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An
Oral History
Interview
with
Ellen DeLand

1996

Acknowledgments

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conducted by
Dennis McBride
January 19 and 20, 1996

This is Dennis McBride and Ellen DeLand. I'm interviewing Ellen as part of a series of oral histories I intend conducting with important members of the gay community in Las Vegas. Ellen laughs when I say important, but it's true. She certainly is an extraordinary woman and we're very lucky to have her. We're at Ellen's dining room table at 1349 North Belcher in Las Vegas. And today is Friday, January 19, 1996.

What I want to know first, Ellen, if you could give me some of your background: when you were born and where you were born, brothers and sisters and so on.

OK. I was born in Santa Monica. I have one sister that's my whole sister. I had two half brothers and one half sister. One of the half brothers is already dead, and the half sister is dead now. I was not close to the half brothers. I was to the half sister.¹

Do you mind saying when you were born?

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Do you mind saying when you were born?

1931. April Fool's Day.

As a child, did you have a happy childhood? Well, that's a relative term.

Yes, reasonably happy. I thought I had a loving home. And, naturally, everything's hard in the Depression.²

Was your family badly [hurt] by the Depression?

Yes. They lost pretty much everything in the Crash.³ They were both from families that had money and they were down to nothing and were *horribly* ashamed. They didn't want people to know how poor we were. You know, "Don't tell anybody about this." Or, "Don't tell anybody your father doesn't have a job." Or anything like that. [laughs] I didn't know everybody else was in the same situation. I thought we were the only ones that were poor. [laughs]

That's sad! What job did your father have?

My father was a steam fitter. And, of course, steam fitters aren't hardly needed anymore.

Who was he working for at the time?

He talked about having put all the steam heat into the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company in Akron, Ohio. He named all kinds of big companies like that that he had put steam heat into. But eventually, steam fitters weren't needed.

Did your parents come out to California after the Crash?

No, they came out in '26.

So they were already out there living when the Crash came?

Yes. And they owned a home in Los Angeles—which they lost. All of a sudden the amount of money they owed on the house was more than they could possibly sell it for. I don't know what the actual figures were. For instance, if a

house cost \$20,000 and you put \$5,000 down on it, you owe \$15,000. [But] all it's worth now is about \$7,000. There's no sense in continuing to pay.

That great [economic] de-flation at that time.

Oh, terrible.

A lot of people in the Depression went hungry, ran out of even what we call basic necessities now. Was it ever that bad with your family?

Well, it was rough. We had some pretty meager meals, and we were in the city, you know. It wasn't like a lot of people that are on a farm and there's always food. We had food stamps and all that kind of stuff.

I didn't know they had food stamps then.

Not just like they are now, but they were called food stamps. There were yellow ones and blue ones.

Did your dad work very much at all during that period?

Very little. My mother was a school teacher so she more or less supported us. See, she'd been a school teacher in Michigan. She was from Michigan. She didn't have credentials in California, but she could get jobs like [in] the child care center on the school grounds during the summer. And crafts teacher. She'd teach crafts to kids who came on the school grounds whose parents were working and didn't have anyplace to send their kids.

So she pretty well kept a job during that time.

Pretty much.

What kind of work did your dad do from time to time?

Oh, he got a job as a crossing guard. And he often got little odd jobs in people's homes. People that *had* money, you know. Doing gardening and that sort of

thing. And then, of course, the war changed everything. *Everybody* had a job in the war.

Where did you go to school?

Santa Monica High School.

Was your family very religious?

My mother had been a Christian Scientist. And Christian Science has kind of gone out of style. [laughs] Christian Science is so different from other religions, that any *other* religion always seemed rather foolish to me. I was raised with Christian Science up until I was about 16. And my sister became a Baptist, which I could never understand because it was so completely different.

Did she become a Baptist after she married?

No. She was a teenager. She joined the Baptist Church.

You had told me once that your parents were quite older when you were born.

Yes. My mother was almost 40, and my father was 44 when I was born.

And your sister was older or younger?

She was two years older than me.

How did [your parents] prepare you for adult life and adult love?

My mother was always the type that if she didn't know the answer to a question, she'd say, "Let's go to the library and get a book on it." So when I asked about sex, that's what we did.

So she wasn't reluctant to discuss anything with you?

I don't think it was that she was reluctant. I think she just plain didn't *know*. She was raised in a time when nobody talked about sex. And when you asked something about sex she didn't know, [she said], "Well, we'll get a book about it, then." And then eventually, after we'd all been reading it—my sister and me—she [my mother] read it too. She sat down and *cried*. She didn't know women were supposed to enjoy sex. And here she was over 50. [*laughs*] I guess my father must not have been a very good lover.

But she nursed me until I was almost 4 years old.

That's very unusual.

Well, I think that it could have been that maybe she didn't have enough to feed everybody. I don't know. I don't really know why. She was definitely in favor of nursing. In fact, if we'd go to the grocery store and somebody had a baby in a buggy and if they had a bottle with them, *oh!* that was *terrible!* This person was showing the world that something was wrong with them. That they couldn't nurse.

That's a very progressive attitude and an interesting perspective, too.

Back then, I guess, everybody nursed. And the only time you didn't nurse was if something was wrong. You know, this woman had something terribly wrong with her that she had no milk.

Do you think that that attitude may have had something to do with her being a Christian Scientist?

I don't know. I never thought of it that way. I suppose it could have.

I think they do keep away from artificial sorts of health care.

Oh, yes. You know, I never went to a doctor until I was pregnant the first time.

How old were you when your parents died?

I was 19 when my mother died, and 30 when my father died.

When were you married the first time?

16. Just a few weeks before I turned 17.⁴

What were the circumstances? How did you meet this man?

He was a girlfriend's boyfriend and she was going to break up with him. And he had a *beautiful* car. [laughs]

Old story!

He had a beautiful Buick four-door sedan convertible. Can you believe that? That big a convertible? [laughs] It was a *lovely* car.

Was he much older than you?

3-1/2 years. Not much older. And he had a job, of course, which made a big difference. He was a lineman.

A lineman?

Yes, on telephone poles for the [Southern California] Edison Company.

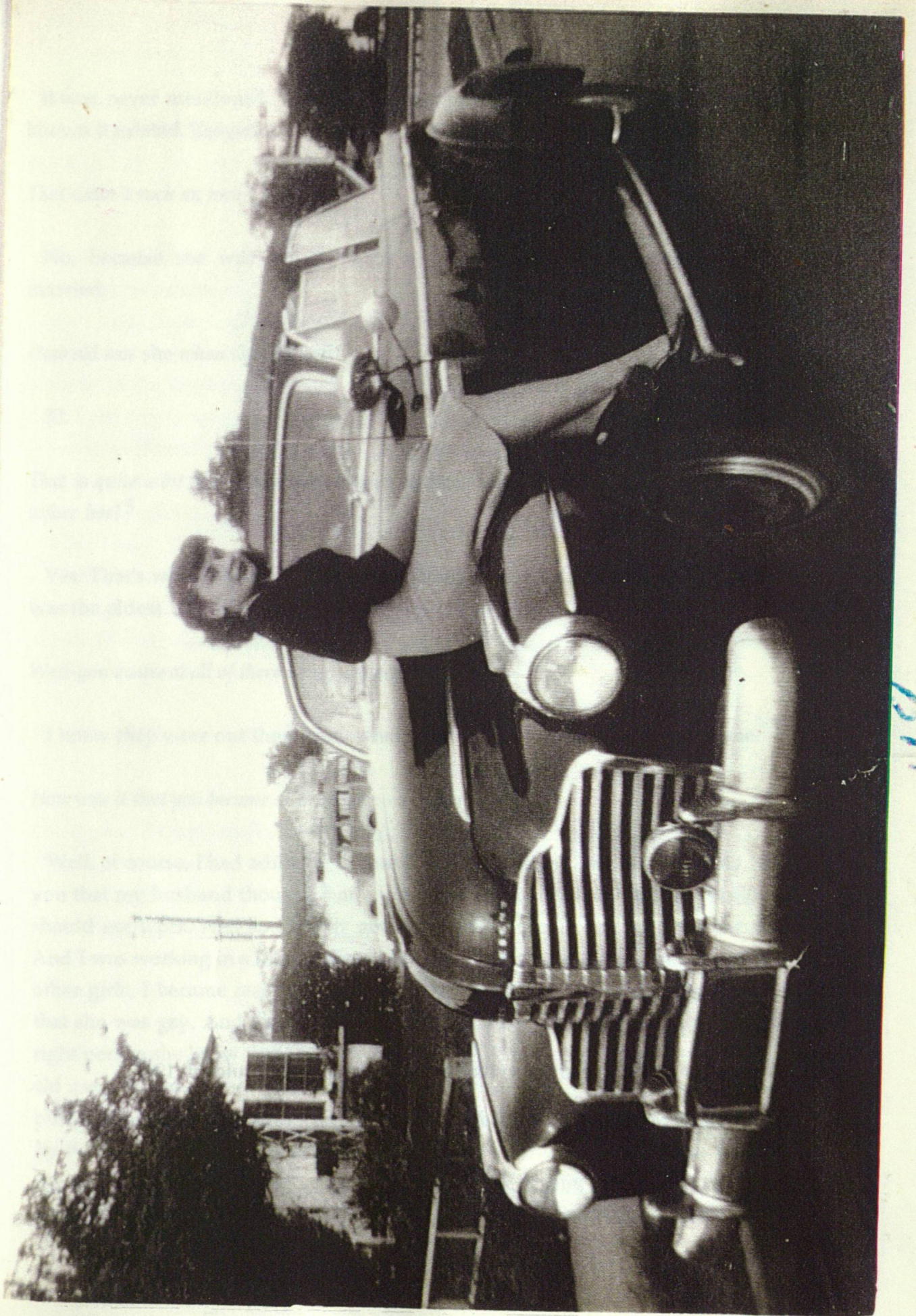
How long did you go together before you married?

