

**AN INTERVIEW WITH
RUTH LEE**

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

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

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

INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

A survey of written sources on Lincoln County's history reveals variability from town to town: A fair amount of literature, for instance, can be found covering Pioche from its first newspaper, beginning in the fall of 1870, to the present. Newspapers from Delamar are available from 1892 to 1906 and Caliente from 1904 to 1868. In contrast, Panaca and Alamo never had newspapers of record. Throughout their histories, all Lincoln County communities received only spotty coverage in the newspapers of other communities. Most of the history of Lincoln County after 1920 is stored in the memories of individuals who are still living.

Aware of Lincoln County's close ties to our nation's frontier past and the scarcity of written sources on local history (especially after 1920), the Lincoln County Commissioners initiated the Lincoln County Town History Project (LCTHP). The LCTHP is an effort to systematically collect and preserve the history of Lincoln County Nevada. The centerpiece of the LCTHP is a set of interviews conducted with individuals who had knowledge of local history. Each interview was recorded, transcribed, and then edited lightly to preserve the language and speech patterns of those interviewed. All oral history interviews have been printed on acid-free paper and bound and archived in Lincoln County libraries, Special Collections in the James R. Dickinson Library at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, and at other archival sites located throughout Nevada.

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

Collection of the oral histories has been accompanied by the assembling of a set of photographs depicting each community's history. These pictures have been obtained from participants in the oral history interviews and other present and past Lincoln County residents. Complete sets of the photographs have been archived along with the oral histories. The oral interviews and

written sources served as the basis for histories of the major communities in Lincoln County. These histories have also been archived.

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

--RDM

This is Robert McCracken talking to Ruth Lee at her home in Panaca, Nevada, February 21, 1990.

CHAPTER ONE

- RM: Ruth, why don't we start by you telling me your name as it is on your birth certificate?
RL: Ruth Danvers. My maiden name was Danvers. That's a very common name in England. My dad came from England.
RM: And what was your birthdate?
RL: November 2, 1905. And I had an identical twin sister.
RM: And what was your father's name?
RL: William Danvers - no middle name.
RM: Do you know when he was born?
RL: I've got it down. It was on the 30th of October in 1871. He was quite a few years older than my mother.
RM: And his father was John Danvers, born April 24, 1835.
RL: That's right.
RM: And where was your father born?
RL: He was born in England - at Woodborough, Nottingham County, England.
RM: That's where my great-grandfather was born, in Nottingham.
RL: Oh, for heaven sakes. We might be friends. [chuckles]
RM: Yes, we might. What was your father's occupation?
RL: My dad had sheep. He ran a big herd of sheep in Wyoming, he and his brother. When they moved here they went to Wyoming on the banks of Green River and had a lot of sheep. My dad worked with sheep in England before he came over here.
RM: Was he a sheep man in England?
RL: Well he was a little kid, but he helped with it.
RM: What was your mother's name?
RL: Rachel Phillips. You don't happen to know Lavon Phillips and Ida Phillips in Caliente? Well, my mother was Rachel Phillips.
RM: And do you remember her birthdate and place?
RL: Oh, I ought to. It's on the next page [of that book].
RM: OK, Rachel Phillips was born the 17th of September, 1880. And where was she born?
RL: In Panaca. Her father, Edward R. Phillips, was born in Chula, Missouri, in 1851. He was born and raised in Missouri. When he was a young man he went to Texas to visit an uncle and lived there for some time. Then he joined a big cattle drive - about 300 Texas Longhorn cattle headed for Arizona. This company was joined by 5 other herds at Fort Cunshell and the combined herds numbered 10,000 head.
RM: How did your father and your mother meet?
RL: My father had a half-sister, and when they lived in England there was a Mormon missionary who went over there from Enterprise, Utah, [chuckles] to convert them - to preach the gospel. And she met [this missionary] there. And he came back home, and when she came over to America a little later they got together and were married. They had relatives [by the name of Terry] living here in Panaca and she came over to visit her relatives and my dad came to visit them because she was his half-sister. And he met my mother here in Panaca.
RM: And what was your father's occupation when he came to Panaca?
RL: His sheep. But he retired soon after he came to Panaca. [In later years] he lived with us. My dad had diabetes and his health was poor. I have a sister, Mary Wilcox, in Caliente, who lived here then. He was here with us until the end of his life.

RM: So your father was older than your mother.
 RL: Oh, yes. I know I remember he was much older than my mother.
 RM: And where were you born?
 RL: I was born in Ogden, Utah. We were living in Wyoming at the time in a house on the banks of Green River. And when we were to be born, my mother came down to Ogden for our birth, so I was born in Utah.
 Well, now let me tell you the rest of how I came to be in Panaca. We were born there, and when we were about 2 years old my mother came down here to visit here father and family. And while she was down here the home in Wyoming burned down and she had no home, so she stayed here with us. That's how we came to be in Panaca.

RM: Where was your father's ranch on the Green River?
 RL: Do you know where Kemmerer, Wyoming, is?
 RM: Yes.
 RL: Right near Kemmerer and Opal, Wyoming. The road went out about 30 miles towards Green River and on the banks of Green River . . .

RM: And he ran sheep there?
 RL: Yes.
 RM: So while your mother was here the house burned down?
 RL: Yes. She was out here visiting and her home in Wyoming burned down so she had nothing to go back to. [She died when she was fairly young and] her father, my grandfather, lived for a long time after she was gone.

RM: And so your dad just left there and came here also?
 RL: Yes, his health was poor. He came down here to stay with my sister and me so we could kind of be looked after.

RM: Did your dad come here soon after the fire?
 RL: No. He had sheep, but he didn't have a home. He had a sheep camp that he lived in where he ran sheep for a long time but he didn't have a home for my mother to go back to.

RM: What made the house burn down?
 RL: I don't know. I never did hear my dad say.
 RM: And what did your dad do when he got here, again?
 RL: He was retired. He bought a lot or two down below town here and he had a few sheep - he sent over to England and got some thoroughbred sheep and brought them over here. He had a few here for a while until he got so that he couldn't take care of them. But then he stayed with Mary and me because he didn't have anyone to look after him and he had diabetes and was quite ill.
 My dad was a very intelligent man. He went to school 3 or 4 years in his whole life, but he was a reader. He knew everything about law and literature and religion and everything. Someone said something to me one day and I said, "Well, I'll go ask my dad." I never could ask him one thing that he didn't know. He read everything.
 I have some of his books in here and they're on history and literature, everything. I'm telling you, he had an education - a college education - and he only went to school 4 years. He was a studier and a reader and he had a wonderful memory.

RM: Where did you live in Panaca?
 RL: Well, it's gone now. It burned down (but I don't know how). You go down at the end of this block and over that street.

RM: That's Phillips?
 RL: Phillips Street. Yes, my mother was a Phillips. And on that upper corner right there, Banks's house was across the street and that was where we were, but the house is gone.

