing Phyllis Bell at her home in Beatty, Nevada November 1, 1987

CHAPTER ONE

RM: Phyllis, could you give me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?

PB: It says "Baby Girl." [laughter] No name. [chuckles] I went by the name of Phyllis all my life - Phyllis Ishmael.

RM: And where and when were you born?

PB: In Los Angeles, in 1920.

RM: Could you give me your father's name?

PB: George D. Ishmael.

RM: Do you know where he was born?

PB: Pioche.

RM: You don't happen to know the year, do you?

PB: No. I have it in some papers back there someplace.

RM: And what was your mother's name?

PB: Luella M. Carpenter. She was from Pahrnagat Valley.

RM: So they were both Nevadans?

PB: Yes.

RM: You mentioned that your father's father also had been in Pioche. Where was he before that?

PB: I don't know.

RM: Where did your father grow up?

PB: He worked in the Clay Camp at Ash Meadows.

RM: Did he grow up there?

PB: No, his folks split up and he went out and lived with the Indians. And he rode a donkey and took a bedroll and rode up to Elko and ran into a bunch of gypsies, and went on up the country. He was 15 years old when he went to Elko

RM.. Did he live with the Indians in Ash Meadows?

PB: Yes.

RM: Would they have been Shoshoni?

PB: I think they were Shoshoni; I'm pretty certain

RM: Did he live with them quite a while?

PB: I believe so.

RM: And then he wound up in Elko with some gypsies?

PB: Yes.

RM: What happened to him then?

PB: I think he was up there about a year and a half or 2 years, and then he came back down and went to work at the Clay Camp and got some trucks and hauling boards.

RM: Was this in the nineteen-teens?

PB: Yes. He started hauling for the Clay Camp, and I don't even know what they hauled back then.

RM: Did he haul for the Bradfords?

PB: It could be; we knew the Bradfords.

RM: Did he have a place at Ash Meadows?

PB: Yes. We had a ranch there.

RM: Where was your ranch?

PB: After we moved away they named it the Lovell Ranch. I think Norine Rooker has it now.

RM: So they're on your old place.

PB: Yes. And then we lived with the Indians Our house burned down, and I lived with Mexicans and my brother lived with the Indians until they could build a . .

RM: Were there a lot of Mexicans there then?

PB: I was in Death Valley Junction.

RM: How many brothers and sisters did you have there?

PB: I've got 2 brothers and one sister. Len Ishmael is living up out of Preston. He's a caretaker for Farina Construction.

RM: Out of Preston?

PB: Yes; or out of Lund - up here on the road construction. And the other brother - the youngest brother - lives over in Guam. He's been over there pretty near 50 years When he went he was a CC boy, or whatever you call it, before you could get old enough to get in the service.

RM: And he just stayed there?

PB: Yes. He came back about every 5 or 6 years to keep [his residency] over here. And then when they made it connected, he just stays over there. my sister Luella lives in Challis, Idaho, now. She's always lived up here at Farron, Utah.

RM: How long did your family live in Ash Meadows?

PB: Well, my dad and mother got married in Goldfield. They lived there and my oldest brother was born in Belmont. Then they moved back down [to Ash Meadows], and I was born in L.A. When my sister come along, she was born in Las Vegas and the youngest boy was born in Tonopah.

RM: Were you born in L.A. because there wasn't any health care out at the Clay Camp?

PB: Yes.

RM: What do you remember about Ash Meadows?

PB: It's kind of vague. It doesn't look the same now as it did in that time. My mother-in-law's brother had a ranch there - Robert Tubbs - Virginia's grandfather.

RM: So you're related to Virginia Goodson?

PB: Yes, through my husband.

RM: And your dad hauled there.

PB: Yes. And from there he went on to work for H. P. Gower in the Junction and down in Furnace Creek.

RM: What did he do there?

PB: A little bit of everything, I think.

RM: Was he kind of a jack of all trades?

PB: Yes.

RM: What are some of the things he did for Gower?