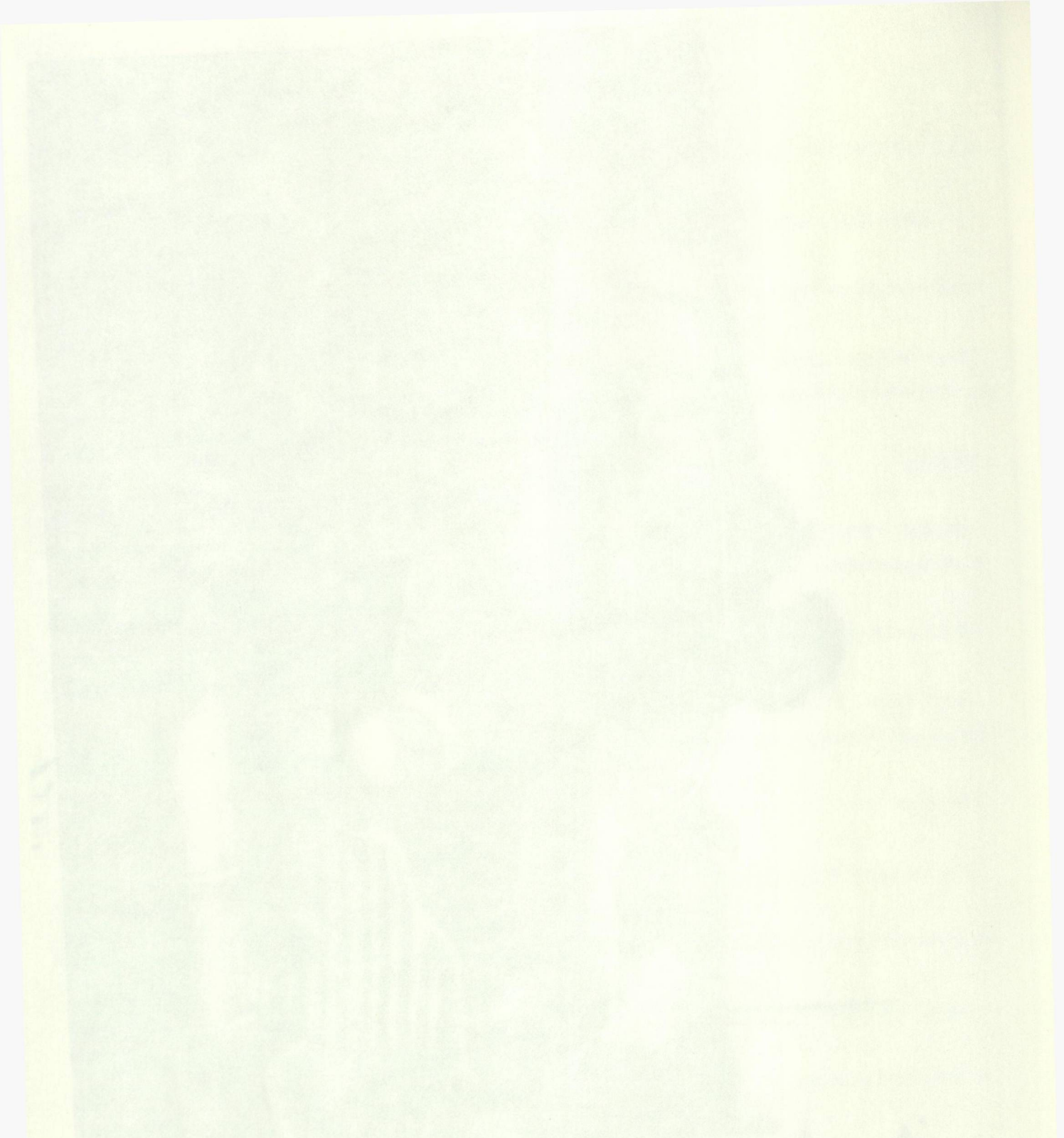
About six months. Something like that.

At this point your mother was ...

Very ill.

Very ill. Back up just a little bit. [Your mother] was very forthcoming about your sex education. What about as far as homosexuality goes?



The image is a very faint, low-contrast photograph. It appears to show a young woman sitting on the fender of a car. The details are extremely light and difficult to discern, but the overall shape and position suggest the subject and setting described in the caption.

Ellen DeLand at 16, perched on the fender of Fred Roan's Buick in 1947.

[photo courtesy of Ellen DeLand; negative in the collection of Dennis McBride]

It was never mentioned. I don't think my mother She may not have even known it existed. [laughs]

That wasn't such an unusual thing.

No, because she was an old maid school teacher that somebody finally married.

How old was she when she married?

32.

That is quite a bit older than most women married then. Had your father been married before her?⁵

Yes. That's where the other kids [came from]. The twin boys and Peggy [who] was the oldest.

Were you aware at all of there being gay people?

I knew they were out there somewhere, but I didn't think I'd ever meet one.

How was it that you became aware of them out there?

Well, of course, I had admired different women before. I think I probably told you that my husband thought that a woman should stay home and do nothing, should not work. And so I finally got somebody to teach me to drive the car. And I was working in a little place that was an electronics factory, and one of the other girls, I became really good friends with her. And she eventually told me that she was gay. And here I was still married. And she said she knew just the right person she knew that I would like. I said, "I don't want to meet any of your old *queer* friends. I can make friends of my own." Well, she kept pushing and pushing, and she was doing the same thing to Kelley⁶. She wanted Kelley to meet this married woman with three children. And Kelley didn't want to meet me. But she [the friend] kept pushing so hard I finally said, "Well, all right!" And gosh, the minute I met Kelley, I knew I was madly in love with her.

I want to get into that a little bit later. What I want to do is talk in more detail about your marriage. Do you remember the exact circumstances under which you met your husband? Can you give his name?

Fred. Fred Roan. Like a horse: R-o-a-n. I had a friend named Joanne [Davis] who was real close, real cute, too. Real cute girl. She looked kind of like Diana Lynn.⁷ Very pretty little blonde. And she was dating [Fred]. We double-dated. I had another boyfriend at the time and we double-dated. And one time all the people on the double date came to my house to pick me up and my sister had sold Fred an engagement ring not for the [girl] he was going with *now*, but for a *previous* girlfriend! [laughs] And my sister said the next day, "You know that fella that was here? He's the one that bought the diamond ring for Pat." Because I knew Pat before.