RM: It'd be on Fifth and Phillips?
 RL: Yes. Fifth and Phillips.
 RM: Did you move into that house shortly after you moved to Panaca?
 RL: Well, I guess so. But as I said, I was only 2 years old. I can't remember, but we lived there with my grandpa and my aunt Ruth Phillips, my mother's sister. And she was just like a mother to us kids. She took care of us after our mother was gone. My mother died when I was 18 years old. We were out in Wyoming and she got a tick bite and she got Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and died.
 RM: That's terrible.
 RL: And she was only 43 when she died. And I was 18. And it was a funny thing - when I was 43 my daughter was 18. And I thought, "Oh, wouldn't that be terrible? If I'd be gone and leave my daughter." Because my mother had gone like that.
 RM: So you all lived together in that house on Phillips Street?
 RL: Yes, we lived together - my mother, my aunt and us kids and my grandpa.
 RM: And would you describe the house?
 RL: [chuckles] Well, it was just an old lumber house. It didn't have anything fancy on it.
 RM: How many rooms did it have?
 RL: It had 4 rooms. And we had a separate summer kitchen. There were just 2 bedrooms and a living room and a kitchen in the house.
 RM: And how many children were you?
 RL: I just had my twin sister and an older sister.
 RM: And then your father joined you?
 RL: My dad stayed in Wyoming for years, running sheep and living in his sheep camp. Then later when his health was poor he came down and stayed with us and sold his sheep.
 RM: How old were you when he came down?
 RL: Oh, I was married and had 2 children.
 RM: And when did your grandfather pass away?
 RL: I've got a big book in there. I could tell you.
 RM: OK, we'll get it later. And then you lived with your Aunt Ruth after your mother passed away.
 RL: Yes. And my mother's other sister lived next door to me. My Aunt Ruth never married and she lived right here with her sister, Elva Cutcher. (Bruce Cutcher lives over here now, her son- my cousin.)
 RM: Tell me about growing up in Panaca. What was your childhood like?
 RL: We had a wonderful childhood. We were all poor but we didn't know it. And we didn't have cars to go places in - we had to walk wherever we went. And there was a big reservoir out here just across from town. It would freeze over in the winter and we'd walk out with our skates and have skating parties. And we'd all meet at somebody's house and make candy. We'd all take a cup of sugar, you know, or a little cocoa or something -milk - and we'd make some candy. Isn't that funny? But we just had the best time. We didn't know we were poor. One year I remember that some of the boys in town found an old sled and it snowed a lot, and they got some horses and sleighbells and put it on and we rode all over town. [chuckles] We were just having a good time. As I say, we were quite poor but we didn't seem to mind it. Everyone else was too, you know. And in a little town like this, there wasn't much you could do.
 RM: Did you ever go to other towns?
 RL: Well, not a lot. We didn't have cars, and there were just Caliente and Pioche.

RM: So you didn't go there much?
RL: Not much, until just before I got married. I was more than 19 (I was 21 when I got married) and we used to go to Pioche for the dances because my husband and I bought a little Chevy coupe. Right after we got married we went up there to dances every weekend and to Caliente. But when I was growing up there were hardly any cars in town.

RM: How did people get over to town?
RL: We had a wagon. I remember in 1910 we had a lot of snow and then it turned to rain. And a big flood came down through Caliente and flooded things and went right down the canyon here, right through town. Just out of town - all that water.

RM: You remember that?
RL: Oh, yes. I was 5 years old. And I remember my grandfather hitched up his team and he came and took us to the mouth of the canyon to see the flood coming through. I always remember that.

RM: It washed out the railroad, didn't it?
RL: Oh yes, it did. It was 3 or 4 weeks before a train went through Caliente. The trains would stop at Modena [Utah], and then they'd go by bus down to Vegas. And between here and Las Vegas it took weeks before they got the track all in again.

RM: Tell me some more about your childhood. What kind of games did you play as children?
RL: Oh, Kick the Can and Hide and Go Seek and all kinds of games, we entertained ourselves - nobody ever entertained us. Kids have to be entertained nowadays, you know. We had no television or anything.

RM: What did you do in the evenings?
RL: Oh, we mostly stayed home, or, as I said, a bunch of us would get together and have parties and make candy and do things.

RM: Where was the school in Panaca then?
RL: You go right down this Fourth Street and you see that little old adobe house on the corner of Fourth and Main?

RM: OK.
RL: It's just a little old adobe house standing there vacant. I started school there when I was in the first grade. And then just about the time I got out of the first grade they built a schoolhouse over on the square. It burned down in 1944, but that's where I went to school until I graduated into high school.

RM: How did they heat that adobe building?
RL: Oh, it had an old pot belly stove.

RM: How many children were in the school, do you think?
RL: There must have been 15 or 20 in that little building.

RM: Did it go to the eighth grade or through high school or what?
RL: Well, as I said, when I first started I went there. And then they got the other one built before long, so I don't know. But in the early days in Panaca, that was the school.

RM: And do you remember your teacher at all?
RL: Oh yes. I've got a story about her. She was a wonderful lady. Oh, let's see: [reading] "When we were 6 years old we started to school in the old adobe building which still stands at the corner of Main Street just east of the post office. It was one of the first houses built in the town of Panaca. The adobe bricks of the building were made here in Panaca. And at Christmas time of that first year we moved over to the cement block 2-story building on the town square that would house the grade school for many years. It burned down in the early morning in 1940 and the present school building took its

place. Now, Miss Smith was our first teacher. She was a relative of the Lee family. Also beginning school that year was my dear friend, Ivy Butler." And we had a good time all through school. This Miss Smith was from the east.

Then when we got into the second grade, a Miss Crouse from Pennsylvania was our teacher. She was a very charming lady. By the time we were in third grade, some people from Panaca could teach. After high school they had normal school here and then the young people from Panaca who didn't graduate from [college] but went to normal school, could teach - they got certificates. So by the time I was in the third grade, 2 or 3 of them were ready to teach and they were my teachers.

RM: I see. And they were Panaca people.

RL: Yes. I think the normal school was a 2-year school. Gracie's uncle, Les Hanson, was one of my teachers and my mother's cousin, Sue Hughes, was the other. Then when I got to fourth and fifth grade, a Miss Edna Wadsworth was my teacher [along with] Amy Devlin - and they were all people who lived here and went to school here. Then when I went to the seventh year a Miss Beatrice Wykle, a very attractive lady from the east, taught us. And then when we were in the eighth grade it was Miss Amy Vonny, who was very patient and kind and took us over.

We had lots of school picnics and we walked everywhere. We'd carry our lunch and walk over to Cathedral Gorge - have you been out there?

Oh, my goodness. You'll have to go out.

One time when I was about 12, my Grandfather Phillip's hay burned down. We'd been to a Halloween party. We just got home and we heard someone screaming, "Fire, fire."

And we ran outside and my grandfather's haystack was all on fire. He planned that for hay for the whole year and the whole thing burned down. But the Panaca people all went together and had a big party and raised money for my grandfather to buy hay for his cattle for that year.

RM: Is that right?

RL: Now, you could only find that in a little town - where the neighbors were all so concerned with each other.

RM: How did your grandfather make a living?

RL: He was a farmer. He had a ranch out here south of town in the White Wash.

RM: How many acres did he have?

RL: Oh, 80 I think. And then he had 2 lots back here that Bruce Cutcher has now. He raised all kinds of vegetables and everything and he had some hay fields down here where he raised hay for his cattle.

RM: And then he raised cattle and sold the cattle?

RL: Yes, he had a few cattle and pigs.

RM: Where did he sell the vegetables?

RL: Oh, they'd haul them to Caliente or Pioche. And the Bullionville mill was running and they had a dining room where they fed all the workers and they'd buy the vegetables.

RM: Do you remember the town of Bullionville at all?

RL: Well, not much. But I know we used to go over there and see the old mill and there were some men working there. While the mill was there they had a Chinese cook. We went through there one time and the Chinese cook was awfully nice to us. We were thirsty because we'd walked from the Cathedral Gorge, and he had a big barrel with one cup hooked on the side of it and we all had a drink out of the barrel of water and with cup. [chuckles] I remember that at Bullionville. There were quite a few working there at that time.

RM: Well, up the canyon here somewhere. And then they had some ore, I think, coming in from Hiko.

RM: Could you tell me a little bit about the kind of clothing that you wore when you were a child here?

RL: Our mother made all our clothes. We never had a lot of fancy things, I'll tell you. I had 2 dresses. [chuckles] I'd wear one to school all week, but when I got home from school I'd take it off and put on my old one to play in. Then I could wear that dress every day for a whole week. And then I had a nice dress for Sunday and we had a nice pair of shoes for Sunday and one for everyday. But we were careful with our clothes. We didn't have a lot like kids do now. I used to wear a dress the whole week, and my daughter couldn't wear one dress more than one day. She'd say, "I've got to have another one. What would they think of me if I wore the same dress every day?" [laughs]

RM: Where did your mother get the cloth?

RL: Oh, there was a little store here where we could buy it.

RM: Do you remember what the cloth looked like?