PB: Well, he drove the 20mule team from San Francisco. I've even got a picture of it.

RM: Was it for a promotional thing on the 20-mule team?

PB: Yes, I believe so. Then they got that borax place down there. That was before I got big enough to remember any of it. And then we moved up here.

RM: When did you move here?

PB: I think I must've been about 5 or 6 - about 1926.

RM: Why did your father move up here?

PB: Well, my mother came up here [to Beatty] because there was nothing going on - the slump had kind of hit and there wasn't enough work down there. She came up and went to work at the railroad depot in the restaurant. Where the old general store is now used to be the railroad depot.

RM.; For the old T&T; yes.

PB: Yes. And right in back of the Exchange Club was the school I went to. The year my mother died - in 1931 - they built this one over here.

RM: So you attended the old school behind the Exchange for several years. what do you remembers about that?

PB: I remembers kids putting shotgun shells in the stove, and [laughter] blowing them up, and sticking old Badger limburger cheese and putting in the screw on her chair . .

RM: Is that right. [laughter]

PB: My mother ran the Exchange restaurant. I don't know who had it, whether it was Greenwood, or whatever his name was. But she ran the restaurant part.

RM: Was that after she quit at the railroad?

PB: Yes. It was after the other boy came along. She was running it right after he came along. By then we'd moved out to what they called the Revert ranch.

RM: Oh. Was that the old Beatty place where the old stone cabin was?

PB: Yes.

RM: Was the stone cabin still in existence?

PB: Yes. It was in good shape then.

RM: Did you live in that?

PB: No, they had a house right alongside it; a nice house. But some of them stayed in that and made home brew.

RM: There was a lot of bootlegging at that time, wasn't there?

PB: Yes.

RM.; How long did you live on the Revert ranch?

PB: Well, off and on - we lived there 2 different times - I'd have to . . . But at the time my nother died we were living at the Post Ranch down here where the airport is.

RM: Down below the Narrows?

PB: Yes.

RM What was there?

PB: The Bradleys had it after we left down there. They had a big garden, but my dad had cows and a big watermelon patch for us kids to all go steal. [laughter] Make it taste better, you know, when you steal them.

RM.: Yes; right. [chuckles] Was he selling milk and things like that?

PB: It was more or less for our own family use and to give to friends and so on.

RM: What was he doing for a living at that time?

PB: Hauling railroad ties. They'd go out every morning and bring back a load and get ready and go out . . . And then he helped - we helped, because he made us kids do it - it was after Mama died. He dismantled Rhyolite out here. Took the windows and doors and all the board parts down.

RM: What did he do with those?

PB: I have no idea; I really don't.

RM: And this was after your mother passed away?

PB: Yes, this was in the summer of '32 or '33.

RM: There was quite a bit left in Rhyolite at that time, wasn't there?

PB: Yes.

RM: Then you went to school here in Beatty, didn't you? I mean, the new school.

PB: Yes - to this one right across the street.

RM: And how long did you go there?

PB: The 6th or 7th grade. And then we moved to Tecopa - out at the China Ranch. That was in '34 or '35.

RM: How long were you down there?

PB: Till I got married in '35.

RM: Tell me About the China Ranch.

PB: It's just down a canyon.

RM: Was your dad growing some animals and other things there?

PB: Oh, trying to. He had geese and ducks and everything like that.

RM.: What was he doing for a living?

PB: I can't remember. Junking a lot, I think. He would get copper and all that and when he'd get a big truckload he'd go to L.A. and sell it and he'd bring back a big old truckload of groceries.

RM: It was a dirt road to Baker, wasn't it?

PB: Yes.

RM: Did you get down to L.A. much?

PB: Never, except when I was born [chuckles] until after I was married. When my oldest boy was about 8 or 9 months old we went down there to see the ocean and whatnot.

RM: What did your father do after you got married? Let's follow him on through.

PB: He still lived at the China Ranch, and then he moved to Pahrump.

RM: Did he stay at the China Ranch long?

PB: Yes. He stayed there damn close to 10 years.