"Oh," I said. "Is that right?"

Well, eventually he gave *me* the ring. After Joanne told me she was going to break up with him, then, why not? He asked me to go out, and so I did. And he was a *fabulous* dancer. That was really the big thing about him, that he was a wonderful dancer.

What kind of places did you used to go dancing in?

The Aragon Ballroom. The Palladium. [After we were married] we moved to the town of El Segundo⁸ down by the airport. In about 1950. We got married in '48.

You were only 16-1/2?

Um-hm.

What did your parents think about your wanting to be married so young?

Well, my mother was very ill. My sister had gotten married and left, and I was just kind of left there with my folks, and I really felt that I had no place to go. That I was better off to get married and get out. My mother eventually died of a stroke, but I think she was having little strokes all the time. But nobody talked

about strokes back then. I didn't know what was wrong with her. She was just getting slower and slower. And I didn't want to be left just with my father.

How come?

I don't know. It isn't that I wasn't close with him because he was a loving person. But he certainly wasn't any companion for me.

Is it fair to say that you married more to change your situation than you did out of love for Fred?

Yes, I think so.

Do you think that this is a common thing?

Possibly.

Did you fall in any kind of love with Fred?

Yes.

What kind of love did you have for Fred?

I realized as time went on that he really didn't love *me*. And I always felt that I loved him more than he loved me.

Always?

Yes. But he definitely wanted me there under his thumb all the time, you know, preparing wonderful meals and taking care of the children. He didn't mind that I got active in the Women's Club and the Cancer Society and all that kind of thing.

At that time, when you were 16-1/2, had you thought at all about what love was or what it meant for you? Or was this an issue with you at all at that time?

I certainly didn't think that I *didn't* know what love was. But you're right, [the marriage] never was what I really thought that love should be. But then I didn't know what love *was*. [laughs]

That came later.

Yes!

Did you get pregnant right away?

Yes. Terry was born when I was just 17, and Chris was born when I was 18. And then Mary was born when I was 22. Birth control wasn't that good back then.

What kind of birth control was there?

I had a diaphragm. But the main problem with a diaphragm is it doesn't work unless you *use* it.

Oh—you didn't use it.

Oh, I did! But I know there were times I was negligent about it.

What's the difference between a diaphragm from 1948 and a diaphragm from 1996?

I imagine they're just the same. I don't know. I haven't seen one lately. [laughs] But there was one time when I had what they called a pesary,⁹ which was an IUD. And apparently everybody that uses one of those things gets an infection, and I did. They took it out and that was the end of that.

After you got into the marriage and you were pregnant and you had your first child, did you feel, looking back with hindsight, that this marriage, this institution that you were involved in, was what you expected it to be?

I suppose to a certain extent, yes. But the idea of divorce never occurred to me. You know, if things didn't turn out exactly the way you wanted it, you just lived with it.

As the woman you lived with it.

Um, hm. You made your bed, you'll lie in it. [laughs]

But Fred was young. He was just 20 when we got married. And he was used to going out with the boys. And he *did!* It was just what he'd been doing, and everybody else did it, the fellas that he ran around with. And he seemed to think it was perfectly all right for him to go out when a bunch of the fellas [were] going to the show or something. And I was left home with two babies in diapers.

Did you resent that at the time?

Yeah, I did, but I didn't know what to do about it.

Well, I guess at that time that kind of life wasn't unusual. We have to be careful not to look with our eyes today at the way things were then and then judge everybody.

I was washing clothes by hand every single day with two babies in diapers. I mean my hands were callused from rubbing the clothes [motions rubbing a washboard]. One day, it was Friday night, [Fred] brought one of the fellows home, one of the other linemen came home, and they were shooting craps on the living room floor. And as the evening wore on, [Fred] was just getting really thrilled with his good luck and how well he was doing, and he said to the other fella, "Let's go to Las Vegas." And the other fella said, "I can't do that. My wife would have a fit!" And Fred proudly said, "I can do anything I want. Ellen doesn't care."

And you heard this?

Yeah! And away they went.

But you didn't say anything?

I didn't say anything. I got up the next morning, went right down to McMahon's Furniture and ordered the most expensive washing machine they had and had it delivered when he got back [from Las Vegas] broke! [laughs]

Did he continue that way in your marriage?

Yes. Pretty much. Of course, as soon as he saw [the washing machine, he said], "It's going back. We're not going to have this!" And I said, "Yes we are. We're gonna keep it."

Tell me about the sex life you had with Fred.

Actually he was a good lover. He spent 18 years learning to make love to me.

Were you a virgin when you married?

No, but he didn't know it. [laughs]

So you had had some experience before and [sex with Fred] was something that you [could] compare with an experience before.

Well, nobody else was any good, either.

When you say that, what did you judge by?

I think that most men are clumsy. And Joanne¹⁰ and I talk about that kind of thing. She said she had one boyfriend that was a wonderful lover. I imagine it was a long time ago. She's from Nebraska.

So you were more or less satisfied with the sex [in your marriage]?

Yeah. A lot of people, in their mind or in their heart, [feel] a dichotomy between sex life and love life. And the ideal is to have them together. But looking at the marriage you had with Fred, what did you have in this respect?

It was more sex than love. But I *did* love him. I can't say that I didn't love him. I kept hoping that he would love me. And, of course, he abused my children something horrible.

Abused them how?

He beat them.

Oh. Physical [abuse].

Yes. And the middle child, for some reason, he beat more than the others. One time he nearly killed poor Chris. I mean, he would just get so angry that he would keep hitting him and hitting him with a belt. His back was just raw. And I kept him home from school because he was hurt so badly. It happened at lunch time—Fred used to come home for lunch. He went back out to the car and I ran out after him and I said, "Come in here and look at this." And he came in and looked at Chris, and he realized that he'd really beat him too much. It was terrible. And I said, "If you *ever* hit one of my kids again, I'll leave you." Of course, he had no idea whether I meant it or not. Well, it was only about a week later he slapped Terry. I mean just slapped him *real hard* across the face [*motions*]. And so without a word I went in and got every stitch of [Fred's] clothes and carried them out to the car and said, "Get out!"

Did he go?

He drove around for a couple of hours and pretty soon came back and said, "I don't have any place to go."

Don't they always?

So I said, "All right, but this is the last chance you'll get." And I don't think that he hit any of the kids any more after that. But then, he probably did after they kicked me out and I couldn't go back.

Did he ever hit you or abuse you physically?

One time he knocked me down and stomped on me with his engineer's boots. But he claimed it was self-defense. *[laughs]*

You mentioned that you kept waiting for him to love you, so obviously you felt there was something missing out of the relationship.

He never, *ever* said, "I love you."

Would that have been enough?

I don't know.

But you went on with the marriage.

By that time the kids were in their teens. The boys were 16 and 17 when I finally left, and Mary was 12. She'd turned 13 when she was with me.

Did you have a good relationship with your children at that time, when you were raising them?

Yes. Yes. Actually, Fred by that time was an automobile mechanic working on the police cars and fire engines, and he had Sunday and Monday off, so he worked on Saturday. And Saturday was the day I had with just the kids then because they were off school, and we did things together. Lots of times just sitting around the kitchen table with a cup of tea. This was one of the fun things we did was sit around the kitchen table and drink tea together. We'd bake cookies, and I'd spread down newspapers and paper towels and everything so they could make cookies of different kinds. We still haven't found the recipe for the cookies that Mary wants to make. She's always asking me, "Did you ever find that recipe?"

How much freedom did your husband give you in the marriage?

Not much. I could go to the Women's Club and things like that. But you see, most of the time I didn't drive.

Because you didn't know how, or because he wouldn't let you?

I didn't know how. I didn't have a driver's license, and he didn't want me to [have one].

So you had no way to get out?

That's right. I had no freedom really to do anything. It feels, even now, today, it feels wonderful to get out in the car all by myself and drive.

Did you ever ask him, "Let me drive. Teach me."