RL: It was calico.
 Now, here's something I wanted to tell you: "I entered the eighth grade the fall of 1918. That was the year the Armistice was signed and the end of World War I. And the soldiers returning home from Europe brought the Spanish influenza and many people died with this terrible contagion. I have read that more people died with that than was killed in the war. And Armistice Day was a time of great celebration all over America. Everybody worked so hard for the war effort. Red Cross units all over were very active. That was when I first learned to knit socks for the soldiers. We were quite young." (And then it tells who taught us how.) "And then, due to the flu, in 1918 all schools and public meetings were closed."
 We had no school in the eighth grade for that whole year. Every time anyone was together (more than 2 or 3) they wore these masks - respirators - that they held over their mouths. Our teacher would go around town every morning and she'd walk down and put lessons in the gate to tell us what to study. And we'd do it and put the papers in the gate the next morning for her to pick up so she'd see that we did our homework.

RM: Is that right?

RL: Nobody ever got together. I remember our little neighbor boy, 8 years old, died with that influenza. My grandfather went down and another neighbor and they took care of the body and someone built a little casket and they took it to the cemetery. They couldn't have a funeral or anything but they buried the little boy. It was a terrible thing, it was frightening.
 But we didn't have school all that year, from that fall clear up through spring until the next fall when I was in high school. We didn't have graduation exercises or anything out of the eighth grade because people couldn't get together on account of that flu. Everyone was just frightened to death of it. So many people died with it, you know.

RM: What kind of coats did you wear?

RL: My mother used to make our coats. In fact, I made my own daughter's coats.

RM: What did your mother make your coats out of?

RL: Old coats. Some of her family had coats they'd outgrown and she'd just take them and cut them down and fit them to fit us girls. And they were nice material. Most of them were wool, they all had wool in them.

RM: How did you wear your hair?

RL: Oh, my mother braided it.

RM: You wore it long and braided, then?
RL: Well, as long as it got. [chuckles] I was telling my sister . . . she had pretty brown eyes and she had the prettiest long dark hair. (She's about 2 years older than I.) And my twin sister and I just didn't have nice hair. It only got to our shoulders.
RM: Was it thin hair?
RL: Oh, it wasn't so thin but it didn't grow long. I was kind of sandy colored with freckles around my nose and everything, and our sister had such pretty hair. But our mother always kept it nice and she braided it.
RM: Did you braid it every day?
RL: Yes - every morning before we went to school. We'd have little bows in our hair.
RM: What did the boys wear?
RL: I don't know. I never had any brothers. [laughs]
RM: What did you have for breakfast in those days?
RL: Bacon and eggs. My grandfather had pigs and we'd had bacon and we always had chickens and eggs and everything - and cereal.

CHAPTER TWO

- RM: So your breakfast every morning was cereal and bacon and eggs?
RL: Yes. And we had cows and we had lots of good fresh milk.
RM: Did you have a lot of bread?
RL: Oh yes. We always made bread. My aunt and mother - in fact, I did too. We always had lots of bread.
RM: Did you come home for lunch?
RL: Oh yes. They didn't have lunch down at school. We walked to school. You know where the schoolhouse is down there now?
RM: Yes.
RL: We lived just around this corner. We'd walk home at noon and have our lunch, then walk back.
RM: What did you have for lunch?
RL: I can't even remember. Sandwiches or maybe soup. When my grandfather had beef we'd make soup.
RM: What was a typical dinner?
RL: Well, it was about the same. But sometimes [chuckles] they cooked a big pot of beans and I always liked that - and maybe baked potatoes. Beans and baked potatoes would be our dinner on wash day. My mother always washed on Monday. They didn't have any power or anything. They just had tubs and their washboard and they'd wash, and on Monday our dinner was beans and baked potatoes.
RM: Because your mom was busy washing and she didn't have time to cook. How many tubs did they use? A wash tub and a rinse tub?
RL: Yes, 2. I've got my washboard still in the basement. I might have to use it again. [laughs]
RM: And then she would hang the wash out to dry?
RL: Oh, yes. She had a big line outside to hang clothes on.
RM: What did you do in the winter?
RL: Oh, they'd dry. We'd leave them out 2 or 3 days or we'd dry them over the chair backs or something in the house.
RM: What kind of soap did you use?
RL: Well, my folks made soap. I learned how to make soap. We saved bacon rinds and fats and put lye with that and my mother would cook it and make soap.
RM: Did you use it for laundry and bathing both?
RL: Oh no. We never bathed with it. We bought soap. We used it for dishes and our laundry.
RM: Was it hard on your hands?
RL: Well, I really don't remember. It didn't seem to be. Of course, after we got a little older we could buy all this stuff, but to start with we made soap.
RM: Tell me about the store.
RL: It started out real early - right after the settlers came into Panaca. A lot of the different people in town put in money in it - it was the Panaca Co-op. And it was a good store. They had things come in, you know.
RM: So you could shop frequently.
RL: Yes, we could shop and get what we needed. It wasn't a lot but we got what we needed.
RM: What are some of the things you bought at the store?
RL: I can't remember. We always had our own meat. My grandpa had meat and we had pork, fat. We bought a little bit of green stuff. We needed it when we didn't have a . . .

RM: Did you buy canned goods in those days?
RL: Well, not so much. I remember buying canned tomatoes but I can't remember a lot of other things. We always had some we bottled - we canned corn and beans and things.
RM: Did your mother do a lot of canning?
RL: We did quite a bit.
RM: And what did she can?
RL: Well, beans and corn and pickles - we raised cucumbers and made lots of nice pickles - and beets (I learned how to bottle beets from my mother) - food that they raised in the garden.
RM: Did you can fruit?
RL: Well, we didn't have much fruit around then. My mother would buy some every fall - about 50 pounds or maybe 100 pounds or 2 bushels. They always raised a lot of fruit in Dixie - in the St. George area in southern Utah - and the peddlers would bring it in and we'd buy it. So we always had lots of nice fruits to can.
RM: Why didn't you have fruit here?
RL: Well, we have too much frost. It won't grow. Just this last spring I had a pear tree out here just loaded with blossoms - just beautiful - and plum trees and an apple tree, and they were all in blossom. Then - frost. I didn't have a thing. And frost got everything in southern Utah this [past] spring.
RM: Is that right? Even at St. George?
RL: Yes, at St. George. And it never freezes down there. So I thought, "Well, I'll get some from northern Utah." (Some of the peddlers would bring it to the store here.) I went up and asked at the store if they'd get me a bushel and Jeanette at the store said, "Well, I got one bushel, and it was so poor that I wouldn't order any." So I didn't even have any fruit this spring. It depends here. But we can't raise fruit here. We have too much late frost.
RM: What things grow best here?
RL: Oh, vegetables. Potatoes and cucumbers and beans and . . .
RM: Did they grow corn?
RL: Yes, lots of corn. I bought a box of corn and froze a lot of it. I have a lot of corn now in my freezer.
RM: Did they grow wheat here?
RL: Not much.
RM: OK, now on Monday you had beans and potatoes. What did you have on the other days?
RL: Oh, I can't remember [chuckles], but I remember beans and potatoes on Monday - wash day. We had lots of vegetables - lots of squash. They'd make squash and casseroles or . . .
RM: Did you have a lot of potatoes?
RL: Oh yes. My grandfather raised potatoes to sell.
RM: OK, Monday was wash day. What was Tuesday?
RL: Ironing day. The rest of the week we'd clean the house or do whatever we wanted to, but Monday was always wash day.
RM: Did you girls have to help with washing?
RL: Well, we liked to think we were helping. [laughing]
RM: Even when you were in school you had to help out?
RL: We tried to a little bit. Later, when Boulder Dam power came into Pioche, then we got washing machines and everything here.
RM: Oh. So there was no power in Pioche?

RL: Oh no. We didn't have power anyplace.

RM: I didn't know that.

RL: We had an old diesel engine. Aaron Mathews is gone now, but he had a diesel engine and he would run it from 7:00 till 11:at night so we'd have lights. And he'd run it for a couple of hours on Monday to wash and 2 or 3 hours on Tuesday to iron. Then the rest of the time we didn't have any power until the Boulder Dam power came in. I remember [chuckles] when we first got Boulder Dam power in here there was a friend of mine - a kid I used to know who lived in Salt Lake. He brought some of these kids down [here with him] and they said, "Oh, they've got power in Panaca, streets lights, and Panaca's ruined." They just said, "Ruined entirely. They've got street lights." [laughs] We never had street lights or anything. We might stomp all over a bunch of cows lying down in the street coming home.

