

F
849
L35
B78
2010

An Interview with Senator Richard Bryan

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee White

Voices of the Historic John S. Park Neighborhood

Oral History Research Center at UNLV
University Libraries
University of Nevada Las Vegas

© Voices of the Historic John S. Park Neighborhood
University of Nevada Las Vegas Libraries 2010

Produced by:

The Oral History Research Center at UNLV Libraries, Director: Claytee D. White

Project Creators: Patrick Jackson and Dr. Deborah Boehm

Transcriber and Editor: Laurie Boetcher

Editor and Production Manager: Barbara Tabach

Interviewers: Suzanne Becker, Barbara Tabach, Claytee D. White

Recorded interviews, transcripts, bound copies and a website comprising the *Voices of the Historic John S. Park Neighborhood Oral History Project* have been made possible through a grant from the City of Las Vegas Centennial Committee. Special Collections in Lied Library, home of the Oral History Research Center, provided a wide variety of administrative services, support and archival expertise. We are so grateful.

This project was the brainchild of Deborah Boehm, Ph.D. and Patrick Jackson who taught at UNLV and resided in the John S. Park Neighborhood. As they walked their community, they realized it was a special place that intersected themes of gender, class, race/ethnicity, religion, sexuality and gentrification. Patrick and Deborah learned that John S. Park had been listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and that original homeowners, local politicians, members of the gay community, Latino immigrants, artists and gallery owners and an enclave of UNLV staff all lived in the neighborhood. Therefore, they decided that the history of this special place had to be preserved, joined with the Oral History Research Center at UNLV Libraries and wrote a grant that was funded by the Centennial Committee.

The transcripts received minimal editing that included the elimination of fragments, false starts and repetitions in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the narrative. These interviews have been catalogued and can be found as non-circulating documents in Special Collections at UNLV's Lied Library.

Deborah A. Boehm, Ph.D.
Fulbright-García Robles Scholar 2009-2010
Assistant Professor, Anthropology & Women's Studies

Patrick Jackson, Professor
John S. Park Oral History Project Manager

Claytee D. White, Director
Oral History Research Center at UNLV Libraries

Interview with Senator Richard Bryan

February 19, 2009
Conducted by Claytee White

Table of Contents

Recalls early life: born in Washington, D.C., father graduated from Las Vegas High School (1927), went to University of Nevada and worked in the Highway Department during the Great Depression, graduated from law school in Washington, D.C., family returned to Las Vegas (1942), father passed Nevada Bar exam (1943), Senator Bryan attends Fifth Street Grammar School	1
Bryan family purchases a home in the John S. Park Neighborhood (1943). Talks about how houses were built in the 1940s. Describes the early Huntridge Neighborhood.	2
Talks about early activities in the park on Maryland Parkway, and importance of World War II: Victory Gardens, fascination with the war as a child, seeing German airplanes, open houses at Nellis AFB and seeing American aircraft, wearing a naval officer's uniform as a child, newsreels	3
Recalls father working at BMI during World War II. Memories of World War II: ration stamps for gasoline and ration books for purchasing enumerated items, milk delivery by horse-drawn wagon, elimination of sliced bread (wartime need for slicing machines)	6
Remembers all the kids he knew in the John S. Park Neighborhood, the activities that kids organized in the community, opening of Huntridge Theater (1944), summer baseball	9
Participation in Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, and involvement of Elks in scouting and in the community	13
Political leanings in John S. Park Neighborhood	17
The Elks and the Helldorado parade in Las Vegas, NV	18
Opening of the temporary John S. Park Elementary School (1943) and building the permanent school (1948). Recounts school life and teachers at John S. Park.	21
Early businesses located in the John S. Park area	26
Changes to the John S. Park Neighborhood: new housing developments, Strip hotels, commercial presence in the Huntridge area, importance of Sill's Drive-In	27
Connections between the John S. Park Neighborhood and the Strip as it was growing: people who worked in Strip hotels, and who owned small businesses downtown	29
Compares John S. Park Neighborhood yesterday and today. Talks about improvements that early residents made to their homes.	29
What he liked most about living in John S. Park community: "Every day was fun." No "economic chasm" between families.	31
Boys and girls worked during high school. Work as mailing clerk and salesman for Bonds Jewelers.	33

How growing up in the John S. Park Neighborhood in the 1940s and 1950s influenced his successful career: influence of father's community involvement, mother's interest in history and politics, participation in school office-holding and lessons learned	35
Concluding remarks re: John S. Park Neighborhood oral history project and Senator Bryan's career	36

Preface

Senator Richard Bryan's Las Vegas story was first told by his father graduated from Las Vegas High School in 1921, left to attend law school and later returned with his young family. His father was particularly proud and a true mentor of young Richard, who would go on to become Governor of Nevada in the 1970s and then U.S. Senator.

In his memoirs, Senator Bryan describes his parents looking at the plot map of John S. Park in 1943 and that the "eighteen house on Maryland Parkway" he signed to buy was "a home away from home" in the John S. Park neighborhood and became a place where he could relax with his family and friends. He describes the house with its own garden, a green, white, and yellow driveway, and a lawn where his family would play for hours on weekends.

He describes the impact of World War II on the neighborhood, attending movies at the Hamilton Theatre, and becoming a student leader as well as being active in the Boy Scouts and the Red Cross. He talks about the large gathering of the parade for the 50th anniversary of the neighborhood.

As Las Vegas' population grew, the neighborhood began to fill in. The idea of a group of schools, including the present-day John S. Park High School, was born. A swimming pool, a tennis court, and a gallery were just some of the amenities that the neighborhood offered. The house eventually became a museum and a part of the oral history project. He talks about the oral history project and the importance of preserving the neighborhood's history.



Preface

Senator Richard Bryan's Las Vegas roots are deep. His father graduated from Las Vegas High School in 1927, left to attend law school and later returned with his young family. His father was politically active and a role model for young Richard, who would succeed in becoming Governor of Nevada in the 1980s and then U.S. Senator.

In this interview, Senator Bryan describes his parents looking at a plat map of John S. Park in 1943 and that they bought a house on Maryland Parkway for around \$5500.00. He recounts details of the John S. Park neighborhood development and nearby areas and talks about houses with carports rather than garages, no grass, rough asphalt driveways, and a desert where kids could play for hours without supervision.

He mentions the impact of World War II on the community, attending movies at the Huntridge Theatre, and becoming a student leader as well as being active in the Boy Scouts. About the Helldorado Days, he talks about the large undertaking of the parade for the Elks Club.

As Las Vegas' population grew, the neighborhoods began to fill in. He tells of the opening of schools, including permanent JSP Elementary in 1948 – with no air conditioning. Neighborhood commerce included a grocery store and Sills Drive-in. On the Strip, he remembers Club Bingo (eventually called Sahara) opening as well as the long list of other hotel/casinos that are part of Las Vegas history.

ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH CENTER AT UNLV

Voices of the Historic John S. Park Neighborhood



Use Agreement

Name of Narrator: X RICHARD F. BRYAN

Name of Interviewer: CLAYTEE D. WHITE

We, the above named, give to the Oral History Research Center of UNLV, the recorded interview(s) initiated on 2/19/2009 as an unrestricted gift, to be used for such scholarly and educational purposes as shall be determined, and transfer to the University of Nevada Las Vegas, legal title and all literary property rights including copyright. This gift does not preclude the right of the interviewer, as a representative of UNLV, to use the recordings and related materials for scholarly pursuits. There will be no compensation for any interviews.

X [Signature] 2/19/09
Signature of Narrator Date

Claytee D. White 2/19/2009
Signature of Interviewer Date

Interview with Senator Richard Bryan

February 19, 2009 in Las Vegas, Nevada
Conducted by Claytee White

This is Claytee White and I'm with Senator Richard Bryan. Today is February 19th, 2009 and I'm in his office in the Bank of America Tower downtown Las Vegas. So how are you today?

I'm fine, Claytee, and I'm looking forward to the interview because it brings back a lot of wonderful memories.

Fantastic! So why don't you just start by telling me about your early life. Tell me, growing up in John S. Park.