Oh, yeah. He didn't want any part of that. He would have been a terrible teacher, anyway.

Did he let you in at all on running the finances of the house?

Yes. We took turns, sort of. He would decide that he didn't like the way that I was running the finances and *he* was gonna do it. And then I would decide that I didn't like the way he was doing it and *I'd* do it. And this happened all the way through the marriage.

Some of our mutual friends say that you had been a society matron in El Segundo. What's a society matron?

A married woman who does things in society. Like I said, I was the Women's Club president. I was Education Chairman for the American Cancer Society. I went to the Little League Women's Auxiliary and the PTA and all that kind of thing. [laughs]

Was this what you had enjoyed doing, or was it something [you felt was required] of you?

Yes, I enjoyed it. It was a reason to get dressed up and wear a hat and gloves and the whole thing.

What kind of activities did these organizations support and promote?

At least the way our Women's Club worked, you start the year with nothing. The club house pays for itself. You rent it out and that kind of thing so you don't have to worry about rent and that kind of thing. So you start out with nothing and you have a Ways and Means Committee that decides what we're gonna do to raise money. And we decide how we're going to *spend* the money, what charities we like. One year we didn't have a lot of money and we supported Little League baseball teams. It just depends on what your particular board happens to like.

Were you president of several boards and organizations?

No, just the Women's Club. But, like I say, I was Education Chairman for the American Cancer Society, which meant that I had to call all kinds of organizations to set up movies for them to see on breast cancer and that sort of thing.

So you've always—then and now, which we'll get into later—been involved in committee work and organizations and doing, promoting.

Yes.

What kind of social life did you have at that time?

We went dancing a *lot*. There were many, many organizations that have dances every year. even the Catholic Church ha[d] a dance every year. And the Booster's Club, and the Firemen's Ball and the Policemen's Ball. And, of course, all the firemen and policemen were our friends because [Fred] was the automobile mechanic on the police cars and fire engines. And we would go to one of these community dances, and there was always somebody who would punch her husband and say, "Go ask [Ellen] to dance. I want to dance with [Fred]." [laughs] So I had to dance with every fireman, every policeman, the mayor, the city manager.

You were very well-known and well-liked in El Segundo among that set.

some mental problems. On one occasion I even called a taxi to take me over to her house

Oh, yes. She was gonna kill herself. So I spent a lot of time with her trying to help

her. She said one day, "You've done so much for me, I'm going to do something

If you had to describe your marriage, your life—your social life, your sex life, your love life and all of this at that period, how would you describe it?

And I did and she did!

It was good except for the way the children were treated. The children were always treated badly. [Fred's] whole conversation with the children was, "Shut up! I'm watchin' television."

It wasn't a big problem. I didn't go on the freeway for quite a little while.

Did he ever talk to you that way?

My friend suggested, then I got a job in the Santa Monica area where I had to drive 13 miles everyday, and usually took the Santa

Yes, to a certain extent. Not as bad as he did with the kids. But he never had any companionship with the kids at all.

Did your husband know that you were learning how to drive?

Did your social life, except for the organization and committee work you did, always involve your husband?

the car to work and then we'd go to his shop and leave her car and take our car.

Pretty much, yes.

And he didn't mind that you were learning?

So you were never really Ellen?

He didn't seem to. He didn't act upset about it. I don't think he was real happy

That's right. I guess he didn't know what else to do about it. He wasn't the

smartest fellow in the world. He had an IQ of 92.

You were Mrs. Roan.

Truly?

Yes.

Truly?

When did you first begin to grow tired of that kind of life?

What's your IQ?

I suppose once I was able to drive and get a job and get out of the house.

IQ?

You mentioned briefly when we were talking on the telephone last week about how you came to learn how to drive. How did you learn how to drive?

the years [who had] an IQ so inferior to yours?

I had a friend¹¹ who I met in the Women's Club who had had some mental problems. On one occasion I even called a taxi to take me over to her house because she was gonna kill herself. So I spent a lot of time with her trying to help her. She said one day, "You've done so much for me, I'm going to do something for you. I'm going to come over *every day* until you get a driver's license and as soon as you do, I'm gonna make my husband give you a job in his office!" And I did and she did!

Was it easy for you to learn how to drive?

It wasn't a big problem. I didn't go on the freeway for quite a little while.

But after that particular job [my friend arranged], then I got a job in the Santa Monica area where I had to drive 13 miles everyday, and actually took the Santa Monica Freeway.

Did your husband know that you were learning how to drive?

Yes. He would take the car to work and then we'd go to his shop and leave her car and take our car.

And he didn't mind that you were learning?

He didn't seem to. He didn't act upset about it. I don't think he was real *happy* with it, but I guess he didn't know what else to do about it. He wasn't the smartest fellow in the world. He had an IQ of 92.

Truly?

Truly!

What's your IQ?

129.

And you—how can I put it?—submitted to this man all those years [who had] an IQ so inferior to yours?

Yes. [laughs]

Did he have any kind of imagination?

Not much.

He was just a watch-TV, meat-and-potatoes kind of guy?

Yes.

You must have been straining at the leash all those years.

[laughs] But when you have children, you have to take care of them. It's one of those things. I'd sit on the floor and play with the kids.

What year, what period are we talking about that you began learning how to drive?

Let's see. I was about 33, so what year would that be? 1964.

How did you feel when you first sat down behind the wheel, and your lady friend—what was her name?

Her name was Margaret [Gerrughty].

How did you feel when Margaret said, "Put the key in the ignition."

Oh, I was thrilled! [laughs]

Did you see this as a way ...

To escape? Yes, I guess I did. I liked the idea of going to work every day.

Had you ever had a job before you married?

No. When we first got married I did a little modeling for a cartoonist.

A cartoonist?

Yeah. A fella that drew like the cartoons in *Esquire*, back then. Now it would be the kind of cartoons you see in *Playboy* where the girls always look dumb, have their toes turned in. I had to pose with my toes turned in looking real stupid.

OK. You're on the road now. This is about 1964. Your children are teenagers. Margaret said she'd get you a job in her husband's firm. What did he do?

He had an insurance agency.
What kind of job did he give you?

Giving information over the telephone as well as preparing insurance policies to go out. Just getting them ready to mail and mailing them.

Was this the first time that you'd ever had money of your own?

Well, I didn't keep it myself. I pooled it along with my husband's money.
But it was money that you had earned.

Well, I had worked for awhile in a discount store that was right close to the house so I could walk. It was only four or five blocks away. So I had worked there. But it was the same thing. I put the money in the checking account for both of us. It wasn't as if I were keeping it. And I earned enough money at that discount store to buy him a car, which he put *only in his name!* [laughs]

How long did you work in the insurance firm?

Oh, just a very short time. Just a couple of months. He didn't really need me. He put me in there because his wife wanted him to do it.

What did you learn from working there that brief period? I don't mean learn in terms of the job, but learn in terms of yourself and "Where do I go from here?"

I definitely wanted to continue working. And then I got a job in Culver City at this electronics place where this girl told me that she was gay. At that time we weren't calling it gay.

Yes, it definitely seemed exciting to me. It was really something that I was very
What did you call it?

Just homosexual. They weren't using the word gay yet. About a year later they started using gay.

The lady that you met in Culver City at your job. Tell me the connection you first made. This is in a very short period where you've learned how to drive, you've been working, and you've earned some of your own money. You've learned that you want to go on with this. Did you have a sense at that time of moving forward in your life, moving away from the life that you'd been living with your husband.?

Yes, I think so. But, of course, I still had my kids, you know.

From there I got a job at Douglas. It was Douglas then, it wasn't McDonnell-Douglas.¹² This was in Santa Monica. The Culver City job was a place called Avnet, which I thought must mean aviation network or something like that, but it wasn't. There had been a person named Bob Avnet who had killed himself about a month before I worked there.

I worked at Douglas as a purchasing secretary and was quite happy there.

Was the Santa Monica job before or after the Culver City job?

After.

And Culver City came after the insurance job?

Yes, I guess so. We had been real close for quite a while at work.

Yes. That's right.