RM: Is that right? Then you went to high school here.

RL: Yes, I went to high school and graduated from high school in 1923.

RM: Tell me what high school was like.

RL: Well, there were only about 30 people the year I went into high school. Fifteen were freshmen and 15 were upperclassmen. They didn't have buses from Pioche and Caliente so all the kids here were from Panaca and Alamo. Alamo didn't have a school then and they'd send their kids over here to live in the winter and go to school. A little later they got buses to Caliente and Pioche and then they bused them down like they do now.

RM: What subjects did you study?

RL: I remember algebra and English and Spanish (we took a foreign language and I took Spanish for a couple of years) and history. I liked that - I had a good history teacher. I just loved that ancient history.

RM: What about extracurricular activities?

RL: There was a basketball team. And we played out in the snow one time. We had this basketball team and Bunkerville had a big team. And they were big players. They looked like old men when they came up here. [chuckles] And the night before the game, it snowed. They had to play outside and it snowed and it snowed and there was a foot or two of snow. They took a team and a scraper and scraped that snow off so that they could have the game. And we stood on the sidelines and rooted for it and we were in snow clear up to our knees. We never had football because there weren't enough kids, just basketball.

RM: And of course, Pioche and Caliente didn't have teams, did they?

RL: Oh no. They had to come here and stay before they got buses [if they wanted to go to school here]. After they got buses running, their kids could come here to school. And it made our school bigger, but . . .

RM: But you played Bunkerville and those teams down . . .

RL: Oh, you bet. And they always had a good team and we always got beat, [chuckles] but we played a good game anyway. We could root for the team and we were real happy.

RM: Did you have school dances and that kind of thing?

RL: You bet we did.

RM: Tell me about them.

RL: We had lots of school dances. The boys'd take us to the dance but they didn't have any cars so they'd walk to get us and we'd walk down to the dance and walk home. And we didn't mind waiting in the snow. We just had good times - lots of good dances. Sometimes somebody playing the piano would be all the music we'd have.

RM: Did you girls get dressed up?

RL: Oh, yes. We thought we looked pretty classy. [laughs]

RM: What did you wear - your Sunday dresses?

RL: Oh yes. But when we played ball (they had a girl's basketball team, too, and I was on it) we wore big black bloomers that came to our knees and white middy blouses, and boy, I'll tell you. We thought we were pretty classy. We had a lot of fun.

RM: Did you have a theater here in town?

RL: Well, people would show movies in the old town hall. There'd be so many reels, and they'd run a reel through and then they'd have to take it out and wind it up and put another reel on. We could go to a show about once a week. It was pretty good. We had to wait while they rolled back the reels and put the other one on, but . . .

RM: This was when you were in school?

RL: Yes. When I was a kid in school.

RM: Ruth, tell me about some of the holidays. How did you celebrate Halloween?

RL: We had a good time. [laughs] We'd make jack-o'-lanterns. I remember we kids would go around and hold them up the window for people to see. There were some old people, the Bladds, who lived down on the corner across the end of Phillips Street there. We'd go down at night and put them up to the window and oh, those people would just be so tickled. They'd just be so happy. And they'd treat us, if they had anything for us.

RM: Did you go trick or treating?

RL: Oh, no. We never had tricks or treats. That was long after, when I had kids. They never did that when I was a kid.

RM: You just went around and held up jack-o'-lanterns?

RL: We just went around and held them up and scared people. We had a big post on each side of the gate at home. We'd put those pumpkins on them all lit up, to decorate our house.

RM: Did you dress up in costumes?

RL: Well, a little bit. We had masks kind of to scare people, you know.

RM: Did you celebrate Thanksgiving?

RL: With the family, yes. We had a wonderful dinner on Thanksgiving. My grandfather raised chickens and turkeys - he'd always have some turkeys - and we'd have a big turkey dinner on Thanksgiving.

RM: What else did you have with the Thanksgiving dinner?

RL: Oh, pumpkin pies and lots of vegetables. My grandfather had one old turkey gobbler that was mean. [chuckles] He used to chase us kids. We'd go home from school and if that old turkey gobbler was in the yard we'd wait till he left before we'd go in. He'd just take after us and pick at us. [laughs] But we got the best of him. We ate him.

RM: [laughs] Was cranberry sauce a tradition then?

RL: It was a tradition but we had to buy it.

RM: Did the family come from other towns or was it just the family in town?

RL: It was just the family here. Most of the family lived here. We didn't have cars for people to come from anyplace else.

RM: Tell me how you celebrated Christmas.

RL: Well, we had a Christmas tree. My grandfather would go out in the hills and cut a pinon pine and bring it in and we'd decorate it. We put candles on one of the first ones we had and lit them. A little later, of course, we got power and we had electric light bulbs. But we'd always have a Christmas tree and we'd string a lot of popcorn and decorate the tree, you know. We didn't have a lot of money to buy decorations. We

had to make what we had. We'd also take paper and cut out little stars and tinsel things and hook them on. (We kids did that.)

RM: Did you say you put candles on the tree?

RL: We had candles.

RM: Did you light them?

RL: Yes. We had to watch them.

RM: How did you celebrate Christmas?

RL: We'd have a family dinner. And when I was a kid they always had kids dances, we'd go to the kids' dance. We little kids would all go and we learned to dance and had a good time, and every afternoon on the day before Christmas we'd have this dance. We had one Christmas and Thanksgiving both. And the older people, of course, would have one in the evening.

RM: Was it little kids or did it include teenagers too?

RL: Little kids, and teenagers would come too. I remember when I was 8 or 10 or 12 years old we'd just have a dance every Christmas and Thanksgiving. And we'd always have a school party on Halloween.

RM: What did you do at the Halloween school party?

RL: Well, we got all dressed up in Halloween costumes.

RM: What would you dress up as?

RL: Oh, one time my sister and I decided we'd be fairies. [laughs] We had some white dresses with tinsel on them and little wing things hooked on. And boy, we though we looked pretty sharp. The kids all dressed up like that.

RM: But you didn't wear those costumes out at night when you were scaring people.

RL: No, we only wore them for the dance.

RM: Was the dance at school?

RL: No, it was at the church house. Those were ward dances that the church put on.

RM: Did they also put on the kids' dance?

RL: Yes, the church did the little kids' dance.

RM: What about New Years? Was that a big day?

RL: I can't remember. It got to be a real day for me when I got older, but when we were that little I can't remember much about New Years.

RM: Valentines Day wasn't a big day in those days, was it?

RL: Not too much. But we always had valentines and we'd go drop them. We'd make valentines and then we'd go out at night and knock on the door and then put our valentines on the step and then run and hide. [laughs]

RM: Oh, is that right? To your loved one?

RL: To anybody in town - friends and neighbors and everybody.

RM: And then what about Easter? Was that a big day for you?

RL: I don't remember that it was. Well, we'd always have an Easter picnic or something.

RM: And was Memorial Day a big day?

RL: Well, Memorial Day was quite a good day here. It was the day when we all went to the cemetery and decorated and cleaned up and put flags up.

RM: What about Fourth of July?

RL: Well, that was always a big day. They'd have a meeting in the town hall and they'd have an orator get up and tell about why we have the Fourth of July and what brought it on and all about it. And they'd have anvils in the morning. They'd just shoot off these anvils or something - 10 or 12 or them - at about 5:00 in the morning. And then they'd have a parade with decorated hay wagons and people on them and they'd march all around town. And they always had a town band when I was little. They'd be on one

wagon that they called the band wagon and they'd play tunes and march all around town and we'd make a big day of it, which they don't any more.

RM: What was Sunday like when you were growing up?

RL: We'd get up Sunday morning and go to Sunday school in the morning and come home and have lunch and go to church in the afternoon. That was our day.

RM: Did you go to church at night?

RL: No, we didn't have church at night. We just had it in the afternoon when I was a kid. And now we have church all in the daytime. But we'd have Sunday school and church and then in the middle of the week we had MIA for the young people - Mutual Improvement Association. And we'd have dances and things.