Well, let me just tell you that my father had graduated from law school in Washington, D.C., where I was born. He had graduated from Las Vegas High School in 1927, went to the University of Nevada and during the Depression years worked in the Highway Department, and so we as a family returned to Las Vegas shortly after Pearl Harbor in January of 1942. And my father's sister had some property on Main Street, Main and Lewis. Pretty modest, and I'm trying to use a nice word, but it wasn't much of a place. And so when my father passed the bar in October of 1943, we were looking to buy. It was during the war [World War II] years. I had gone to school that first year at Fifth Street Grammar School and my kindergarten teacher was a legendary teacher who taught for decades—Doris Hancock has a school named after her. No one of my generation would fail to recall her name.

And so, in October of 1943, we drove to the intersection of what would be Tenth [Street] and Charleston [Boulevard]. Charleston was not cut through to the east, to Maryland Parkway as Charleston connects with the Boulder Highway. So Charleston, as

far east as it was paved and it was open to traffic, ended at Tenth Street. And there was what I reconstructed in my mind now, probably what we would call a sales office and model home. Obviously those were terms that were not familiar to me as a child but I remember it vividly, because there was a plat map, and on that map there were pins, and the pins represented either the lots that were sold or the lots that were available. And so we drove around the John S. Park Neighborhood, and our family decided on a house at 1141 Maryland Parkway, and we did in fact buy it and moved in shortly thereafter.

The Huntridge Neighborhood was nearing completion. This would have been one of the final phases. But the houses immediately across the street and down the street, on Francis, were being framed, and we as kids kind of went into the [area], and I can recall how houses were built. I mean there was a concrete pad, not any different. The plumbing was done. And then in those days the framing was in place, but the exterior house was wrapped in what looked like tar paper, and then there was chicken wire, and it was plastered. I remember that.

A brief description of these homes might be of interest to you. Huntridge was clearly what I would consider an upwardly-mobile neighborhood. I mean it was the largest subdivision probably ever constructed in Las Vegas at the time, and in effect the people that were there were in effect a pretty eclectic group. My father was a lawyer but around the corner, one of my best friends, his father worked for an electrical company here in town, a retail electrical shop. Another kid's father did the landscaping at one of the Strip hotels. Another friend of mine's father worked at the Weather Bureau. Accountants, contractors, working-class folks but clearly these houses, and our house was a corner lot, and I believe it was fifty-five hundred dollars.

So that was our house. And it was a terribly exciting time for our family. My father had just passed the bar and we were moving into this new neighborhood which seemed like that there were just kids on every block. There's no question about that.

The parkway, Maryland Parkway, terminated at Oakey [Boulevard]. Oakey was the last street; beyond that, it was desert. And Oakey was named after the developer Tom Oakey, who owned the house immediately across the parkway to the west. And his house would've been on the west side of the parkway the same position as ours on the east side.

And the park itself was not developed. In other words, initially, there was no grass or anything but shortly thereafter, and I don't recall the exact time, they brought hundreds and hundreds of baled-like-hay peat, just bales and bales of peat that were wired and were just like a bale of hay. And for us as kids, we made forts and kind of threw peat clods back and forth, nothing in a malicious way, and that was for a period of time, maybe it was a few weeks, I've lost track, but that was the beginning. And then the park itself became kind of the central focus for the neighborhood. I was never an athlete but during the summer months, we'd have what you'd call now a pickup baseball game, people would just kind of arrive and play on the parkway.

As I say, I mean it was during the war years, one of my neighbors, a fellow that I met years later in the Senate, Mikey Carroll, I haven't seen him in forty years plus, his father was in the service and the entire backyard there they had made a Victory Garden out of it. We had a small Victory Garden, very small, but that was part of the war effort, and the war was very much a part of us.

I was fascinated by it. I, even at six and seven, could identify, you know, the various officer and enlisted ranks. It just intrigued me. It had nothing to do with being

intelligent. I was inquisitive. That was always fascinating to me and, you know, I knew obviously, you know, whether you were a private, a corporal, a buck sergeant as they used to call it, a master sergeant, a technical sergeant, the warrant officer ranks. All that sort of thing was something that just fascinated me. And I had a little book that was given to me which had all of the warplanes, and I knew those. And it had the German, the Japanese, the Italian, Russian, and Chinese aircraft. I mean, now, obviously this was still relatively [simple]. We didn't have any of these jet aircraft that the Germans were [developing], and none of this was top secret. They did say, as I recall, that the top speed was classified. I remember reading that as a kid and understanding that that was secret stuff.

And as part of the war effort, I mean there were bond drives and things like that, but for the kids they would bring to where the City Hall is today, it's the old War Memorial Building, but it became the City Hall in later years before the new construction, and they brought German aircraft that had been shot up, so that we as townspeople and of course as kids, very fascinating, so I can recall there were Messerschmitts and things like that that were [there for us to look at].

As I look at it now, obviously a traveling tour. This wasn't just for us in Las Vegas. This is part of a morale-building thing and of course things out at what is now Nellis [Air Force Base], they had open houses, I guess, and we, from time to time, the community was invited, and there you could see American aircraft. I recall seeing the B-17G which was the latest model with the gin turret. And, you know, it had been brought back from the European theater and, God, there were bullet holes all in it that the sheet-metal guys had faced in. But it was pretty [interesting]. I remember the first time I saw a

B-29, because it was the first pressurized aircraft. The compartment in the front where, you know, the pilot and copilot and navigator sat was pressurized. And then there were other compartments in the aircraft that were pressurized where, you know, the tail gunner and the others were located. But crawling through that tunnel was something I can recall vividly.

We knew, as kids, we could identify from the air most of the aircraft that flew. I mean propeller-driven aircraft were pretty reliant, and I can recall the Bel Air Cobra which, I later learned, was not much of a plane but it was a beautiful plane, and I recall years later when the Confederate Air Force came to town in about 1986, being out on the flight line and saying, my God, that's a Bel Air Cobra. I hadn't seen one of those since 1944 or '45, and this was forty years later.

So the war was very much a dominant thing. The newsreels of course featured the war. And as kids we were all involved in various patriotic things. My mother had gotten me—I still have pictures of this—had gotten me a naval officer's children's uniform. It was a dress white uniform. It did not have the tight collar, it had an open collar for a kid's necktie, but it had the shoulder boards, and the two gold stripes. I knew immediately I was a full lieutenant. And I was very, very proud of that. I was probably about six or seven at the time. Very, very proud of that. That was a big thing to have that naval officer's uniform.

Explain what you mean by newsreels.

Well, newsreels, I mean, this is in an era long before television, and so the theaters would have, you know, typically they would have either a comedy, a cartoon, they would have some kind of a feature, could be a travelogue or some kind of a feature, they would have

the main event and sometimes there would be a double feature but whatever the main feature was, and a newsreel was the news of the week. And it would be—I can recall the voices—I mean it would be, you know, the latest fashions for women, the Miss America contest. It would be little segments. They were not devoted exclusively to that. And of course during the war, a lot of war news, you know, the Allies landed in France today, Iwo Jima fell. And it's visual, it's film, so of course we didn't have anything like that [until] when television came in and television news. I mean, it was history for newsreels because in effect television did that. But in other words, it graphically showed, you know, and I can recall seeing, you know, the film footage of the Allied forces marching through and all the devastation and what we were doing. And that too was obviously kind of a morale booster. So those were kind of the war years.

Did BMI mean anything, Basic Magnesium [Incorporated]?

Yes. It meant a lot to me. A lot to me.

OK. Tell me about that.

Because before my father passed the bar, he worked at BMI, in the legal department there, and that was while we were still living on Main Street. And he worked, I think, kind of an evening shift, as I recall, or a swing shift, because he was not there in the evening. I think it was a swing shift probably from afternoon to evening, as opposed to a graveyard shift, because that would start at midnight.

We were alone, my mother and I, I recall one time. My mother was terrified. I was even more terrified. There was a knock, you know, on the window where I slept. And we didn't have telephones. You didn't have telephones during the war in Las Vegas. If you had one prior to the war, you had one. But we did not get telephones in Huntridge

and new telephone service until probably '46 or '47, after the war. So my mother had no way of communicating. Hey, wait, there could be some kind of intruder or burglar. I remember going into this bathroom. The bathroom door did not have a lock, but it had kind of a hook, you know, that you use when you're using the bathroom on the inside. We kind of huddled in there until my mother thought it was safe to come out.