And it was in Culver City that you met the lady [who told you she was gay]?

Yes, that's right. I thought she was pretty masculine. I would have thought

Yes.

Digress just a little bit, and this is a question that may not have an answer, that may reflect more my ignorance than anything. But did you have a sense at that time of yourself being a woman? Of your womanhood? Does that make sense?

Yes. It definitely seemed exciting to me. It was really something that I was very interested in. But it's kind of hard to explain. I kind of thought this was the direction I wanted to go. But I didn't know what I was going to do about Fred. [laughs]

The lady that you met in Culver City at your job. Tell me the connection you first made [with her].

Well, we ate lunch together every day and we talked a lot. I don't know how we got into personal things, and she eventually ... Well, it was a long time before she actually admitted that she was gay. Eventually she did and told me that she lived with a girl, a woman who was 42 years old and was very, *very* masculine. And after I met Kelley, after she introduced me to Kelley, I met this woman that was very, very masculine, and she *was* very, very masculine! She actually had a crewcut and worked as an operating room nurse. So I guess at work she was all bundled up in gowns and everything.

What was the [Culver City] friend's name?

Her name was Carol Golden. And Kelley's name was also Carole [DeLand].

Carol [Golden] must have felt very comfortable with you to say she was gay, especially in those days.

Yeah, I guess so. But we had been real close for quite awhile at work.

Had you had any idea that she was gay?

Yeah, I did. In fact, I thought she was pretty masculine. I would have thought that she would have been the butch.¹³ [laughs] But then, there are a lot of people like that [who] don't realize that they look gay.

What did you think when she told you this?

I thought it was very interesting.

Interesting how?

Well, I was certainly very curious to know what this was all about.

You had mentioned a little while ago that before you'd been married you'd had, would you call them crushes?, on other women?

Sort of, yes. One particular occasion when I was at a Women's Club meeting, a girl that I hadn't met before came in late. *She was gorgeous!* Even now I can tell you exactly what she was wearing! She was wearing a yellow dress with a full skirt and all those petticoats underneath like they were wearing at that time. A black belt, and her hair was black. And she was just beautiful.

Did you understand what that feeling was?

No, I didn't. I just knew I wanted to get to know her better. I found out her telephone number and called her and, you know, just made it a point to do things when she was going to be doing them.

At the time, then, that you met Carol [Golden], and she told you that she was gay, did all these past feelings begin coming together in a way that you understood a little bit better?

No, I didn't understand it. [laughs] I just found it so interesting.

What did Carol [Golden] propose to do with you then? Did you tell her, "I'm curious. I'm interested. I want to know more."?

I probably let her know. I may not have said it in so many words, but I'm sure she knew that. Then she said she wanted me to meet this friend of hers. And she thought this friend would be just right for me.

In a romantic sense?

Yeah. And at that time it hadn't even occurred to me to say I was a chubby chaser.¹⁴ And this girl was chubby!

You were still trying to understand being gay.

Yeah. Oh, I thought it was just wonderful. She [Carole DeLand] was so chubby and soft and cuddly.

Tell me about the first time you met Carole [DeLand], who you then loved. Tell me the first time you met her.

She smiled and she had dimples. And I said, "Oh, you've got dimples!" Of course, she was embarrassed and didn't know what to say.

Was this a date that Carol [Golden] had set up for you?

Yes.

How did you arrange [to keep] this date when you were still married and had children at home?

I've forgotten. I must have made some excuse as to where I was going. I don't know. I think it may have been. ... I know. I was going to a group therapy class because I had a child that stuttered. My second child stuttered. So they recommended that I go to this group therapy class and find out what to do about it. And I left the class early in order to meet [Carole DeLand].

Where did you meet? Do you remember that?

Yeah. On the corner of Slauson [Avenue] and Sepulveda [Boulevard]. That's where we decided we'd meet. And then we went over to Carol [Golden]'s house where her girlfriend, whose name was Mac, was. And we spent the evening with them. We stopped in a bar called The Corkroom. I'd never been in a gay bar before.



Carole DeLand at 16

[photo courtesy of Ellen DeLand; negative in the collection of Dennis McBride]

When you say gay, was it a lesbian bar, a gay men's bar?

It was a lesbian bar at the time. It later became a men's bar and women weren't even welcome in there after that.

And you'd never been. When you first walked in—you knew it was a gay bar. What did you think when you went in the first time?

Well, I tried to be very blasé about it as though I saw this kind of thing all the time. [laughs] But it was the first time in my life I had ever sat on a bar stool. As a straight woman and a lady—ladies sit at *tables*. Ladies don't sit at bar stools. And I was too embarrassed to say, "I don't want to sit on a bar stool." So I sat on a bar stool! [laughs]

How did Carole [DeLand] react to you?

I think she fell in love with me right away, too.

Love at first sight?

Yeah, I think so.

You believe in love at first sight?

Oh, yes, I do. Certainly I did on that occasion. That particular night [Carole DeLand and I] left. As the evening wore on we left. We weren't gonna stand there all night long and keep those people up. They had to go to work the next day. We went and sat in the car and we sat there until six in the morning just talking.

What did you talk about?

Anything!

Did you talk about being gay?

Well, I asked a lot of questions.

How did you explain this [date] to your husband?

I came in and he was asleep. I got into bed—after six in the morning—and he never knew I was out that late. He slept really sound.

With an IQ of 92, I guess he would. What was going on in your head after this first date with Carole [DeLand]?

I thought this was pretty exciting. Yes.

What did you think you wanted to do about it?

Well, I knew I was going to do something about it. I didn't know *how* I was going to do it.

At that time, at that moment, were questions going through your mind about "Oh, the children! Oh, my husband! Oh, everything!"?

Oh, yes.

That was really a crisis point for you?

Oh, it was. And once [Fred] found out, he was just so absolutely He sued for divorce *immediately*. And I think he figured that I would come begging to him and ask him, "Oh, please, don't do it. I love you so much." Or something. But I didn't.

When did you get to see Carole [DeLand] again? Did you move pretty fast with her?

Yes. Um hm.

How did you arrange to meet her again?

Gee, I don't remember. I guess I must have just taken off. The day that I met her was the 25th of September in 1965. And we moved in together by January [1966]. [Fred] sued for divorce and I was served the papers on the 20th of October. It was only a month after I met her.

Yes. [laughs]

How did your husband find out?

How did she find out you were married and having a baby?

I guess I probably did enough that he suspected something and wanted to know what it was, and so I told him. But I didn't think it was that bad a thing.

Did you think he would ask you for a divorce, or did you consider divorcing him?

No, I really didn't think that he would. I probably thought I would eventually. But I really was so I really hadn't made any plans. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. But he made the decision for me.

Did I'm curious to know how Carol [Gitter] reacted to what happened.

Did you, in that period between meeting Carole [DeLand] and [being served with divorce papers], make love with her?

Yes. After a couple of weeks, yeah.

Describe how you felt at the time that you made love with Carole, since your experience up till that time [was only with men]—and you were 34 now. What was the difference you understood emotionally?

On being a husband. That I was having an affair with a younger woman.

Well, I suppose that women are *cuddly*. And that's more important to me. Men just aren't cuddly like that. [laughs] And, of course, she was chubby, too, which helped.

You'd spoken earlier that you'd been waiting and waiting for your husband to love you.

And I often [thought], Oh, I know he must love me. He just doesn't know how to say it.

But you didn't feel that way with Carole?

No. I felt she loved me right away.

That would turn the trick for me.

Yes. [laughs]

How did she deal with your being married and having a family?

Of course, she wanted me out of there right away. She didn't want me to stay there. I didn't have much choice. I was out right away. As soon as he served the papers on me, I moved into my daughter's room. She had a double bed. And so I slept in her room. I wouldn't sleep back in the master bedroom again. And then very soon—like I said, in January [1966]—Kelley and I got an apartment together.

Then I'm curious to know how Carol [Golden] reacted to what happened.

I think she was happy about our being together. It was rough on her. Fred tried to subpoena her to court, which he was never able to do. Was never able to catch her at the right time to serve a subpoena on her. But he tried to serve subpoenas on everybody that I knew.