RM.: Was he the only one living there at that time?

PB: No, there was another guy there. Dad was more or less a caretaker for -I think his name was Greer or something like that. We had our house and he had the big main house and all. He had a chauffeur and he'd care up from L.A.. But he lived down there - had a bunch of property.

RM: When did your father move to Pahrump?

PB.: let's see, we were living in Death Valley Junction when the war was over. Yes, I'm sure he was over at Pahrump. But he was still tangled up with Gower working back and forth in the valley from Death Valley junction down to Furnace Creek. In fact, he helped Gower to put in the museum that's down there. He hauled old mining cars and other equipment.

RM: He 'hauled a lot of that material down there?

PB: Yes; gathered it up and sold a lot of it to Harry Gower. In fact, I think my stepmother - because he had participated so much in that museum - -was going to donate a portrait of him to the museum. I haven't gone back down to see if they got it up or not.

RM: Was this before he moved to Pahrump or while he was living in Pahrump?

PB: Up until Harry Gower got so bad and couldn't work anymore. We knew the Gowers real well.

RM: What do you remember about Gower?

PB: When I had my last kid he come to visit me in the hospital in L.A. He had a home down there. And his daughter - the same day that I had my youngest one - gave him a baby girl. My dad and the Gowers were real close. RM.: What did he do in Pahrump? Pahrump was just a couple of ranches by that time, wasn't it?

PB: Yes, but they had lots of hayfields. They've all gone out of hay, now. They're more or less lettuce and onions and commercial gardens. There were lots of cotton fields down there, too - they had the gin down there.

RM: What did he do there?

PB: I don't know. He had the Pahrump Ranch leased for awhile.

RM: So he was probably growing some hay?

PB: Yes. Had a lot of horses and whatnot. Schultz kind of made a dude ranch out of it. My brother could tell you those guys' names, because he ales just getting old enough that . . . They came from San Francisco. The Schuitzes would bring out guys and my father was the caretaker - whatever you want to call it - kept it going. They owned the ranch and he leased it from them.

RM: How long did he stay at the Pahrump Ranch?

PB: Off and on till the last 10 years before he died. Not just on the Pahrump Ranch, but down at the old Manse Ranch and . . .

RM: Did he have that leased, too?

PB: No. That's when we'd go there and stay and put up fruit, because they had lots of fruit.

RM: Who owned the Manse Ranch then; do you remember?

PB: I can't remember; I think it was a Frenchman.

RM: Did he stay in Pahrump till he passed away?

PB: No, he was living at Devore, in California, when he died so he could be close to the doctor and the Vet's Hospital. That's out of San Bernardino about 10 miles this way. He just died 2 years ago. He was 86.

RM: When did he leave this country, then, and go to Devore?

PB: I believe it was in the '70s. His wife's youngest girl graduated from high school from Shoshone, and they moved down to Devore there to put her in college.

RM: He remarried, then? Did he have other children?

PB: No, just us 4.

RM: He lived to be a very old man, didn't he?

PB: Yes, 86. But the last 10 years he was so helpless that he was no good for himself. He loved to fish and everything like that, and he couldn't do anything; he was in a wheelchair and at the last he was just flat. And they amputated his leg, because he got an abscess or something.

RM: Did he do a lot of hunting and fishing?

PB: When he was younger; yes.

RM.: Where did he hunt and fish?

PB: Oh, up on the Charleston . . . Of course, always out of season. :laughter] He did go hunting during season, but we had to eat, you know.

RM: Oh, so he was feeding his family with hunting and fishing too?

PB: Yes. We canned everything we could get our hands on, and dried all the meat we could get - made jerky and everything. But later on . . . He had Kingston Ranch, too, - for 4 or 5 years.

RM: You mean, up Smoky Valley?

PB: Yes.

RM: When was that?

PB: He bought it from Smith Lines in - let's see . . . Richard was born in '47 - he must've moved up there in '43 or '44. And my husband and I moved up there - down in Smoky Valley - at the Gillam place - and lived up there 20 years

RM: Now, who did you marry?