RM: What day was that?

RL: We'd usually have it on Tuesday.

RM: And what happened at Mutual?

RL: Well, they'd have classes to educate you.

RM: Do you mean religiously?

RL: Yes. And then we'd have parties and games and the MIA would sponsor dances and programs. It was a real big thing.

RM: Were there any other church activities?

RL: Well, the LDS church is the only church in Panaca, so there wasn't anything else. Of course there was the Relief Society for the older ladies.

RM: What was that?

RL: That was for all the women in town. Years ago they first organized the Relief Society to help people - to provide relief for people who were sick and needy and so forth. We'd go all over town and see if people needed anything and take care of the sick and so forth. And we still have Relief Society in our church.

RM: So it still goes on - that's good. Has the church always been kind of the centerpiece of town life in Panaca?

RL: Well, yes it has. Yes, it has. And in the Relief Society we have what we call "teachers." We visit all the people in town and see if they need anything. Now I go out - I have 3 or 4 houses I visit. This week I go to Gracies'. We visit and see if they need anything. If we don't go up, then we call on the phone and see if they're well and how they're getting along.

RM: Let's say a person needs something. What do you do then?

RL: Well, we see that they get it - we do our best.

RM: And where do you get the money if something costs money?

RL: Well, I don't know that we've ever had anything cost money. But people will go in and take food and do things. If someone is sick or anything, we'll all go in and take food and take care of them and see what they need and take it to them.

RM: What other kinds of church activities were there in town?

RL: Well, as I said, the Mutual had the dances and parties and things, and then there was Relief Society, and then Primary for the little kids. And then scouting. There were a lot of kids in the Boy Scouts.

RM: Does the church run the scouts, too?

RL: Yes. We still have a lot of scouts and it's run through our church.

RM: Do you have Girl Scouts?

RL: Well, they might have now, but they didn't when I was little and even when my daughter was little they didn't have Girl Scouts. But my son was a scout - he was an Eagle Scout.

RM: Then you graduated from high school . . .

RL: I graduated from high school in '23 and I got married in '27.
RM: What did you do for those 4 years between when you graduated and got married?
RL: Oh, we just stayed home and helped take care of our grandfather.
RM: You stayed home?
RL: Well, my twin sister and I went to school one year at the Weber Normal College in Ogden. And just at the close of that year our mother was very sick and died and we had to come down here for her funeral and bury her, so we never went back to school. But I was home a couple of years before I got married.
RM: Did you like normal school?
RL: Oh yes, I did. I loved Ogden. I was born there and I have a lot of relatives still there. My twin sister and I liked it.
RM: How did you get to Ogden in those days?
RL: On the train. We used the train [a lot]. When you'd go to Caliente you'd go up on the train, because people didn't have cars.
RM: Did you go over to Cedar City much?
RL: Not very often. I'll tell you, the roads weren't very good and it'd take us 2 or 3 hours to go over. It's 80 miles away and it'd take a long time to get there. I remember one time when I was 18 years old and we took a bunch of 4-H club kids up to Reno to compete with the 4-H clubs for the state. My future father-in-law, Henry Lee, took us. And when I got home I read in the paper, "Henry Lee said that he just came back from Reno and the roads were in fine shape all the way. Motored right along at 20 miles an hour." [laughter] Well, we were 3 days. We went to Tonopah the first day and we camped out. And the second day we thought we might get into Reno, but we hit a big flood up in the northern part of the state and we hid in some little town - I think it was Minden - and the people there let us put sleeping bags on their porch. And we couldn't get into Reno till the third day. So we "motored right along at 20 miles an hour. The roads were in fine shape."

CHAPTER THREE

- RM: What route did you take to get to Reno in those days?
RL: Well, we went over to Tonopah the first day.
RM: How did you get to Tonopah?
RL: We had cars. We'd go over through Hiko and hit that highway there and it went right up to Tonopah. It's the highway that's there now. My daughter went back to Reno yesterday and she said there was a lot of snow on that road. We went by Tonopah and Walker Lake and Fallon.
- RM: Did you ever go to Las Vegas?
RL: Not very much.
RM: It didn't amount to much, did it?
RL: No, it didn't when I was a kid. It just started in about the time I was born, 1905 - the railroad went through there. So Vegas was pretty small then.
RM: But if you went to Vegas did you go on the railroad?
RL: Yes, we went on the railroad. I remember one time we didn't have a dentist here and I had a toothache. I had to go to Caliente and get on the train and go to Las Vegas to get my tooth taken care of and then come back on the train to Caliente. There were no buses or anything.
- RM: When would that have been?
RL: Oh, I was 14 or 15 or 16.
RM: So it would have been about 1920.
RL: Yes. It was long before I got married.
RM: What did you do about health care here?
RL: There was a doctor in Pioche - Doctor Camel. He was wonderful. And he'd come down here and make calls. We didn't have any way to go back up there and he'd come down and do what we needed and then go back. Sometimes if anyone was real sick he'd stay all night. He had a little car.
- RM: Was there a hospital in Pioche?
RL: No, not then.
RM: What did people do if they needed hospitalization?
RL: They'd have to go to Milford, Utah, or Vegas. They'd go on the train to Milford. It was a little handier, maybe, then going to Vegas.
RM: Where would you get medications if you needed medication?
RL: The doctor would tell us and we'd buy what we could at the store. And the doctor might bring a little bit down. But we didn't have much in those days.
- RM: Do you remember any of the medications that were commonly used in those days?
RL: Well, Mentholatum and things that we'd rub with when we'd get sore throats, but we didn't have much. Maybe a little sore throat medicine or something.
RM: And if people broke bones and things like that the doctor would set them?
RL: Yes, he'd set them. Dr. Camel only had one arm. He had gone to take care of a woman and he got an infection from her. She had a baby and something was wrong and he took care of her and got an infection and lost one arm. He was awfully good, I remember how patient and good he was. But he did everything with one arm.
- RM: What did women do about childbirth?
RL: There was a lady here in town who kind of took care of them. Then the doctor would come and he'd stay all night if they needed him.
RM: What was the lady's name here in town?

RL: Well, there was a Mrs. Stuart from Alamo who lived here with her daughter. When one of my children was born, Aunt Nora Wadsworth took care of me. I had the doctor come down and she took care of me.

RM: Were these women a type of midwife?

RL: Well, I don't know if we can call it a midwife because they had the doctor, too. They didn't do it all by themselves. Aunt Nora was my neighbor and I just loved her. And then when my second one was born - Ruby [chuckles], she's 59 years old - this lady from Alamo, Mrs. Stuart, took care of us. She took care of a lot of people - brought a lot of babies into the world. She had a daughter living here and she was staying with her then.

RM: How did women take care of babies here then? First of all, when a woman delivered a baby she stayed in bed a long time then, didn't she?

RL: Oh, my heavens yes. And it was just terrible. And [chuckles] I'd sneak out when that lady was with me. I'd say, "Oh, I heard someone knock on the door and I'll get up and go to the door."
"Oh, no, no," she said. "Oh, you've got to stay in bed 10 days." And you know you were 10 times worse off. Oh, it was just terrible. I'd sneak out when she wasn't looking and walk around. They'd say, "You have to stay in bed 10 days."

RM: And all the women did that?

RL: Yes, they did.

RM: What was their thinking?

RL: I don't have any idea. I was unhappy about it, as I say. But that's quite a while ago.

RM: So they had to have help with their house and their children and everything, didn't they?

RL: Yes.

RM: Tell me about some of the problems in raising babies. You didn't have disposable diapers or anything.

RL: No, no. And I'm sure glad I didn't. [laughs] We had these old diapers that I'd wash out in the toilet or in a tub of water and sterilize and we just got along fine.

RM: What did they use for diapers when you were growing up?

RL: I don't remember when I was growing up. But I'd just buy nice cotton diapers at the store, then I'd wash them and use them all the time.

RM: And women always breast-fed in those days, didn't they?

RL: Yes, I did both of mine.

RM: There were hardly any bottle-fed babies in those days, were there?

RL: No. My sister bottle-fed hers because she couldn't feed them otherwise. But I just fed mine and got along beautifully.