But my father worked at BMI. And I recall that he had a big decal on the right windshield, which indicated that he had access to the BMI plant. And of course, he had a ration stamp. There was a ration stamp that you put in the windshield, on the right side, passenger side. In those days, the windshield was divided in two. There wasn't one full windshield. [You put the stamp] on the lower right-hand corner, and it was a ration [stamp]. It would tell you how many gallons of gas you could get. And so, you know, doctors had a [stamp] because in those days doctors made a lot of home calls. But I believe, if memory serves me correctly, my father had an A, and it was about maybe two inches by three inches, it was relatively small, but that's how you know how much gas you could get.

And of course, we had ration books. And that was part of the war that was very vivid. I used to go with my mother when she would shop, particularly when we were living downtown. Sewell's Market was on the corner of Third [Street] and Fremont [Street]. And I can recall that a case of Coca-Cola was a dollar, plus I think there was a deposit for the case. The case was a wooden case, much as you see today. But the ration. And every member of the family had a ration book: my mother, my father, every member of the family. And those things that were rationed, like sugar and meat and things like that during the war.

My mother worked. By 1943 she worked at the county courthouse as a deputy county clerk. And there were a number of women in the office that worked in the clerk's office in Las Vegas. There's a large number of LDS [Latter-day Saints, or Mormons] people in the community. And among those items that was rationed was coffee. Well, the LDS ladies didn't drink coffee. So I can recall my mother talking about how she had traded them stamps for some other item that was rationed, whether it was sugar or meat or whatever it was. I didn't know the details. But she always had plenty of stamps for coffee. I remember that as a child.

One other thing that I remember about the war years in Las Vegas was that milk delivery was done by [horse-drawn wagons]. Anderson Dairy. We had a lot of dairies in Las Vegas. We had Anderson Dairy, we had Heine's [Dairy], we had Updike [Dairy], we had Clark [Dairy], we had Rancho Grande [Dairy]. I mean that many dairies. You know, the town was still small, so I don't understand the economics of that. But that [dairy products] was delivered [by] horse-drawn [wagon].

And the other thing that I recall is that at some point during the war, because of the demands for machinery, they eliminated sliced bread, the slicing machines. We did not have sliced [bread]. And our family was not poor. I don't know whether it was not available but in later years I was aware that you could get bread diets that were designed, you know. Today we'd use that for French bread, you know. This was a regular loaf of bread, and we didn't have [sliced bread]. And so to make a sandwich, to use a regular knife to cut that fresh loaf of bread, I mean it was a jagged slice, and not a slender slice. It was kind of a pain, I do remember that. And as a kid I can recall my mother making a sandwich and it was just—the bread was [too soft].

But those are kind of the memories, I think, of kind of the war years. Now if you want to talk a little bit about the school in the neighborhood?

Yes, and I want to talk about the kids. Name some of the kids that you played with in the community that you remember.

OK, well, and some have been friends all of my life. Dave Powell, probably my best friend. Dave was a class behind me. He passed away just a year or two ago. But Dave Powell, his father was an electrician. And Dave was a good friend.

Gerald Eggers, his father was the Weather Bureau guy.

Don Fennell was a very close friend, probably in those years a closer friend. His father worked for Mason Fennell Electric. I think it was kind of an electrical repair shop. I remember seeing it very well.

John Gibson's family, the Gibson family, John Gibson's family lived on Ninth Street. That was not Huntridge. It would be part of the Huntridge Neighborhood, but that was not part of the Huntridge subdivision, and he lived about a block from John S. Park.

Others that were in the neighborhood. Well, these were not my closest friends but there were a lot of people.

Dean Shelton lived in the neighborhood.

Sharon Christian, one of the girls that was in my class.

Down the street was Linda Downey. She was two or three years, maybe four years younger than I.

There was Barbara Lee Horsley in my class, who lived on Fifteenth Street.

There were the Westland boys, who I was never close to.

Johnny Demmon in later years moved to Huntridge and he was quite an athlete in school. I know Johnny quite well.

Gary Pickett who's changed his name to Gary Johnson. That was always of intrigue to us. Gary Johnson was part of that.

Billy Hanson was in our class and his mother was our den mother.

Evelyn Bruce was in our class, and she lived on Maryland Parkway.

Joanne Stanford. Her parents were schoolteachers [and they] lived on Franklin [Avenue].

Patty Ann Tenney's family lived on Tenth Street.

Mary Jo Ousley, just a beautiful gal, lived on Tenth Street. She was a class ahead of me.

Charlene Hexinbaugh lived [there].

So there was just dozens and dozens of kids. Robin Hill and John Dormand and Winslow Drew. I mean I could go on and on with some of these. And some were, you know, a few classes ahead of me.

Rod Reiber was kind of my idol. He was a great-looking guy and a wonderful basketball player. And then there was Ken Huntsman who played on that basketball team, and Chuck Hanley who I really didn't know in grade school, but lived in Huntridge and I got to meet him a little bit when I was in high school. He was the manager of the basketball team.

But there were just lots and lots of kids.

What kind of organized activities right there in the community do you [remember]?

Well, that's the big difference today. That's the big difference, and I obviously have a bias for my own childhood. By and large, there were a couple of exceptions I'll share with you, there was no organized activity. We organized ourselves. Nobody said, gee whiz, it's the first day of the summer vacation. What activities are we going to plan for Richard? In other words, you know, in the evenings sometimes we'd just play stuff like Kick the Can or kind of pal around in the neighborhood, go over to the park and play. You know, on the weekends we would go typically.

The routine [that] was kind of interesting, particularly as we got a little older, was at the Huntridge Theater. It opened up in the fall of 1944, and that was a big surprise that I had because ordinarily admissions were fourteen cents for children and the matinee was twenty-five cents and I had to panhandle eleven cents because I only had fourteen cents. But that was a big thing. And the Huntridge Theater was kind of part of our routine on Friday night. That was where everybody kind of went. And in later years there was kind of what would be akin to an adolescent mating ritual, you know, you kind of met girls there and maybe you got to put your arm around your girlfriend. I was not good at that so I can't claim any great [accomplishment]. And the gal that was the enforcer, and she probably was like the manager, she didn't own the theater, her name was Mrs. Hatfield, and boy I'll tell you, she could've been a Marine drill sergeant, and she'd kind of walk down the [aisle], you know, with that flashlight, you know, to the floor so it didn't [disturb you], and if you were out of line, you were out of there. Mrs. Hatfield was her name. I remember her very, very, very vividly. But that was kind of part of it.

Now, in later years, in the summertime, there was baseball. I mean I was not a part of this thing but there was the Ashworth Outlaws, and they were a very good team,

and I played for the Hudson, what did we call ourselves, the Desert Something as I recall. But there was a Hudson dealership. Another very good friend of mine who lived in Park Paseo was Phil Waldman and his father was the Hudson dealer.

Denise Jolley, another [friend], she lived on Eighth Place. I'm just thinking of people that were in my class at school.

And then there was Richard Sutton, a class behind me, who lived further down on Ninth Street.

Michael Mack, with whom I just had a phone conversation today, I've got to return an email, he lived on Park Paseo.

Paul Huffy, good friend of mine, lives at Park Paseo.

Gary Holler, he and I were never real close, but he lived on Park Paseo.

Two older folks who were probably, oh, eight, nine years older than we were, were [children of] the Matuzzi family, and they played football and we all knew who they were. But they were not friends. They were much older than we were.

Buzzy Holst who was about four years ahead of us was right there in Park Paseo.

And I know I've overlooked [some people]. Audrey Wickman, Colleen Harvey, you know, I'm just trying to think of all of these names.

Tony Earl, and somehow, looking back, he must've gotten a [school] waiver because he didn't live in Huntridge. He lived to the north of Charleston and he lived on Ninth Street. So I don't know whether his father got a waiver or something but he was not a Huntridge kid but he went to grade school with us, and he was in my class. In fact, we started kindergarten together. And graduated from high school together. And later he was one of my deputies when I was public defender.

Now, did you have Boy Scouts?