What grounds did he divorce you on?

On being a lesbian. That I was having an affair with a younger woman.

A younger woman?

Yeah, well, [Carole DeLand] was 7 years younger than me. [laughs] He was just as nasty as he could be.

What did your society friends think?

I didn't see any of my society friends, but he apparently went to everyone and told them. I mean everybody that I ever knew, he had made it a point to go see them and tell them what a terrible person I was and how sick I was.

At the time that you were going through the divorce, did you ever have an opportunity to
What about all of the organizations that you belonged to?

Just left.

Just left everything all at once?

That's right.

Did you think about taking your children with you?

Oh, yeah. To begin with, I was working at Douglas. I had to leave early in the morning and come back in the evening. One day, before I went to work, I set out a package of 10 pork chops on the sink, and when I got back there were 10 pork chops on the sink and nobody there.

What happened?

He'd taken them all away. He'd taken them all to live at his brother's house. I came home to have nobody. And I had no idea where they were.

What did you do?

Well, I called Carole [DeLand] and told her what had happened. I ended up having to throw those pork chops out. [laughs]

How long was it before you saw your children again?

Oh, dear. That was such a mixed-up time. Of course, they were told, you know, that I was sick and terrible. The boys never really got over that. Mary was good and she wanted to be with me and ended up running away [from her father].

She was the youngest?

Yeah. She was 13. And she definitely wanted to be with me.

At the time that you were going through the divorce, did you ever have an opportunity to sit down with your children by yourself and try to explain to them what was happening?

Only to Mary. The boys I didn't see them at all.

How long was it that you didn't get to see your boys?

At least a year. And then when I finally *did* see them, they were all closed up. Couldn't make contact with them at all.

In the divorce, Fred got custody [of the children]. But was there an arrangement for visitation rights?

Only if Carole wasn't there. And that was written right in the divorce papers.

Could [the children] come to your place, or did you have to go to theirs?

No, they could come to my place.

When the divorce was actually in court and you were facing the lawyers and the judges and they were aware the grounds were that you were lesbian—how did they react?

They all treated me like dirt. Even my own attorneys and I had about 19 of them.

How did they treat you so badly?

Well, as soon as they saw Carole They'd treat me real nice, talk just like Perry Mason. To start out with, El Segundo's a small town, and Fred got the only attorney in El Segundo. So, naturally, I couldn't get *that* attorney, so I went to the nearest town which is Manhattan Beach,¹⁵ and chose an attorney. Went in to see him and he talked just like Perry Mason. "Anything you tell me is completely confidential. And I can do wonders for you!" And all this sort of thing. So I told him the truth, just exactly what was happening, and he said he didn't want to take my case. Didn't want any part of it. "Go get another attorney and lie to him." That's what he *said!* And then after I went out, after paying him, of course,

he went and had lunch with my husband's attorney and told him everything I'd told him! I was treated *terrible* by the attorneys. Then I decided I would get some really big, important attorney, and I called Gladys Towles Root, the one that handled the Frank Sinatra, Jr. kidnapping case.¹⁶ And this was right down by the court house in downtown Los Angeles. Of course, I didn't get *her*, I got her associate, who was a dirty old man. [laughs] All he was interested in was talking about sex. After a certain length of time when I would try to get hold of him for something—they started attaching *my* wages for Fred's debts—I kept calling [the attorney] and he'd never call me back. When I finally got him on the telephone, I said, "You could at least have had the courtesy to call me back." I'd been calling him for a couple of weeks. He said, "I'm *sick* of you. Get yourself another attorney." I had agreed to pay him \$500 and had paid him \$100 and had \$400 more to pay. I had to sign a statement that I was paying him *nothing* in order that *Fred* would pay him a certain amount of money, which he did. And then [the attorney] sued me for the other \$400 even though he didn't handle my case. And that attorney, the one that was suing me, came right up in court and told the judge I was queer, and the whole thing. I lost that case.

All because you were gay?

Oh, yes.

Did you ever find a sympathetic ear in that system during your divorce?

Not really. The next attorney was one named Weinberg down in Santa Monica. He was really nice up until Kelley came in, Carole came in. When he saw how she looked, he turned completely indifferent. But he *did* handle the case. Actually, *Fred's* attorney did more things for me than *my* attorney had even thought of. You know, that I should get part of his pension when he retired. My attorney hadn't even thought about that. [Fred's attorney] apparently was more ethical than the others.

Among the friends that you'd had—and you'd had a very wide circle of friends in El Segundo society—were any of them subpoenaed?

No. The ones that were subpoenaed were my new gay friends.

No. I just left El Segundo and never went back.

How did Carole support you through this, emotionally?

A clean break.

She did the best she could. She wasn't experienced in doing anything like that.

That's right.

She'd had a much more sheltered life than you'd had?

Was there a point at which Fred changed his mind [about the divorce]?

Oh, yes, she certainly had. And I don't think she ever felt a real responsibility to

One time, when we were in the middle of the divorce, we sat down at the kitchen table like this, and he said, "You know, all this time I never loved you. But now I love you. And I don't want you to leave."

And I said, "You waited too late." Just waited too long.

And according to the kids, they say that Of course I was kicked out and lost custody of the kids and everything. The kids made it sound like he'd been really mourning about the whole thing. But I never heard him saying anything like that. But maybe he realized that he did love me and wished that he hadn't started the divorce.

These are the things that she said. And she made quite a bit of money at it, but not enough to really support us. [laughs]

From that point onward was he more conciliatory?

Tell me about [Carole's] background—her family, her parents.

No! He didn't really want the kids. He just wanted to do something to make me unhappy. He certainly didn't treat the kids well. They were just a nuisance for him.

This is something that can't happen now. In order to do anything in

the movie industry [today] you have to have college degree to start with. He
When you were going through all [this], trying to deal with discovering that you were gay and your new relationship and your new life, and all the old life and Fred still sticking it to you, how did you maintain your equilibrium?

Other people have higher

titles than production manager, the production manager is the one that does all
I don't think I did. [laughs] *much money is going to be spent, how much it's gonna cost to make a movie, and try to make sure that it stays within that*

Did you ever regret going with Carole?

And he had an office and a secretary

and all that sort of thing.

No, I never regretted going with her because I was so madly in love with her. I knew that was where I belonged. But it was awfully hard. I would just wake up in the night pounding on the mattress because you feel so helpless. There's just nothing you can do.

How did Carole support you through this, emotionally?

She did the best she could. She wasn't experienced in doing anything like that.

She'd had a much more sheltered life that you'd had?

Oh, yes, she certainly had. And I don't think she ever felt a real responsibility to get a job at that time, that we'd just make out somehow. I had no idea that I would have to be the sole support [of Carole and myself], too.

How come?

Kelley looked so butch that nobody would hire her. Because she typed a hundred words a minute, she put an ad in the UCLA paper and she had a typewriter that would justify. You know, be straight on both sides? And she would type Master's theses and things like that. And she made quite a bit of money at it, but not enough to really support us. [laughs]

Tell me about [Carole's] background—her family, her parents.

Well, her father started out in the 20s as a grip, a stage hand at Paramount [Studios]. This is something that can't happen now. In order to do anything in the movie industry [today] you have to have college degree to start with. He worked his way all the way up from the very bottom. He became an assistant director and then, I don't know, different things until he was finally a production manager. And a production manager, even though other people have higher titles than production manager, the production manager is the one that does all the work. They decide how much money is going to be spent, how much it's gonna cost to make a movie, and try to make sure that it stays within that budget. And he's a paper pusher, really. And he had an office and a secretary and all that sort of thing.

What was his name, his first name?

His name was Claude Kenneth DeLand. And most of the credits on the [film] often say C. Kenneth DeLand. Or maybe just Kenneth DeLand on some of them. He has a frame to himself¹⁷ on *The World of Suzie Wong*.¹⁸ And *Klute*.¹⁹ And *The Sterile Cuckoo*.²⁰ And by that time they had given him the title of associate producer, but he still did the same thing as a production manager.

Did Carole get along with her father?