PB: Dick Bell.

RM: Was he a local fellow?

PB: Well, he was when we got married. He'd been born, though, in Hope, New Mexico. His mother moved out here to go to work for her brother, Bob Tubbs, in the Junction. He had a restaurant alongside the railroad down there.

RM And so your husband came out here . .

PB: When he was 9 years old. Of course, there was that revolution going on down there and they had to get out [chuckles]. Got on the wrong side of the fence or something; I don't know just . . . There were a lot of them who moved out here.

RM: Did you and Dick Bell have children?

PB: Three - George R. Bell from Las Vegas, Luella M. O'Dell right here in Beatty, and Richard Bell in Tonopah.

RM.: And you lived up in Smoky Valley for 20 years?

PB: Right across from the Gillam Springs.

RM: I'm trying to think where that is.

PB: Well, it's 9 miles this way from the frontier. We had 13 acres.

RM: Where is it from the Darroughs Hot Springs?

PB: Oh, it's a long ways on down the valley. Go down to [Highway] 50, and come back this way 9 miles. It's the first place on the left if you were coming back from Austin. We drove a school bus up there 10 years into Austin.

RM: The kids went to school in Austin?

PB: Yes. They consolidated the school out there.

RM: Did you like living up there?

PB: Yes; I loved it. I hated it when I come back down here.

RM: Why?

PB: Well, I don't know. That was home, and we had a garden and everything. But my husband's health was bad, and he couldn't stand the cold. He had emphysema and asthma. So we moved down here about 20 years ago. He lived 5 years longer by coming down here. He died in '75.

RM: And you've been living alone since?

PB: Yes. We bought this place and we had what is now the Amargosa Motel. I ran it, but it got [to be] too much of a hassle. I fell and broke my Knee, and before he died I busted the center of my kneecap, and I couldn't climb ladders to paint the ceilings in the bathrooms or do anything like that. And it was going downhill, so I just had to sell it - get out from under it.

RM: Are you retired now?

PB: Yes. I set it up when I sold it so it would give me a pension. I'm that's old enough. I've worked hard. I've been married ever since I was 15 - just before I was 16. The year he died, we celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary.

RM: That's a long time, isn't it? Not many marriages last that long nowadays.

PB: They sure don't.

RM: How would you describe your father?

PB: Oh, he was a big guy - 260 pounds, and 6'1" or 6'2". When my mother died, in '31, he and she each weighed 230 pounds. She was big-boned. She was 6 feet tall.

RM: What nationality was your mother?

PB: I don't know. My dad could talk you out of anything.

RM: He was a horse-trader?

PB: Yes; he was a horse-trader.

CHAPTER TWO

RM: So he was a good horse-trader and a big man. How else would you describe your father?

PB: As a hard worker. In fact, I was talking to somebody here awhile back who said he picked up a 50-gallon drum of gas and just loaded it on the back of the truck.

RM: That takes a strong man. How would you describe your mother's character?

PB: Well, she was a hard worker. Tough as nails - she liked to play poker. She wasn't hard, really, but she could hold her own.

RM: But your father grew up in Pioche?

PB: Yes, partially. I don't know when they moved. I know they were Ash Meadows when my dad and mother got married. They ran off and got married up in Goldfield. But I don't know much about his life before..... Just hearing things that they talked about and whatnot.

RM: Do you have any other recollections of the Amargosa Valley, and the Clay camp, from when you were a little kid?

PB: Not really. We used to go out to the old T&T Ranch - Gower had that.

RM: What was it like then?

PB: It was just a big old ranch.

RM: Were there a lot of trees and things?

PB: There were lots of tamaracks. They planted a lot of them for windbreaks and whatnot.

RM: Were they growing much on the T&T then?

PB: I think hay, mostly. They had a bunch of horses there for riders in Death Valley, and they'd haul the hay down.

RM: Were they milking any cows or anything?