We had Cub Scouts, and our Cub Scout unit kind of fell apart. I was in Pack 73. And I can't recall my den number, whether it was 3 or 4, but Billy Hanson's mother, I think her first name was Nola [Hanson]. (She's a twin. Nola and Nyler were twin girls, and one was the mother of Billy Hanson and the other the mother of Jerry Spear, who was a class behind us in school and was later in the Boy Scouts with us.) Anyway, she was our den mother. And that only lasted [a short time]. For whatever reason, the pack, or at least the den, fell apart, because I remember getting my Bobcat. In those days that was kind of the first step. And then I got the Wolf. It was Wolf, Bear, Lion, Weeblos in those days. And I think I still have my old card where I was a Cub Scout.

But Boy Scouts was a very big thing. In the winter of 1949, the year that I turned twelve, Phil Waldman was born on January 6th and so he was eligible for Boy Scouts right away. John Gibson who was a very good friend of mine was born like in March-April. And so we joined initially the B'nai Brith, Troop 70, part of the Boulder Dam Area Council. There were about nine troops in Las Vegas. And they were sponsored by, you know, a number of the troops, 62, 63, and 68 as I recall were LDS troops, always very active. The Lions troop was 60, as I recall. There might've been the Footprinters ahead when the Elks troop, which I'll comment on, 65, very active. Maybe 66 could've been the [Elks troop]. But 67 was a black Scout troop. I can't recall what 69 was. There was about ten troops, from 60 to 70. And then the B'nai Brith troop, I think that fell apart.

Anyway, we went over there and I recall we had our meetings over there at the First Synagogue in town, which later became used by the Greek Church and another church. It's about like Ninth or Tenth and Carson [Avenue]. The building is still there.

And I recall for the first time seeing, what I later was told was a menorah, and, you know, the things that are part of that faith.

But I don't think I ever joined that because I was not eligible until July of that year, so I missed the Boy Scout camp, which was up at Cold Creek. So I didn't get to go because I wasn't old enough.

My father was very active in the Elks Lodge. The Grand High Poobah was the Exalted Ruler, and that's still the top office. And it rotates. You start, you know, as Esquire, and Lecturing Knight, Loyal Knight, Leading Knight. But the Elks played a big part in the community. Very, very big. Were very active. Sponsors of the Helldorado parade which was a big event. And they through volunteer labor built the first Cashman Field. I remember as a child going down there with my father who was then the Exalted Ruler, holding the surveying rod which didn't require any intelligence at all. I mean the surveyor would just tell you [to] move it left [or] right. I mean a total robot could've done it. But I mean doing that as they were doing the elevations because the stadium was a concrete stadium and they were just, you know, doing the various sight lines for the elevations.

But somehow the Elks troop, and my father was very active in the Elks Lodge, they planned a trip to the Grand Canyon. Now that may not sound like much today, but that was a big thing. And I was attracted to that. And so, John Gibson and Phil Waldman and myself, we became involved with the Elks troop. My father was no longer the Exalted Ruler when that occurred but everybody in the lodge [participated].

The committeeman for the troop was a man by the name of Francis Brown. The Exalted Ruler appointed the Esquire, as he does today. That makes you part of the line

officer. Unless you screw up in a big way, to use the idiom of the street, you'll become the Exalted Ruler in four years. (Masonic bodies work much the same way.) So Francis Brown always felt heavily indebted to my father, because being the Exalted Ruler was considered a big thing in the community, and my father had given him that opportunity. Francis Brown was so good to me that some people, some of the kids thought, is that your dad?

And I can recall coming to the troop as a Tenderfoot. That's the lowest rank. And I have no doubt, it was not based upon merit, but Jimmy Roberts was the scoutmaster and he was a dealer at the Golden Nugget [Hotel and Casino], [and] I became the Quartermaster. Now that had nothing to do with merit, and I'm sure it would've created a lot of resentment.

One of the things that I did, I went down to the Fremont Drug, where my father knew Harvey Parben, who was the pharmacist, and I remember buying, my dad, in those days it may have been ten bucks at most, buying all the things that should be in a first-aid kit. We're not talking about anything sophisticated but in those days we had iodine and mercurochrome and some bandages and I think there was a snakebite kit, you know, we're talking about pretty basic stuff.

And so I became very active in the Boy Scouts, and did OK there. I mean I quickly became a Second Class and then a First Class in those days, because the community was small. These awards were given at a Court of Honor for the entire, at least the Las Vegas troops of the Boulder Dam Area Council. It did include Henderson, Boulder City, and by 1950 Parker Dam and Davis Dam were under construction so there were the troops down there. Needles [California] was also in the Boulder Dam Area

Council, and if I recall correctly, so was Lincoln County. But I mean, the Courts of Honor were not done by troop, so it was a pretty big thing. They were typically held in a recreation center at an LDS church. And they were pretty well attended. I mean there would probably be, my recollection, maybe a hundred, two hundred people there, because everybody that got a merit badge [was there], so, you know, all those that are getting their Second Class and then, you know, somebody says, this is Richard Bryan, Troop 65, and, you know, so it was kind of a big deal. It was a Court of Honor and you got merit badges, you know. You might have earned three merit badges. The Court of Honor was not every week, but periodically, as I recall, two, three times a year. But it was a big deal.

And so that's the Boy Scout involvement. And then the Vegas troops would go to Death Valley [National Park, California]. [We] went there in February, about this time of year, as we're doing this interview. It was a little warmer there and so we could go swimming, most years. And we were near Furnace Creek Inn. That's where the adults stayed and we camped kind of around the swimming pool down below. And that was kind of a nice trip, and a number of the troops went down.

Did you get to go to the Grand Canyon?

We did. That was in September of 1949. We did. And we did that with Troop 63. The very first time I ever saw aluminum foil used to cook baked potatoes. That was pretty new stuff then. Yeah, my mother had never done anything like that before, but these scouters, that really were campers, I saw them wrap potatoes in aluminum foil and put those, you know, in the coals. I'd never seen that before.

So, you know, that's kind of the Boy Scouts. And then later, I was selected to go the Boy Scout National Jamboree in 1950. So I was happy with scouting and I thoroughly enjoyed it.

Wonderful. Were there any particular political leanings in that John S. Park Neighborhood?

My father was a very active Democrat. I mean, Clark County was so heavily Democrat then, probably three or four to one. What I do recall is in later years our neighbors across the street were active Republicans. The Deutsch family. He was an insurance agent, and his wife Adelaide Deutsch. And they were active Republicans. There was no ostracism but, of course my family, active Democrats. And I believe Pat Tenney's father Tom was a Republican. I remember that. But most of the families, it was my impression, [were Democrats]. But you know sometimes we would talk about politics, particularly Harry Truman who was a very controversial figure and far less revered then. But I mean, we didn't really talk. I mean to say that we had any political discussions, I was probably more political than most because my father was active in politics, but I don't recall discussions. Dave Powell's family was Republican. But I mean, that never entered into any part of our [relationship].

You've talked about recreational activities. Tell me a little about the Helldorado parade and since you were kind of closely connected to the Elks, what did that mean to you and your family?

Well, it was a big thing, it was a big burden for the Elks officers, because, you know, they were responsible, for the parade. At what would now be Las Vegas Boulevard North and Bonanza [Road], there was the Helldorado Village, which was permanently there but

occupied only during the Helldorado parade [and] in which we had, in effect, a carnival, you know, with all the rides and that sort of thing. And so it was a very big thing in the community. It was always in May.

The format was, there was the Old-Timers' Parade, which was very, very interesting and very well done. And they had stagecoaches and everybody wore Western clothes, many in the town. My father, who was a lawyer, wore Western clothes, although he was a rider. He was genuine. He knew what he was doing. A lot of the Elks who had grown up in urban cities were not, you know, [genuine Westerners], but most wore cowboy [clothes]. It's a bit of an exaggeration, not everybody did, but that was very, very common. My dad always did that. And I can recall, the first time I saw the Twenty-Mule-Team Borax team, my grandmother was still alive and she said, you know, that's a jerk line. I didn't know what the devil she was talking about. She was talking about how they controlled the mules. She had actually done that, as a younger woman. And so, the exhibits were nice but they were not—I don't want to say there were hundreds of these but a lot of stagecoach-type of things and riding groups, you know, I mean mounted. My father was a member of the Mounted Posse, and in those years after he was through the chairs of the lodge he rode in the mounted posse and that was a very prominent group of lawyers, businessmen, and others who liked to ride. I mean these were folks who either had grown up on ranches or they loved horses. Almost all of them owned their own horse[s] and boarded them out, you know, somewhere in the town. But that was the Old-Timers' Parade. Very well done.