RM: Were there any rules of thumb about when babies should be started on solid food?

RL: No, it was just suit yourself - sort of when you felt like it. About 5 or 6 months old I'd be giving them a little bit of food. They start earlier now but you can buy baby food now, which we couldn't then. We just cooked the vegetables and mashed them up and started the babies out on that.

RM: What were the people's theories on raising children in terms of discipline and that kind of thing? For instance, were you spanked?

RL: Never. And I don't remember ever spanking my kids.

RM: How were you disciplined when you misbehaved?

RL: Well, I don't remember. But I know our mother was always nice and she took us to church every Sunday when I was a little kid. And I'd say, "Do we have to go next Sunday?" [chuckles] And she'd say, "Yes." And we'd go to church and we'd do

everything she said. And I remember one time we did something that she didn't particularly like and she said, "You girls. You're not worth the salt in your food." And that just broke my heart. If she'd have beat me it would've hurt me lots worse. That hurt my feelings more than if she'd have whipped me. We never got spanked.

RM: Did other people in the community spank?

RL: I don't think so, much. I don't know of any who did. There are other ways of disciplining.

RM: What do you think are the best ways in terms of the way you were treated and the way you treated your children?

RL: Well, I don't know. I treated my children about the way I was treated, with love. Love your children and they do what you want them to. You just love them and make sure that they know they're worth something. And gee, they work at it, I'll tell you. They work at doing what you want them to.

RM: Yes, that's a good philosophy.

RL: It's a good way to do.

RM: Well, so you got married. Who did you marry?

RL: Kenneth Lee.

RM: Was he a Panaca fellow?

RL: Yes, we went to school together and we were the same age. We married here in Panaca in 1927.

RM: Did you have a big wedding?

RL: Yes, we did. And we had a big wedding dance.

RM: Tell me about how they held a wedding in those days.

RL: Well, he had an uncle who was a bishop or something in Las Vegas. Charles Ronald was his name. He came up and married us. I had a beautiful wedding dress. It was orchid chiffon with silver beads all over it, and silver slippers. And then we had a big wedding dance.

RM: How many people were at the wedding?

RL: Oh, quite a few because I had my family and Ken's family and my twin sister . . . and the boy she was going with was the best man. My twin sister was my maid of honor and we had a house full of people. We had it at home - the house out where Kenny lives. It's a brick house as you go out of town. So we had a real nice wedding and we had a wedding dance after, out at the town hall - at the time the church was the town hall.

RM: Did you have a band?

RL: No. I can't remember who played. We had somebody play the piano or something.

RM: And then you settled down here in town?

RL: Yes, we did. We lived here.

RM: What did he do for a living?

RL: Ken was always in the cattle business, he was a cattleman. He had cattle on the range and always worked with cattle. That's what my son does now. He has a lot of cattle.

RM: Did he have a ranch?

RL: Yes, we had fields up here - 300 or 400 acres. My son has it now. He's bought more since his dad died. My son has quite a few cows out there - 200 or 300, I think. He had 80 new calves in just the last few days, they're calving now. But my husband always had cattle. They used to run them on the range out of town here and he'd go out and ride 2 or 3 days and take care of them and then bring them in in the fall when it was time to sell.

RM: How many children did you have?

RL: I have 2.

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

RL: Kenneth Danvers was born in 1929. (Danvers is my maiden name.) He lives up here. And then I have one daughter, Ruby. Now, my twin sister's name was Ruby and I named my daughter Ruby for her. And she lives in Sparks, Nevada. She was down here over the weekend to visit me. She's married and has 4 boys.

RM: Does your son have children?

RL: Oh yes. He had 3 girls and 1 boy. And I have 13 great-grandchildren.

RM: And were your children raised here in Panaca?

RL: Oh yes.

RM: Where did you live in town after you got married?

RL: That pretty yellow brick house as you go out of town there. Go up Main Street and it's the last house on the south side. My son has it today. That's where my kids were raised.

RM: I see. Was that your husband's house?

RL: Yes. My husband's father and mother had that house. And they moved to Carson because he worked in the Industrial Commission so we had the house. And then later we turned it over to our son Kenny, who has it now.

RM: When was the house built?

RL: Let's see. It was built when my husband was 11 years old, so it was about 1916, or '17. It's a very nice home, and I remember that it only cost them \$2000, and look at it now - what it costs. [chuckles]

RM: Where did they get the bricks?

RL: I don't know. They shipped them in from somewhere.

RM: Ruth, when did they put the highways in? Do you know?

RL: Well, I don't know. There's always been that road to Pioche and Caliente. It's been a good road ever since I can remember.

RM: Has it always been paved?

RL: Well, no, but it was a good dirt road - a real good foundation road.

RM: Over the years did you go to Pioche much?

RL: Well, we used to. I don't so much anymore. But when I was a kid we always went to the Saturday night dances up there. That was our weekend event - to go to Pioche to the dances. And it was a good town. There were several hundred men working at the mine. When the mines closed down in Pioche it went dead.

RM: When did the mines close down at Pioche?

RL: Oh, in the 1930s or '40s. They laid off all the men, and there was just no work around. In Panaca, you see, we'd farm in the summertime and then in the winter the men could go up and get a job on the mines, then quit to farm in the summer, until the mine closed down.

RM: And a lot of Panaca men did that?

RL: Oh yes.

RM: And when the mines closed, what did the Panaca men do?

RL: Well, they just lived on their farm or went somewhere and tried to get work for part of the year to get by until they could come back and raise their gardens again. Of course, we didn't need a lot to live on then - I mean, there wasn't a lot to spend money on.

RM: Where did the men have their farms in Panaca? They lived in town, didn't they?

RL: Do you know where the town spring is above town?

RM: Well, a little bit.

RL: Well, right up beyond that is where my husband had the farm - and my son has it now. He has 300 acres up there. You can go on the highway going to Pioche. Go up there a

little ways till Bullionville and above there there's a road that goes right over through to the farms - to where my son has his farm. It goes clear through on this side of the valley, you know. Up by the town spring.

RM: So there are farms up in there, too.

RL: Oh yes - there are lots of good farms up there.

RM: Are there farms south toward Caliente?

RL: Well, there are some out here in White Wash. There used to be more. I don't know how many are out there now, but there are some.

RM: When you were growing up how did people in Pioche make a living?

RL: Well, as I said, the mine was there and it didn't close down until after I was married. And men from here worked there, too, when they weren't farming. They'd go up and work for the winter.

RM: So the mines were important for the men here.

RL: Oh, you bet they were important. They were important for the whole county.

RM: Was there anything else that helped keep the economy of Panaca going through the years? What else was here in terms of making money?

RL: Well, there wasn't much of anything. The farmers might sell their produce a little bit and their cattle. We always had cattle. We'd take them over to Cedar to the auction yard. There's a big auction there at Cedar and my son takes his over there now.

RM: Was there always an auction there?

RL: I don't think so when I was young. In the time of the Depression we didn't have any money because there was no work around but we had plenty of food. We raised food and then my husband had cattle. We'd go to Caliente and take a beef and the markets would buy his beef and we'd take groceries for the beef. So we always had plenty to eat.

RM: What did the other people in town do?

RL: Well, they just got along. Most everybody had a few pigs and a few cows and we'd get along.

RM: Where did they keep their pigs and cows?

RL: Sometimes right in their back yard when I was little (but they don't anymore). Of course there are no cattle around except up in the feeders now. But everybody had a pig or two that they could keep in their back yard or in back of the lot so they'd have some pork and food for winter.

RM: How many stores were there in town through the years?

RL: There was just one. And one other time there was another - that old adobe place that I went to school in. For a little while some of the Wadsworths had a little store there but it didn't last long. There was just the Panaca Market that's there now.

RM: There never was a drug store or . . . ?

RL: No, nothing like that.

RM: How about a gas station?

RL: Out at the Y. [chuckles] That was our gas station.

RM: What did you do about law enforcement through the years in Panaca?

RL: Well, they had a sheriff here for town.

RM: There probably never was much trouble here, was there?

RL: No. People were just quiet and stayed home and took care of their families so we had no reason to have law enforcement offices.

RM: What about a volunteer fire department?