PB: I don't remember; I really don't. My husband used to work out there, too, before we got married. Dad moved to Oregon one time - and he was inducted in the army up there. [chuckles]

RM: Was this World War II, - or I?

PB: Two, because it was '40? - I don't even remember what year it was. He was 45 or 46 years old, something like that, and they inducted him. His boss got mad at him and they took him in the . . . He was only in there from October 21st until the 9th of March, and they gave him a discharge. was tickled to death for him. He had so many benefits from that.

He got a pension from the army, and he got his social security after we tracked down all his records and a birth certificate, because the courthouse in Pioche burned down. They lost all records - everything. So we had to go back and find people, to get a record of his birth. I have a slip back there in the bedroom someplace - boxed up - that has the year he was born.

RM: He's buried up at the cemetery, isn't he?

PB: Yes. That caused us a war to start with, but . .

RM: Why?

PB: His wife wanted to bury him in Devore. I said, "His kids all live here and his wife lived up here and died and is buried up here. We already ordered the plot lying next to her, and he will be buried in Beatty." And he was.

RM: Does she still live in Devore?

PB: Yes. She's got all her family down there - she's a preacher.

RM: Was your dad religious?

PB: No, not at all.

RM: Is there anything else that you want to say?

PB: He saw a meteor go down. I've been trying all day to think of what year it was. You could find that out from that gal that kept records. It was out at the Devil's Hole down there in Ash Meadows. A meteor went down, and he watched it. And then he went up to it and 20 or 30 years later he took bunch of ecologists to where it was.

RM: And they found it?

PB: Well, they found traces of it, after all those years.

RM: I wonder what they found.

PB: I don't know. As I say, a woman went through the records at Reno one time. He had a good, full life. He didn't have to go to the war because he got bucked off a horse and rammed a piece of grapevine in his eye and poked his eye out.

RM: Was he blind in one eye?

PB: No, it just snapped it right out of the socket, and he pushed it back in there and he didn't lose that eye. He had a knot on his face here -that's the only mark he had to show on that - he'd snapped that right off. It just went in there and snapped it out. Strange. [laughs] And doctors were few and hard to care by then. They were living in Pahrump at that time.

RM: He didn't go to the doctor?

PB: I don't know if he did or not. That was the year my brother was born. That happened in March, and they were going to induct him in the service, and when that happened, it took him out of the service.

RM: Oh, but he was in.

PB: Yes; later. I can't remember dates very well. I know he went out to Northumberland when he got kicked off of that job in Oregon and went to work in the mine out there. He was only out there 2 weeks and they drafted him and sent him to Corpus Christi, Texas. We went on down to Vegas, my husband and I and the 2 kids. There's 9 years difference between my girl and my youngest boy. They inducted him in, and his pay didn't go anywhere - \$21. I had a brother of 11 or 12 who I had to raise from the time Mama died - he was only 4-1/2 when she died. Of course, they had to give me an allotment for him. And they never - he'd send me a wire, and I'd get the allotment and then I'd get the wire. And I'd have to send it all back to him. [laughs] [A] circle.

RM: Can you think of anything else, Phyllis, that you'd want to relate?

PB: His mother's buried up here, too. Her name was Alta Wirtz.

RM: How did she happen to be buried here?

PB: Well, she remarried after she split up with his father. And his father married my Aunt Beulah - my mother's sister. His mother lived in Beatty.

RM: When did she come here - in the '20s?

PB: I think so. I'm not sure - she and I clashed. And when my mother died, she just kind of went against us 2 girls. We just didn't get along at all. And his father and my Aunt Beulah had a rocky road - it didn't last too long. She filled his wader boots full of honey, and [laughs] he put them on to go to work . . . I just heard that; now, I wasn't old enough to . . . but it always tickled me.

They lived in Ash Meadows. They came down from Pahrnagat Valley. The Carpenters originally came from - I think it was Nebraska.

The index has been removed for the digital format. Digitization by Suzy McCoy - Beatty Graphics SM
Productions - Beatty, Nevada