Then there was the Children's Parade. And then the wind-up event on Sunday was the Beauty Parade, and those exhibits were really quite well-done, certainly not at the

level of the Rose Bowl Parade, but the Strip hotels in those days spent a lot of money, looking back on it. For example, a float might actually have a swimming pool and some gorgeous starlet, you know, getting ready to dive into the pool and that sort of thing. And there was the Miss Helldorado contest, there was what was called a Whiskerino contest, who had the longest, best beard type of thing. And for the adults there was a dance at the Helldorado Village. Now as kids we did not participate in that. Then there was the Helldorado Village, which was a big thing for us.

And then there was, like Thursday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday night, rodeo, and that was a big deal. And one of the funnier things that happened was, because the Elks sponsored the whole thing, they were showcased at the beginning of the rodeo each evening. The officers of the lodge were introduced. And because many of them were—when I say my father was a horseman I don't mean he was an outstanding rider, but he rode. I mean he was never afraid of a horse. He could ride, you know, and he liked to do all kinds of things. He was kind of a cut-up. Anyway, so they would introduce, you know, the Esquire, and he would ride from the chute where the livestock were released for the rodeo, to center stage—that was a pretty good distance, you know, it was a hundred, two hundred yards—and face the crowd and then, you know, maybe take off his hat and be introduced. And my father always loved that, and he knew how to ride, so he could really ride and bring that horse up and the horse would kind of rear back a little bit. He really knew what he was doing and loved it. He loved it.

Harley Harmon, very prominent, his father had been the first Exalted Ruler and had been the district attorney in the county. Harley was not a lawyer but very prominent by then, and he became Exalted Ruler. He grew up in Las Vegas and he was not a rider.

And I was a Boy Scout at the time with Troop 65. We always had the inside track to do something with lodge and we had kind of the soda-pop concession, you know, we made a little money doing that. And as Harley rode out, either the horse had a very tender mouth or the bit was not properly placed or Harley pulled on the bit too much, but as Harley rode out to stop, and pulled those reins in, the horse stopped on a dime, and Harley, before six or seven thousand people, tumbled off the horse. I mean I can't imagine something that's more mortifying.

But, you know, those are the kind of memories that I have. But Helldorado was a big part of the community, and everybody was [involved]. And as kids we kind of wore Western attire, too, you know, so it was a community activity. And all of the Elks were the prime movers. It was certainly not in any way exclusive to the Elks.

Any special participation by John S. Park [Neighborhood] ever?

Oh, the John S. Park Band was always in the parade. And the Fifth Street Grammar School Band was always in the parade. Oh, yes. The bands were always in the parade. Yeah, the bands were always in the parade. I was in the parade [for] several years but I think maybe as part of the Boy Scout troop. What I remember, and I don't recall whether it was an Oddfellows float or not, the International Order of Oddfellows, I don't even know if they exist anymore, but years ago in America they were a big fraternal organization, and they had a small presence in Las Vegas. Nothing like the Elks or the Masonic bodies. But I recall riding in a parade with the, you know, veterans of the Spanish-American War.[and] World War I. This is the late Forties, '49, '50, so this would've been twenty-two [thirty-two] years after the war. So some of those guys were relatively young men, still in their forties [fifties]. So, you know, it was, looking back at

it, probably kind of an armed services type of float. I think I was in a Boy Scout uniform with a flag or something like that, as I recall.

Sometimes now when we think of John S. Park [Neighborhood] we think of First Friday with the arts and all of that. Were there any particular cultural or arts type connection with John S. Park as you were growing up, anything special?

No, we had school carnivals. Not as sophisticated, certainly, as I recall. Now remember, the physical facility at John S. Park [Elementary School] went through two iterations during my time. When John S. Park was first opened, in the fall of 1943, Miss Hancock moved from Fifth Street Grammar School where she'd been for two or three decades to the new school. But they were temporary buildings. They looked like portable military barracks type of thing. They were certainly large enough to accommodate maybe a class of thirty or whatever we had at those times. They were not real small classes but they were not fifty or sixty. And they were temporary. And it was obvious that they were temporary, kind of, as I recall, metal-like [buildings]. They were prefabricated. That's what you'd call it. I didn't see any of this, but they were prefabricated. And they were there initially, and they were arranged essentially in the pattern that later became the permanent [arrangement], you know, along, gosh, I guess it would be, Eighth Street and then along Franklin. So there was a pattern there. But there were no recreational room[s], no facility where you went to eat lunch or a rec room or whatever we're calling it, a multipurpose room as we call it, nothing like that.

And then in 1948, if memory serves me correctly, the new John S. Park [was built]. This was a permanent building. And that was very nice but, you know, as kid we didn't [know the difference]. None of these were air-conditioned so late in the spring

when it was very warm, early in [the summer], sometimes the boys were allowed to take their shirts off in the classroom. And we were allowed to have water, nothing like bottled water or anything like that, but I recall that a little bit.

The thing in grade school that was kind of a rite of passage: the various teachers that you had. Initially, you know, in kindergarten, first, second, third grade, you had one teacher for everything. You know, by the time you got into the sixth grade, you might have a couple of teachers that went to your homeroom, you know. But it was kind of a big deal when you were able, as a class, to move. And that started in about the seventh or eighth grade, and so at the break if you were going over to Miss Strand's classrooms, another eighth-grade teacher, you'd line up, and you'd all go over there. Looking back at it, it certainly would've been more efficient for Miss Strand to come to us but it was her homeroom. And Miss Schultz was the other.

We had wonderful teachers. I told you about Miss Hancock. My first-grade teacher at John S. Park—I came in mid-semester. My parents were of the belief that it was not wise to change from one school to another in mid-semester, and indeed in those days, there was more of a distinction. Your report card would indicate 3A or 3B, 4A or 4B, and so there was maybe some merit to that. Obviously at the time I was just a regular kid, so I was not [anything special]. But when I got to Miss Shelbar's class, I was behind. I was very, very self-conscious. People like Phil Waldman who had started with me [and] were my friends, they kind of helped me out a little bit. And I say I was behind, I mean, for a week or two. In other words, they were further ahead in reading and math than I was, you know, and when the assignment was given I really didn't know what to do.

Miss Strand was our second-grade teacher. Miss Strand was a very stern teacher and she had a ruler and if you got out of hand she'd kind of rap your hand. But we had a class that was called Arithmetic. I think it may have been because of the war years but the paper that we had had no lines on it. So if you were adding a column of figures, I was always in trouble because the numbers I was adding were always drifting. I'm right-handed [and they] drifted to the right. And so all too often my conclusions were in error. I hated math, still do. I don't say that with any degree of pride. I just hate it. Just hate it, with a passion.

Then we went to third grade and that was Miss Elison and we got to do some fun things. We made candles. You know we were talking about, you know, the Western experience and by then I had cultivated an interest in geography and history so I knew all the state capitals and everything, which was a source of great pride for me. We made candles. And like every week, they would heat up this small vat of wax and you would start just with the wick, and then you would add [wax]. Now, it required more skill than I possessed, because if you left the candle in that heated wax too long, it would in fact dissolve the wax added the previous week. So at the end of this period, my candle clearly had to be the most pathetic in the class. I mean it was somewhat of an embarrassment. It was probably barely able to stand up in its own right. But Miss Elison was very good.

Mary Louise Carmody was our fourth-grade teacher and she reminded me very much of Babe Dietrich Zaharias. She was wiry, wore her hair very short, and was very athletic. I mean she was a better athlete than most and certainly far better than I. I mean she could hit the ball. This was at a time when I never saw women athletes, you know. Somehow it was kind of considered a little bit gauche that girls didn't [act like girls].