When I first met her, one of the things I asked was, because she was—since she was very, very *obviously* gay, she couldn't pass for somebody straight—I said, "What do your parents think about your being gay?" She said, "They don't know." [laughs] That just flabbergasted me. I couldn't see how anybody could *not* know. And I asked about all the cousins 'cause they had a big family that all got together on many occasions. "What about all your cousins and aunts and uncles?"

"They don't know."

Well, you know they *had* to have known and just didn't talk about it. And it's possible that her parents knew but didn't want to know.

Kind of a denial on both sides?

Yes.

She didn't introduce you to her family right away?

Oh, yes, she did.

As what?

Just a friend.

Did they know you were living together?

No, this is before we were living together. When we first met. One night she took me over to her house. And at that particular time I was all dressed up fit to *kill*! I think I had a hat and gloves on and everything. And Kelley's father thought

I was just wonderful. He was putting together this game. He invented the foosball game.²¹ He never had it patented, though. He was constantly giving the plans to everybody. But he had just made this new foosball game and they were gonna take it to the home of that woman—oh, what was her name? She was the secretary on *The Beverly Hillbillies*.²²

*Nancy Kulp?*²³

Yes. Nancy Kulp. They were going to her house in Santa Barbara to a party. And they were going to take the game along. [laughs] He was all excited about having made a new one, because he was always making one for somebody. They really liked me. They just thought I was pretty special. They didn't have any idea. Of course, when Kelley got subpoenaed to go to court, why then, they knew.

Oh, [Kelley's family] knew about the subpoena?

Oh, yeah. Kelley's mother was there when she got served with the subpoena.

Carole must have had to tell her what the subpoena was for.

Oh, yes.

Did Carole tell you how they reacted then?

I was there.

What happened?

[Her parents] were upset, yeah. They were really upset. I went in and talked to Kelley's mother. We had a little conversation, and she said, "Well, I can tell you one thing about Carole. She's loyal." [laughs] That was a nice thing for her to say. I'm sure she didn't think I was any more guilty than [her daughter] was!

Did they have other children? Did Carole have any brothers and sisters?

One sister that's older than her.²⁴

Did you know her?

Yes. We'd been living together quite awhile when we told the sister that we were gay. And that sister was absolutely flabbergasted. She had *no* idea!

Did she come to accept it or not?

Eventually. But as soon as Kelley started going through the sex change, [her sister] didn't want her children to see [Kelley] at all. So we weren't allowed to see them at all during that time. Of course, they were adults, and Kelley was already considered a man by the time we ever saw the kids again.

What kind of a life did Carole have before you met her?

Well, she didn't have any problem with money, that's for sure! [laughs] They lived in a very exclusive area of Cheviot Hills²⁵ in Los Angeles. Rancho Park or something like that. In that type of neighborhood they have grocery stores where you can just call 'em and they deliver. And if they don't have what you want, they go and get it for you. if you happen to feel like squab, they'll go find it and bring it back and sell it to you. Or lobster tails, or whatever.

Had Carole ever been on her own?

Never had been on her own. Everything was provided. Never had to support herself.

How did that affect your relationship? You'd come from a difficult life.

Yes. And I'd been married for 18 years and had three teenage children. [Carole and I] were definitely different, but we seemed to make it all right.

Where was the apartment that you and Carole had?

In the Cheviot Hills area. It was on National Boulevard. Los Angeles 54? Is that what it was?

How did you set up housekeeping? Was it something that you both naturally did? Or did you have trouble learning each other's habits like any couple would? Or was it a wonderful relationship from the start?

It was just a wonderful relationship. I know one time Mary, my daughter, came to visit for a few days. And it was kind of funny. I was 34 years old and weighed about 110 and looked pretty good. And I had on a bathing suit because this particular motel—it was *like* a motel. It was an apartment complex and it had a swimming pool. We were playing in the water. I wanted to get something out of a tall cupboard and stood up on a chair in my bathing suit and was getting something down. And Mary, 12 years old, said, "Mommy, when I get old like you, am I going to lose my figure, too?" [laughs] Believe me, I reminded her of it when *she* turned 34!

In your new life, how did your two sons relate to what was going on?

They didn't say too much, but it was obvious they definitely disapproved. They were pretty unhappy.

Do you feel that they disapproved, or that they were made to disapprove?

They were made to disapprove. But I think they felt that they had been abandoned.

Do you think their disapproval had more to do with their feeling abandoned than your being gay?

I don't now. Probably both. But it wasn't *my* idea to abandon them. Their father took them away. But I don't think they understood that. I don't think they understand that today, even.

Is your relationship with them today difficult?

It's not perfect, but they will at least talk to me. Now, my oldest comes to visit occasionally. Maybe twice a year. And lately he's been bringing a girlfriend along, which is kind of surprising, since he's been very, *very* religious. I mean *fanatically*. Just terrible. Didn't believe in sex before marriage, so there he was, you know, a 40-year-old virgin. But he's been bringing this girl along and even sleeping in the same bed with her. Maybe they're *not* having sex. I don't know. [laughs] But he's short, and he was able to wear most of Kelley's clothes. After Kelley died I told him there were an awful lot of nice clothes here, beautiful suits and things. Nobody to wear them. He was tickled to death when I gave them to him.

If you described a typical day in your life with Carole, right at the beginning, the first year or so [of your relationship], what was it like?

I went to work in the morning and came home in the evening and fixed dinner. Most of the time we stayed up very late because she always felt that she didn't have enough time with me. Even though I had to get up real early in the morning, I still had to stay up late with her. That was common most of the time.

Did you have a very active social life at that time?

Only with gay people. They were *her* friends to start with.

How were you accepted then in the gay community?

Oh, I was accepted, yes. I was accepted definitely in her circle of friends. And we joined the GLF, the Gay Liberation Front.²⁶ That was about 1969, '70, is when we joined the Gay Liberation Front.

What kind of activities did the GLF have?

They had the first [gay pride] parade in LA.

Were you in it?

Yeah. We were along with a group from Troy Perry's church, and it was the only gay church in the whole world at that time.

Let's talk about that. The Metropolitan Community Church.²⁷ The MCC. When did you go to your first service?

Probably around 1970. I'm not sure if we went in '69. I know the first time we went there was a theater [where they were holding services]. They rented a theater in Los Angeles.²⁸

Do you remember where that theater was?

I did know the name of it, but I can't think of it right now. But they had lots and lots of people. It was a pretty good-sized theater and they filled it up. Standing room only.

Why did you go to MCC? You were raised as a Christian Scientist. What did MCC offer you that you wanted?

I suppose fellowship. I think most people went for that reason. You see, [Troy Perry] was a Pentecostal minister, and this was so completely different certainly as far as anything I'd ever known. You know, "If you love the Lord, say Amen!" And the whole congregation yelling out, "Amen!" [throws her arms in the air]

That's what the MCC was?

Oh, yes. That's what Troy Perry was. Troy Perry was a Pentecostal minister. People would yell out, "Praise the Lord!" or something any old time during the sermon. [laughs]

Did you feel particularly religious at that time?

No. I've never really felt particularly religious. Except when I was a little kid I thought religion was wonderful.

We outgrow that, don't we?

hit 'im again [laughs] It was so cute, his telling about it. He actually had ways to
 Yes! [laughs]

How did you find out about the Metropolitan Community Church?

Someone must have mentioned it in a bar or something, 'cause I don't know how else I would have found out about it.

What did Carol get out of MCC?

Was it founded about that time, 1969?

I think fellowship was the main thing. She was raised an Episcopalian, and it's a
 I think it was '68 or something. He [Troy Perry] was having meetings in his home. They tried different places when they got enough of a congregation together, but by the time we went it was already very big. But it was still the only gay church in the whole world.

What kind of man was Troy Perry? Is Troy Perry? He's not dead.

He speaks, of course, with a southern accent. He's from Georgia or one of those places in the South. I've got his book here.²⁹ I just recently bought it. I used to have a record of [his sermons].

A record?

Yeah. He was selling records of it, and I was in the audience when the record was made.

What kind of sermons did he give?