RL: Well, we have one here now but I don't know how many years it's been here. In the old days we didn't have any law department. I told you about my grandfather's haystacks

that burned down in the middle of the night, and there was just no way to fight the fire. It burned all his haystacks down. They only carried buckets of water to throw on it - we had nothing.

RM: Do you think somebody set that fire?

RL: No, I think it was this way: There were some people living not too far away and the man smoked. And I think maybe when he was coming home he dropped a match there by the haystack and it caught fire.

RM: I was just wondering if maybe a Halloween pumpkin or something . . .

RL: No.

RM: I wanted to ask you - on Christmas did Santa Claus come?

RL: You bet. [laughs] And nobody could ever make me believe that he didn't. Because I woke up one night - and we had a big old lilac bush out on the lawn - and I could hear that sleigh there by that lilac bush, and nobody could ever make me believe I didn't.

RM: Isn't that sweet? [chuckles]

RL: We always had a nice Christmas. We didn't have a lot of money but we had a nice, happy Christmas.

RM: What kind of presents did Santa Claus bring the kids?

RL: Well, not a lot. I remember we'd get one little thing, maybe a doll. I remember I had a rag doll with a pretty head on it. When the head wore out they'd buy a new head and sew it on or get new hair for it and put a new hairpiece on and we'd have practically a new doll. And then we'd make clothes for the doll. We'd dress them ourselves. I think I had only one doll all my life, or maybe 2 - a little celluloid doll that I made clothes for when I got a little older. But we didn't have a lot. We were happy to have one doll and maybe a slate or something to write on and some crayons and a few little things like that.

RM: Did you make any of your toys?

RL: I don't remember that we did, except doll clothes. We made our dolls' dresses.

RM: So you learned to sew by making doll clothes.

RL: You bet. We learned to sew.

RM: Did you use the old pedal sewing machine?

RL: Yes sir. I've still got one.

RM: How old were you when you started sewing?

RL: Oh gosh, I don't know. Ten or 12 years old or a little younger maybe. As soon as we could hold a needle our mother taught us how.

RM: Did you also learn to knit and crochet and things like that?

RL: Yes, I learned to knit when I was 12, for World War I. I knitted socks for the soldiers. Our neighbor taught us how. She'd set it on for us and then we'd knit and then we'd go up to her place when it came to the heel. (We had to turn the heel around, you know, and go down for the toe.) In World War II I knitted 13 sweaters for the Red Cross.

RM: Is that right? Did you furnish the yarn or did they?

RL: I furnished it.

RM: What effect did World War I have on Panaca?

RL: Well, we lost one of our neighbors when I was little. We lost one and one neighbor boy (I had a picture of him the other day, I showed Kenny) who lived next to us was in France but he got home. World War II was the same. We had a lot of boys in World War II who were gone from Panaca. In fact, 4 of them were killed.

RM: What effect did their absence have on the community?

RL: Well, it left a sad feeling. It affected everybody. If we didn't have one of our family go, our neighbors did. And you know, in a little town like this you're just like one big family. And when one was gone it affected the whole town.

RM: Did it make it harder to get work done with less men here?

RL: I don't recall that it did.

RM: What effect did the Depression have on Panaca?

RL: Well, we learned how to do without in the time of the Depression. We had all we needed to eat, but we didn't have any money. I remember one time I wanted to write to my twin sister, who was teaching school over at McGill, and I never had 3 cents for a stamp. When I got the letter written I didn't have 3 cents for a stamp. That shows where the Depression hits you. And you were just doing fine and all of a sudden that Depression hits you.

We had a neighbor who lived out there back of the Y - his name was Andy Anderson. He was a stockbroker in New York and all of a sudden the Depression hit like that and he lost everything he had. He told me that he was in Las Vegas and he was trying to make a living and he said for 3 days he never had one thing to eat. And then for a little while after that he'd find things in garbage cans. He was making a lot of money and that Depression hit just like that and he lost everything.

RM: Wow.

RL: It really hit here in Nevada. There were one or two men up north who committed suicide. They couldn't live without that money. They lost a lot of money and that was .

RM: Where was that, in Reno?

RL: Around the Reno area and Carson City.

RM: Do you remember the Korean War affecting you any here?

RL: Well, I can't recall that it did too much.

CHAPTER FOUR

- RM: How do you see Panaca as having changed since you were a little girl?
- RL: Well, it changed quite a lot. All the houses up above town is housing that the government came in and built for people.
- RM: When did they do that?
- RL: It was along about the time of the Depression, or a little after.
- RM: Oh, about in the '30s?
- RL: No, I think it was after the '30s. Gee, I can't remember. But after that came in we had a lot of people come and live in these houses. And a lot of people came here to retire - people who didn't earn a living but had something to retire on. Today in Panaca we have a lot of retired people moving here because they like the life that's here.
- RM: Are they mainly LDS people?
- RL: Well, the only church we have here is LDS but a lot of people are not LDS. About half of the people, I imagine, in Panaca are not LDS. But they're all fine people. My neighbors are not but they're wonderful people.
- RM: So that beginning with the Depression, would you say that you saw a transformation of Panaca from a town that was mainly farmers and guys working in the mines to more of a community of retired people?
- RL: Well, that's the way it is today - a lot of retired people.
- RM: Is there anything else that's supporting the town economically? There's no mining here, is there?
- RL: No, there's no mining now in Pioche but some of the people are working out at the Timpahute and out at the Test Site. [The ones who work at the Test Site] just come home on the weekend.
- RM: OK. They started the Test Site in 1951. How did that affect Panaca?
- RL: After they started, some of the men who were out of work here went down there and were very glad to get jobs. And there are quite a few working down at the Test Site now who live here. As I say, they come home on the weekend.
- RM: Do you remember when they were shooting the A-bombs off in the air?
- RL: I sure do. They shot one off in the night. And I remember my whole bedroom lit up. It kind of went through the window in the night and I could see the whole thing lit up and a big cloud that went up into the sky. That went for a few times, and then pretty soon they put it underground.
- RM: Did you folks get any radiation here? You know, they say they did down at St. George.
- RL: I know they did, but my son had some cattle and he was selling milk, so he had to have this milk checked every day. He'd take a gallon of it and I think they went to Vegas to check it to see if there was any fallout any in it. And he and his family all went to Las Vegas and stayed overnight and went to the hospital to be checked to see if they had any contamination from it.
- They were all free of it and the milk never once showed any of it. It never did show up here in Panaca. The wind might have blown it further north in Utah and places. But we didn't get any here.
- RM: Do any of the people here think they got it?
- RL: No, I don't think so.
- RM: So people here don't think that there was any cancer or anything caused by the fallout?
- RL: No. As I say, Kenny and his wife and their 2 children went to Las Vegas and they put them in the hospital overnight and checked them and made sure, and they never had

anything at all. And they'd test the milk to see if there was fallout or anything. I think the wind maybe blew it the other way.

RM: When you were growing up - and many years ago - were there different roads going across what is now the Test Site?

RL: I don't think so. You see, when I was growing up we didn't have cars so we couldn't get out. I didn't know anything about that Test Site.

RM: Timpahute opened in the '50s, didn't it? Did it have any effect on Panaca where - did men work there?

RL: Oh, a few maybe, but not many. What's kept Panaca is the schools - the high school teachers and the principals and the janitors and everybody who works in the schools. And then the bus drivers now, you see.

RM: Oh. So the kids from Caliente and Pioche come down here.

RL: They take buses every morning to Caliente and Pioche and bring the kids down and take them back at night.
My neighbor across the street here drives a bus and he goes in the morning about 7:00 or 6:30 and starts his bus and goes and drives one of the buses.

RM: Where do the kids in Alamo go to school?

RL: They have a high school in Alamo now.

RM: It must be really small.

RL: Yes, it's quite small. When I was a kid the Alamo kids had to come over here and go to school. But of course, that was years ago.

RM: What did people do for newspapers in the old days?

RL: Well, we had papers.

RM: Which ones do you remember?