That's not to say that they [girls] didn't have PE [physical education] but it's not like [it is today], and frankly that's one of the great things that's happened in America is that women are much more involved in athletics and that's wonderful. I think that's a great thing. But that was less so [back then]. But she could move right in there. And her brother was Father Carmody, later Monsignor Carmody. And she was very good. She and my father had gone to college together, so my father knew her. She was very good.

Fifth grade, one of my favorite teachers, Lucille Chandler, and that's when we had a lot of history and stuff like that. I loved it. She was from the Masabi Range and I recall, every year she'd go back to South Bend and get a new Studebaker. It seemed like it was every year. And she told us a lot about growing up in the Masabi Range. I was very fond of her and I loved [history]. You know, we were getting into American history in the fourth and fifth grades. I loved that.

And then sixth grade we had Mrs. Turner, whose son Clyde Turner was in my class in high school and who became a very, very successful gaming executive, CPA-type. I still see Clyde all the time, and his mother.

Seventh grade was a tougher grade. Faustine Leach, she was tough.

And the eighth-grade teacher that I had was Miss Schultz, and she was legendary. I thought she was six-foot-seven; she was probably five-foot-ten. Thin as a rail. Wore her hair in a bun. I thought she was a hundred; she may have been forty-five. She didn't much like me, and I wasn't fond of her but I would acknowledge [that] I think she was a very good teacher. What I remember most about her, is how strict that she was, and I'd never had anybody in grade school ever address us by our last names. It was always Richard. But [Miss Schultz called me] Mr. Bryan. And then if she was frustrated at

something that I had done, she would put her arm on the desk, her head on her arm, and pound her right fist. I can see it. She may have been a little over the top with me. I was elected president of the eighth-grade class. She did express some amazement that that had occurred. Of course she had no vote, but I mean she clearly was not what I would call a supporter. And she was the prototypical old maid. Her car would today be a classic. It was probably about a 1929 or '30 Model A coupe. We had her in 1950, '51 and that was an old car, even then. And I can recall one Halloween, you know, somebody stuck a potato in the exhaust pipe of the vehicle. But in fairness, I think she was probably a very good teacher. She was just not my kind of teacher but she was a good teacher and I would've done much better if I'd been more attentive. I think she was very strong in English.

Did you ever find out who put the potato in the [exhaust]?

Well, I was there to observe it. But I mean, this was a practical joke.

In those days there was no junior high. We graduated and there was a graduation ceremony. And I have photographs of that. And we graduated at the municipal golf course. In the photos there was just nothing out there then. It was a very nice event. It was done in the evening. And as the class president, I presided over the dinner, you know, a little banquet thing, something that I did a lot of in later years, very simple thing, you know, a cold lunch. But that was a big deal.

And then of course the rite of passage was Las Vegas High School.

Before you tell me about the high school, what were some of the businesses in that John S. Park area?

There were none. None. It was strictly, you know, [houses]. The only thing that would've been considered a business, initially, there was a Union [76 service] station, as there is today, on the corner of Charleston and Maryland Parkway. Huntridge Theater. To the east of that there was nothing till you got to the Boulder Highway and very little there. So that was all undeveloped. So during those years there was nothing. But remember, the whole town was downtown, as it was in many small towns in America.

Cliff Lazear was a fellow that I don't think was highly educated in a formal sense but he clearly had entrepreneurial savvy. His son was in our Scout troop, Ron Lazear. Cliff had savvy. At a time when the grocery stores in Las Vegas, even though this was a twenty-four-hour-a-day [town], you know, kept the traditional hours. They'd be closed at six o'clock on, you know, Monday through Friday, or Friday night they may be open a little bit later. There were nothing like 7-Elevens. But Cliff, and I don't suggest that the idea was original with him, he opened a [place] called Cliff's Fifth Street Market on the corner of Las Vegas Boulevard and Gass [Street]. And what that was, the floor was concrete, it was not fancy, but it was where you could stop off and get a loaf of bread, and many times my father would stop to get a loaf of bread, you know, a quart of milk. There was a little bit of produce. It was very small. But it was opened twenty-four hours a day. And I think that Cliff must've made a small fortune because this was before [businesses routinely opened twenty-four hours a day]. Now I don't know how many years he enjoyed that monopoly but in other words [it was unique]. And it was closer and see the markets were still downtown, by and large, and this was kind of out closer to where we lived.

That's interesting. I don't know how much more time we have.

Let's take another fifteen or twenty minutes. I've done all the talking but please, I want to give you an opportunity.

What were some of the changes that you noticed, being so young when you moved into that area, what were some of the changes, construction, any changes that you remember?

Well, there were several. First of all, I mean, Huntridge was kind of out in the boonies. And it was not too long that developments began to fill in. The one immediately to the east whose name escapes me. But one that was developed in the '50-'51 time was Crestwood. That was quite a bit to the east. And Phil Shipley, who was one of my friends, his father had Curlette Construction, if memory serves me correctly, and shortly before eighth-grade graduation, they moved to Crestwood. The houses were larger and nicer, frankly. So that was one thing that I saw.

New Strip hotels were opening up. I mean, you know, I recall when the Sahara [Hotel and Casino] as Club Bingo opened up, when the Thunderbird [Hotel and Casino] opened up. I think I mentioned the Flamingo [Hotel and Casino]. And of course by high school you've got the Riviera [Hotel and Casino] and the Royal Nevada [Hotel and Casino] as it was called and then, you know, the Tropicana [and Casino]. Showboat [Hotel and Casino] down on the Boulder Highway. So that was occurring.

And the Huntridge area began to have some commercial presence. In 1950, construction started on a Safeway [supermarket] store that would be immediately to the east of the Huntridge Theater. So we now have a supermarket, where I later worked as a box boy. And immediately to the east of that there was a small complex and there was a drugstore there. Diagonally across from the Union station was a Standard Oil [service]

station, and directly across the street, probably in 1955, Lloyd Treidel the Chevrolet dealer who had been on Main Street was among the first of the auto deals to move out of the downtown area, and so he had a very nice [dealership] and that building is still there. Clearly even as kids, it wasn't big by today's standards but it clearly was, you know, more bays, garage bays, that sort of thing. A fire station was located immediately to the east of Tenth and Charleston, again on the south side. So that was occurring.

And there was some development on Fifth Street that was moving out further from the downtown area. That was beginning to fill in. Our favorite place to go in high school was Sill's Drive-In and that had been there for a few years. That had been, I'm sure, built in the forties but that was kind of, as high school kids, where you kind of hung out, and the car hops and, you know, all the guys are looking at the girls and everybody's kind of looking at each other, you know, and you want to be seen and, you know, I can recall all these things, they're unbelievably childish but I mean, it was a big deal then. I remember I had taken—misappropriated—a salt-and-pepper shaker, so I had one in my glove box. We used to call the glove box the jockey box. So, you know, if you're with some girl and she ordered French fries, you could just drop the [glove box door] and the salt-and-pepper was [there]. Oh, this is just—it is so childish. So childish.

Were there any direct connections between the John S. Park Neighborhood itself and the Strip as it was growing? Did you see anything?

There were connections in the sense that there were kids whose parents worked at the hotels. That became more apparent for me when I was in high school, [from] 1951 on. But yes, there were [connections]. Less apparent—I don't recall, in my grade school years, any one of my close friends who worked on the Strip, but by my high school years,

definitely. Of course the town and the Strip was growing. Yes, yes, there was clearly that. And of course, some of our classmates' families were in business. Marilee Mason, Mason Furniture, which was on Main Street. Main Street still had a [number of businesses], you know, so there was a number of businesses. Sharon Christian's father was one of the muckety-mucks at Sill's Drive-In, you know, so I mean some of my classmates' families had small businesses, you know.

Today, when you go back to the John S. Park Neighborhood, that whole neighborhood over there, how do you see it today? What kind of changes? Do you see it as still a good neighborhood? Do you see that it has declined or it's improving? Any thoughts?

Well, the neighborhood has profoundly changed. Along Maryland Parkway there are mostly, you know, commercial businesses. Now remember, this is my child's eye. The neighborhood does not look anywhere near as good as it used to, although there are certainly areas that are considered part of the John S. Park Neighborhood that were not part, not places where I went as a child, but that would be to the west of, say, Ninth Street off of Franklin, and there is clearly some resurgence of activity.

But what I remember is that it was a wonderful neighborhood, and those families that were a bit more affluent—we're not talking about wealthy—made a number of improvements. There were no streetlights, and there were no offsite improvements. There were no sidewalks. Still are not, in John S. Park Neighborhood, in the Huntridge. Not required. But the driveways were asphalt, but not smooth asphalt, and so you could not roller-skate on the driveway. There were no garages. Nobody had a garage. They had a carport. And so gradually, you know, families that had a little bit more money would, for

example, enclose the carport, and you had an additional room in the house. The driveway would be paved.

My neighbor immediately to the south was a widow. [Her] name was Rae Campbell. Looking back at it, she had some money. I don't mean that she was a [wealthy person]. But [at] her house, which was much nicer, she had a beautiful kind of a walkway that went to one of the side doors that she had modified so that she had full-length doors that opened up, whatever you call those doors, and she had, marvel of marvels, a sprinkler system, the only one that I knew as a child that had a sprinkler system. Now this was before, you know, the plastic pipe, whatever it is, PVC or PCV, whatever it is. These were cast iron. But she had a sprinkler system and when she would go out of town for something, you know, I would earn a little money watering her lawn, and I just thought that sprinkler system was wonderful. It was wonderful because, without a sprinkler system, you had to, every fifteen or twenty minutes, literally move the hose all the way around, so you had to kind of stay around [and] do that. Now it was not an automatic sprinkler system as we have today, where it's on a clock. I never forget that when we bought our first house, in 1965, one of the things that attracted me, it had a sprinkler system, cast iron, but it had a sprinkler system, and it had a garage, and we had never had a garage. I loved having a garage. Those things from your childhood that you [remember], you know. And I don't want to give any [incorrect] impression. I was certainly not a disadvantaged child. I had every good fortune.

To close, what did you like most about living in that community?

Every day was fun. I'm sure there were occasional childhood fights. I was not involved in that sort of thing. But it was such a wonderful neighborhood. In other words, there was

no fear, no apprehension. My mother was very protective, from the South, clearly of the old school, and I was the oldest so, you know, she was kind of feeling her way along with me, just as parents do with their children, and so literally, I mean I could take off in the morning and be gone for hours. You know, we had rules. You had to be home for lunch or dinner, you know, but essentially short of that [there were no rules]. And we wandered out in the desert which was immediately to the south, and spent hours out there, just having fun. The point that I'm trying to drive home [is] there was no sense, in terms of parental responsibility, we need to establish, you know, a recreational program for Richard during the summer. Now, in later years as I've indicated, we did have, you know, a baseball team. But I mean essentially, we were on our own. And that was one of the things [I liked]. I liked the kids in the neighborhood.

Essentially looking back on it, there was no economic chasm that you were made aware of. I knew that my father did better than some, but our house was no larger, although we'd enclosed. We had a nicer car. My father always drove Chryslers, so in '47, '48 when finally we were able to get a new car, we had a Chrysler. Some of my friends, their family would have a Plymouth or a Dodge or a Ford. But there certainly was not [any difference]. We lived the same way. None of us had ever traveled to Europe. None of us had ever gone to Hawaii. Our vacations were a little bit nicer. I remember one year, we drove to Canada. But by and large, we had a common frame of reference. In other words, my clothes looked like everybody else's clothes. In other words, you couldn't spot [any difference]. And now looking back on it, there was clearly poverty, particularly over in the old Westside, the West Las Vegas area, but I mean, there was an eclectic group of people in terms of occupational backgrounds, but by and large, we all lived the same

way. We did the same thing. Played the same games. You know. Maybe one kid had a new mitt, but there was no [difference]. I mean the excesses that I see today in terms of my own grandchildren, there was very little of that. Now I had a bicycle. But so did everybody else. And I remember one year I got a Schwinn bicycle. It might've been a little nicer, but, you know, it wasn't like I was the only kid in the neighborhood with a [bicycle]. Everybody had a bicycle.

We walked everywhere. The town was small. We walked downtown. We walked to and from Las Vegas High School. We came home for lunch every day. Now some of the kids that lived further out [did not]. But we had an hour lunch hour, walked, take us about fifteen minutes, my mother was at home, probably ate lunch in twenty minutes, walked back. Walked to school every morning.

Did most of the boys work, during high school?

Yes. Yes. And a lot of the girls did, too. I mean I think a lot of us, as kids, we watered lawns and mowed lawns for neighbors. By the time I was in high school, there were some of us that worked as box boys at Safeway, and other jobs.

I worked when I was early in high school—I worked off and on about seven or eight years there—I worked at Bonds Jewelers on the corner of Third and Fremont after school, cleaning up. It was a credit jewelry store, nice store, and my job was, at about four o'clock I'd arrive there, school was out at three, I think I got there about four, and among the things that I did was I handled the mailing. And it was educational. We had had, in the eighth grade, a class called Business Forms, which had no appeal to me at all. Registered mail, insured mail, bill of lading, bill of sales. I mean, this was not something that I was exactly rhapsodic about. All of a sudden now I'm fourteen and I'm the mailing

clerk. And so, you know, I had to handle the registered [mail], insured [mail], return receipt requested, and every single day, Monday through Friday, I went to the post office right there on Stewart Street [Avenue]. Bonds Jewelers had a box. Every day there would be something that would have to be in the registered or the insured or parcel post, and I learned a little bit about that. Mrs. Matuzzi, who was the mother of these two older boys that I talked about, was the lady at the Registered window and she knew who I was and she was so nice and I'm only fourteen, I knew nothing, and she helped me out, you know. And she knew I was a polite young man that was trying to do the right thing. And then at the Parcel Post window, you know, they weighed and, you know, you could insure the package for whatever it was. That was kind of a bit of a learning experience. And I would meet other young people who were doing similar things for other local businesses. There was Monte Reese I met who worked, I think, at Smith and Chandler's. And he was doing the same thing. He was a little older than I and knew a lot more about it than I did but, you know.

So that was kind of a thing. And I did that, you know, basically and then, in December of that year—everything was downtown and I'll tell you, the crowds in that store were bigger crowds than I've seen in any of the stores out there at the malls. It was a small store but remember, the town by then now has about twenty-five thousand people, maybe a little bit more. And so, after I did some of my chores like that, I put on a coat and tie and they let me sell things. You know, this is a credit jewelry store, so we had wallets and watches and silver plate, costume jewelry, cufflinks, electric shavers, we had some radios. I remember that that big Zenith Transatlantic was a big, big deal. And I was allowed to sell things.

And it was a credit jewelry store. This is at a time in America where I venture to say 99 percent of people in the country, if they had a credit card at all, it was [for] a service station. Our family had [one]. My father used Standard Oil. So, this was a credit jewelry store and these people obviously knew what they were doing: the Gold brothers and their son-in-law Stan Fayman who operated the store here, a young man, twenty-six at the time. And so they kind of figured out that you could make a lot of money on the charge account. And so we would add to the purchase, if somebody wanted to finance, they'd put down something like 10 percent down or whatever it was, and then you would add cc (carrying charge), then you would take the customer to Mr. Jacobs who was in charge of the credit department, and Mr. Jacobs would give a steely-eyed look at you like he was an Amsterdam gem merchant, you know. Not a bad guy. And he would take a look and see, you know, whether you were employed and everything and he'd say, look, you need to put a little bit more down and we'll set this up for x-number of weeks. And then there was a hand [written] card that was kind of kept in a box, you know, [alphabetized]. And so there were two or three people in the credit department and a couple of the gals, their sole job was to call and say, Claytee, you were supposed to be in last Monday and we didn't get your payment.

My last question. How did growing up like this influence the successful career that you've had?

Well, you know, like most of us, our parents. My father was very involved in the community and, you know, I picked up on that right away. My mother was very interested in history and clearly I picked that up from her. She was from the South, very proud of the Old South, so my reading material was a little imbalanced. Two little

Confederates and some of the, you know, those books that were, I'm sure, required reading for every Southern white boy at least. And so I saw that. I saw the interaction. People came to him, would ask him questions, you know, people knew him. That impressed me. And so clearly that had an influence. My mother was very interested in politics as well, and so those were the subjects of discussion at our house. And so, you know, as a youngster, I followed not real closely but some of the campaigns, you know, and was aware of them.