RL: The Salt Lake Tribune. It'd come in and sometimes we got it by the mail and then after a while some kids would get it and pack it and deliver it around town. I always had the Salt Lake Tribune. And then there was the Las Vegas Review Journal. I took 2 papers for a long time. In fact, I still do. [chuckles]

RM: When did you start getting television here?

RL: Well, I don't remember.

RM: Do you have a cable system here?

RL: My neighbor just put in cable. Did you see those big plate things up by the post office on those big dish things?

RM: Yes.

RL: Well, that's what they put in to bring in cable. Now my neighbor had it put in, but I never did. I just have plain old television.

RM: You don't have cable?

RL: I don't have cable. I've just got an antenna up on the roof, and that brings it in.

RM: When did your husband pass away?

RL: In 1971. I've been a widow 18 years. He had emphysema. He smoked too many cigarettes.

RM: He was a smoker, then?

RL: Yes, he smoked when he was a kid. We did everything we could for him but . . . we took him to Cedar and he was in the hospital 4 weeks. I sat beside his bed for 4 weeks. His lung collapsed and he couldn't live. And for all these years I've been alone. But I've got my family and my friends and I read a lot - I'm a reader. I read everything. I take Reader's Digest and National Geographic and Good Housekeeping and a lot of good magazines. That's what keeps me going. Then I have my family here - my son - and my grandkids live over in Cedar. So I get along fine.

RM: They made quilts in the early days, didn't they?
 RL: You bet they made quilts. We still quilt. I went out yesterday to quilt. [chuckles] We make those little tiny stitches. Down here at the center a lady had a little baby quilt on. Yes, we made lots of quilts. We usually would tie them, but we quilted, too. And I enjoyed it. Quilting takes lots longer than tying because of those little tiny stitches. But it's beautiful. I just like to do it. And people do that now still.

RM: Did you do patchwork quilts?
 RL: No, I never did. But I've got one that my grandfather's family made - little tiny 5-sided blocks. It's a great big one all pieced by hand. Just imagine.

RM: Yes - imagine the work.
 RL: I can't. When I look at that, I just can't imagine it.
 RM: What other kinds of activities did people do, in terms of crafts?
 RL: Well, we all learned to knit. We had a knitting club during the war - I told you how we knit all those things for the war. There were 10 or 12 of us girls in the club and our husbands were happy too because we'd have a party whenever anyone had a birthday and they'd get to come to the party. [chuckles] But we knit a lot of things for the war and kept busy. We were happy being busy.

RM: Do you still have a knitting club?
 RL: Well, no. I'll tell you, so many of them are gone. Five of our knitting club girls died with cancer and 2 or 3 with heart attacks. And nearly all the husbands are gone. See, we're getting old and nearly all the husbands are gone. I think maybe one or two are left. Maybe once every year or two we get together and have a little party or a picnic out in the hills. But there are not many of us left. Time takes its toll.

RM: How big was your club?
 RL: Oh, we had 10 or 12 - 10 all the time. We started our knitting club in World War II and there were about 10 of us. And then different ones'd leave and then others'd come in, so it stayed about 10. Now we don't do it anymore. We had a party when we had our 40th anniversary and we took some pictures and had a get-together. But as I said, there are not many left anymore. Time goes by, but we had a wonderful time while we were doing it. And we made so much for the war effort.

RM: Yes. Tell me about the part that your religious beliefs play in your life.
 RL: Well, our mother took us to church when we were little and we always went. We learned honesty and to be trustworthy and to be dependable and to do all good things and moral. We learned all of that going to church. And we didn't know it when we were little but as I look back and think, what a difference it made in our lives! And now, if I miss going to church on Sunday I just don't get over it. And I look at my neighbors, who don't go, and I think, "Oh, what would it be like to never go to church?" I don't know. It's always been my life, more or less. I'm not radically religious or anything, but it's just the idea that Sunday is to worship and be thankful for what we have. I can be thankful that I have such good health at my age and am able to take care of my home. I have a garden in the summertime and I even get up on the ladder and paint my house outside and do everything. And I've been so blessed. I feel that I've had a special blessing to have such good health at my age.

RM: Yes, that's true. Are we leaving any important things out here, Ruth?
 RL: Well, I don't think of anything right now. Probably when you're gone I will.
 RM: And your husband raised cattle . . .
 RL: He was a cattleman and he raised hay and all. But it was cattle that kept him going.
 RM: How many cuttings of hay did he get?
 RL: Three.

RM: Was it alfalfa he raised?
RL: Yes. And then my son has some grass hay that he just cuts once a year from the pasture. Grass hay is good for horses.
RM: But the grass hay isn't good for the cows?
RL: Well, they don't do so well on it. The horses'll do better on the grass hay. The cows probably don't give as good of milk and everything. They usually have alfalfa for the cows. And the horses do better on the grass hay.
RM: Did you take magazines when you were young?
RL: Yes. Always we had magazines.
RM: What were some of them?
RL: Well, we had some church magazines. And I had the McCulloughs and the Ladies Home Journal and magazines like that. You can see some church magazines I have here. And this is the magazine my daughter brought me down - Nevada, the Silver State. I've read it all, too. It's a beautiful book. And so I take magazines now. But when I was growing up we always had church magazines and McCalls and Good Housekeeping.
RM: Did you or either of your kids go on a mission?
RL: No, I didn't. I have 5 grandsons - my daughter's one boy is in Japan now on a mission for the church. And the other 4 grandsons have been. Two of them went to Sweden and one to Germany. And then my grandson living here in Panaca (my daughter's children don't live here) went to Ohio on a mission. It's a wonderful education for them - they get to meet people and know people.
RM: Not all the kids went on missions in those days, did they?
RL: No. But my grandsons did. One of the grandsons who went to Sweden said that they have to get into the homes in order to tell them about the gospel and everything. So they'd go out in the fields and help the farmers - run the tractor and help them with their farm work and everything - and then they'd get invited in the house. [chuckles] He enjoyed it. He said it was nice to get out in the fields with the farmers and the people.
RM: That's nice. Does Panaca have a sewer system or is everybody on septic?
RL: Oh, we have a good sewer system.
RM: You didn't have that when you were a kid, did you?
RL: Oh no.
RM: And they brought the lights in with Boulder Dam power?
RL: When Boulder Dam came in they brought the street lights. "Just ruined Panaca - these street lights ruined Panaca." And my husband had that field up there and they had wells and they could drill wells and then they had the power up there to pump them. My son is running 2 or 3 wells now - 1200 gallons a minute.
RM: Does Panaca has a city water system?
RL: Yes.
RM: Where does that water come from?
RL: Wells. There's a well up here at the edge of town. And up above town - maybe you can see it from there - on that hill there's a big tank. The water goes into that tank and then it comes out all over town. They pump it up from the town here into the tank. We've always had a lot of fine people in Panaca who've been willing to help each other. And that's what has made us a good town and why we still have it today. It's a fine community to raise a family in. You don't have to worry a bit about somebody breaking into your home or anything. My grandson lives in Las Vegas, and right after they got

their home somebody broke into it. It's been broken into 2 or 3 times. They can hardly believe it.

RM: Isn't that awful?

RL: And my cousin down there - Bruce's sister - has a security guard along where they live in Vegas. So we're lucky in Panaca. We don't have to worry. It's just a little town and everyone helps everybody else.

RM: Where is your twin sister?

RL: My twin sister died in '42.

RM: Oh.

RL: When we were in the eighth grade she had rheumatic fever and it left her with a bad heart. And the doctor said to her, "Never hurry and never worry and never get excited and don't climb stairs." And she lived so long with that, trying to live, and finally she just couldn't.

RM: But she got rheumatic fever and you didn't?

RL: She got rheumatic fever when we were kids.

RM: And you didn't get it?

RL: I never got it. I guess I'm a tough old gal. It really broke my heart. We were identical sisters.

RM: Oh, I know.

RL: And I couldn't even look myself in the glass, I look so much like Ruby. And I just thought that was awful. I couldn't live with it, but here came World War II and I got so busy knitting and working for the war effort . . .

RM: And that helped you get over it?

RL: It helped me. Then I had my own family. But, it was a terrible thing, losing my sister like that so young. To die so young. But when I tell my kids my mother was only 43 when she died. And you know, that's so young.