But again, I was basically a kid, not a political scientist, don't misunderstand me, but I paid a little attention to that, and so I, you know, ran for class office when I was in the eighth grade, as I've told you, and I ran for Student Council when I was a freshman in high school. I was misguided enough to think that it was egotistical to vote for yourself and I lost by a single vote. I corrected that. That was a learning experience. I was elected sophomore class president and senior class president but I was defeated when I ran for student body president. I was not an athlete but because I was a manager of the basketball team, I had a very good relationship with the athletes. I mean, they liked me but I was no threat. In other words, I was not somebody that might take over their starting position. It was kind of, hey, Bryan's, you know, OK and he's not an athlete but he's a good guy to be around. So I had the support basically of, you know, kind of the hoi polloi if you will, the athletes, you know, these guys, but not exclusively. I was defeated by a very able fellow, who had support not of what we call the front-steps crowd. The front steps of Las Vegas High School which you can see from here, is kind of where the movers and shakers hung out. There was Frazier Hall where the freshman and lowerclassmen [gathered]. And it was a lesson I never forgot. My opponent, wonderful guy, Tony

Rosenbaum, had their support. There were more of them. I never forgot that. So when I ran for student body president at the University of Nevada, in those days the whole system was the Greek system, but I was over at, you know, Lincoln Hall. The Independents went door-to-door campaigning. Harton Hall, where some of the older veterans [met]. In other words, the very thing that Tony Rosenbaum did, in maybe a much less sophisticated way. That was a lesson I never forgot, and it was an important lesson, and, you know, I mean, gracious in defeat is also, you know, something, so you know I'd been unsuccessful as student body president candidate but next year I'm elected president of the senior class.

Wonderful. I appreciate this so very much.

You're quite welcome. Well, you ought to keep this and some day it can be part of something, maybe.

This will be part of our John S. Park [project], and you will have a bound copy of it, eventually. And we're going to do lots of impressive little things with this.

Well, I mean I've wandered along a lot. There's much more that I probably could think of telling, but these give you some idea.

But what I'd like for you to think about is that you have a career that no one else has ever equaled.

Well, it's an interesting career. I've enjoyed it.

Yes, but I mean we're talking about governor of the state house as well as the U.S. Senate, and you know one of my favorite questions for you, after I looked at all of that, I said, hm, why didn't he ever run for president, you know, so I have lots of questions for you, so I really want you to think about it.

INDEX

- A**
- Ashworth Outlaws, 12
- B**
- B'nai Brith, 13
 BMI, 6
 Boy Scouts, 13–17, 20
 Boulder Dam Area Council, 13
 Boulder City, 16
 Davis Dam, 16
 Henderson, NV, 16
 Lincoln County, NV, 16
 Needles, CA, 16
 Parker Dam, 16
 Businesses
 Anderson Dairy, 8
 Bonds Jewelers, 33, 34
 Chevrolet dealership, 28
 Clark Dairy, 8
 Cliff's Fifth Street Market, 26–27
 Fremont Drug, 15
 Heine's Dairy, 8
 Hudson automobile dealership, 12
 Mason Fennell Electric, 9
 Mason Furniture, 29
 Rancho Grande Dairy, 8
 Safeway supermarket, 28, 33
 Sewell's Market, 7
 Sill's Drive-In, 28, 29
 Smith and Chandlers, 33
 Standard Oil service station, 28
 Union 76 service station, 26, 28
 Updike Dairy, 8
- C**
- Cashman Field, 14
 Clark County, NV, 17
 Club Bingo. *See* Hotels/Casinos:Sahara
 Cub Scouts, 13
- E**
- Entertainment
 Huntridge Theater, 11, 26, 28
- F**
- First Synagogue, 14
 Fraternal organizations
 Elks, 13, 15, 18, 19
 Lions, 13
 Oddfellows, International Order of, 20
- G**
- Great Depression, 1
- H**
- Hellorado, 14, 18–21
 Old-Timers' Parade, 18–19
 Hotels/Casinos
 Flamingo, 27
 Golden Nugget, 15
 Riviera, 27
 Royal Nevada, 28
 Sahara, 27
 Showboat, 28
 Thunderbird, 27
 Tropicana, 28
- N**
- Neighborhoods
 Crestwood, 27
 Huntridge, 2, 7, 9, 10, 12, 27, 28, 30
 Westside, 32
 Nellis AFB, NV, 4
- P**
- People
 Mormons, 8, 13
 Personalities
 Brown, Francis, 15
 Bruce, Evelyn, 10
 Campbell, Rae, 30
 Carmody, Mary Louise, 24
 Carroll, Mikey, 3
 Chandler, Lucille, 24
 Christian, Sharon, 9, 29
 Demmon, Johnny, 10
 Deutsch family, 17
 Deutsch, Adelaide, 17
 Dormand, John, 10
 Downey, Linda, 10
 Drew, Winslow, 10
 Earl, Tony, 12
 Eggers, Gerald, 9
 Fayman, Stan, 34
 Fennell, Don, 9
 Gibson, John, 9, 13, 15
 Gold brothers, 34
 Hancock, Doris, 1, 21, 22
 Hanley, Chuck, 10
 Hanson, Billy, 10, 13
 Hanson, Nola, 13
 Harmon, Harley, 20
 Harvey, Colleen, 12
 Hatfield, Mrs., 11
 Hexinbaugh, Charlene, 10

Hill, Robin, 10
 Holler, Gary, 12
 Holst, Buzzy, 12
 Horsley, Barbara Lee, 10
 Huffy, Paul, 12
 Huntsman, Ken, 10
 Jacobs, Mr., 34
 Johnson, Gary. *See* Pickett, Gary
 Jolley, Denise, 12
 Lazear, Cliff, 26–27
 Lazear, Ron, 26
 Leach, Faustine, 24
 Mack, Michael, 12
 Mason, Marilee, 29
 Matuzzi family, 12
 Matuzzi, Mrs., 33
 Oakey, Tom, 3
 Ousley, Mary Jo, 10
 Parben, Harvey, 15
 Pickett, Gary, 10
 Powell, Dave, 9, 17
 Reese, Monte, 33
 Reiber, Rod, 10
 Roberts, Jimmy, 15
 Rosenbaum, Tony, 36
 Schultz, Miss, 22, 25
 Shelton, Dean, 9
 Shipley, Phil, 27
 Spear, Jerry, 13
 Stanford, Joanne, 10
 Strand, Miss, 22, 23
 Sutton, Richard, 12
 Tenney, Patty Ann, 10, 17
 Tenney, Tom, 17
 Treidel, Lloyd, 28
 Truman, Harry, 17
 Turner, Clyde, 24
 Turner, Mrs., 24
 Waldman, Phil, 12, 13, 15, 23
 Westland family, 10
 Wickman, Audrey, 12

S

Schools

Fifth Street Grammar School, 1, 20, 21
 John S. Park Elementary School, 21–22
 Las Vegas High School, 1, 32, 36
 Nevada, University of, 1, 36

Spanish-American War, 21

Streets

Bonanza Road, 18
 Boulder Highway, 2, 26, 28
 Carson Avenue, 14
 Charleston Boulevard, 1, 2, 12, 26, 28
 Eighth Place, 12
 Eighth Street, 21
 Fifteenth Street, 10
 Fifth Street, 28
 Francis Street, 2
 Franklin Avenue, 10, 22, 30
 Fremont Street, 7, 33
 Gass Street, 26
 Las Vegas Boulevard, 18, 26
 Lewis Street, 1
 Main Street, 1, 6, 28, 29
 Maryland Parkway, 2, 3, 10, 26, 29
 Ninth Street, 9, 12, 13, 14, 30
 Oakey Boulevard, 3
 Park Paseo, 12
 Stewart Avenue, 33
 Strip, 2, 27
 Tenth Street, 1, 2, 10, 14, 28
 Third Street, 7, 33

W

World War I, 21
 World War II, 1, 3–6, 7–9
 Pearl Harbor, 1