The one particular sermon that he gave that was on the record, and which is also in his book—he was protesting, I imagine it must have been all in the news at the time, the whole acceptance [issue] of gay people.³⁰ And he decided he was going to fast and sit on the steps of the Federal Building or something, fasting. [laughs] For rights for gay people, which was a pretty big order at that time. He said this one particular time he was sitting there fasting and some woman came up and hit 'im with her purse. And he started to say something to her, and she

What did they talk about at the meetings?

hit 'im again! [laughs] It was so cute, his telling about it. He actually had ways to counter anything anybody said in the Bible about people being gay.

He would be the first who went to that effort.

Yes, he was.

What did Carole get out of MCC?

I think fellowship was the main thing. She was raised an Episcopalian, and it's a rather serious church, too. Well, the Christian Science Church is almost *silent*. You don't have somebody yelling out, "If you love the Lord, say *Amen!*" [laughs] That was a real shock to me. And I think probably the Episcopalian religion is almost as quiet.

Did you know Troy Perry very well?

We got to know him as time went on. I saw him recently at the [MCC-Las Vegas] church when he spoke about a month ago.³¹ I had told him ahead of time that I had [Carole's and my] wedding pictures, and he definitely wanted to see them, so I brought them that day for him to see when he preached.

Aside from the bars and [MCC], what other organizations were there that gay people at that time in Los Angeles could be involved in? You already mentioned the Gay Liberation Front.

That was the only thing. They didn't have any of the stuff they have now. Not even as much as [Las Vegas] has [now]. *Nothing*. It just hadn't started yet. I'm sure that right after we left is when it started becoming everything.

Did you hold any offices or belong to any committees in the GLF?

No. [I] just went to the meetings and enjoyed the company of all the other people that were gay. That's all.

What did they talk about at the meetings?

They were not really well-organized. And when they'd steal things, [they'd say] they liberated it.

Steal things? Like what?

Stationery supplies and things they needed for the meetings.

Where would they steal these things?

I don't know. You'd ask 'em, "Where did this come from?"

"Oh, I liberated it." [laughs]

We weren't a really ethical organization.

At that time, the late 60s, the country was really beginning to explode politically. Where did gay people fit into that?

They *didn't* a whole lot. There just wasn't anything for them to fit into. Nobody was really well-organized.

Did you feel that gay people were becoming more accepted at that time or not?

I suppose I thought they were becoming more accepted. But then, I really didn't know what it was before then.

Tell me about the first [gay pride] parade [in Los Angeles].

The first parade was fun. Well, let's see, what year was Stonewall?³²

1969.

'69. Then our first parade was 1970. It was just a year later in June. Supposed to be the last Sunday in June. It was kind of crude. I think I mentioned to you before that one of the things they had was this great big penis that walked down the street. Like the Orientals have a dragon with people underneath? Well, this

was a big penis going down the street like that. [laughs] I think a jar of Vaseline went along with it.

Did you march in the parade? Did you carry signs? Yes. It was an evening parade. It wasn't in the daytime like it is now.

We could have had signs, but I don't think so. I think Troy Perry sat on the back of a flatbed truck or something like that.

Where did the parade go?

No, I don't remember them raiding the bars. But we had to be very careful

Down Hollywood Boulevard. They closed the street.

Was it a very big parade?

Why? It was a very big parade. It was a very big parade.

Nothing, of course, like the last ones that I've been to.

They were afraid that some undercover person would come in and find out.

What kind of reaction did the crowds give you?

What was the line that you couldn't touch?

Mostly amused. Nobody was angry about it. They just thought it was kind of funny.

People would suspect us of something like that.

No Christians threatening you?

What kind of dancing did you do? You were a dancer, with your husband. Were you a

No, nobody like that. Maybe they just didn't know it was gonna happen.

When you went out marching in this gay liberation parade, were you a little apprehensive about how people would react to it?

Yes. I was a little apprehensive about how people would react to it.

No. Most people were embarrassed that somebody would see them [and] find out that they were gay. I worked in downtown Los Angeles and the people I saw at work I never saw socially. They were so far away, the people that I worked with, that I wasn't worried about them seeing me or anything. But a lot of people were scared that somebody was going to see them and know they were gay.

We weren't supposed to. We often did, and the bartender would come around and say, "You know, you're going to have to be careful with that."

That day, at the parade, after it broke up, after it was over, did everybody go off and celebrate somewhere?

We didn't. I don't know what the rest of them did. It was an evening parade. It wasn't in the daytime like it is now.

In general, how were gay people in Los Angeles accepted at that time? Did [the authorities] raid the bars?

No, I don't remember them raiding the bars. But we had to be very careful about touching in bars for fear undercover police would come in. We weren't allowed to dance real close.

Why?

They were afraid that some undercover person would come in and find out.

What was the law that you couldn't touch?

I imagine it was a sodomy law, that you had to be real careful [touching]. People would suspect us of something like that.

What kind of dancing did you do? You were a dancer, with your husband. Were you a dancer with Carole?

Oh, yeah. Well, she was a lousy dancer. Always was. Always was a lousy dancer. [laughs]

What kind of dancing did you do?

Just regular slow dancing.

But you couldn't get close?

We weren't *supposed* to. We often did, and the bartender would come around and say, "You know, you're going to have to be careful with that."

Was that something that you just accepted? Did it make you angry?

We just accepted it. I suppose [Carole and I] were a little angry about it because we were just starting to go together and we wanted to be close.

I suppose the sensibility [of being repressed wasn't common] then. This was before Stonewall?

Yes.

Can you remember some of the gay bars you went to in Los Angeles?

The first one we went to was The Corkroom, which was on Slauson [Avenue]. And, oh, let's see, there was one we went to off of Melrose. It had a number in it. 70. Bacchanal 70.

I'll come back.

And it was really crazy place where they had all kinds of junk hanging from the ceiling. I'm sure you've seen that kind of place. There'd be a bicycle and a toilet and all kinds of oddball things stuck to the ceiling. Newspaper headlines all over the walls.

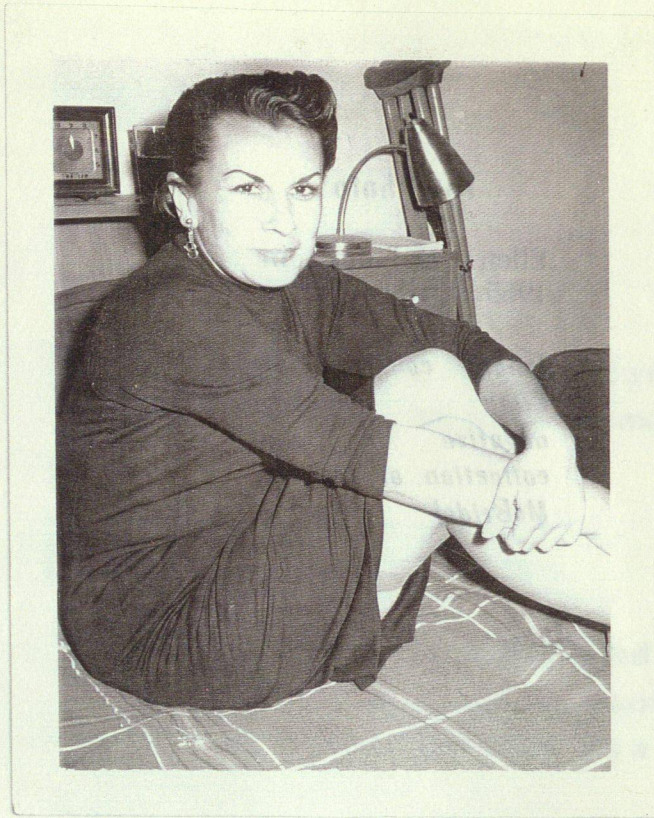
Was this a lesbian bar or a gay [men's] bar?

I think it probably was mostly lesbian.

Oh, and there was Joannie Presents in the [San Fernando] Valley. It was just off Lankershim, one of those streets. [It] was a lesbian bar. Joannie was a drummer. She was quite pretty. And apparently she must have had an orchestra at one time. Occasionally there would be a little orchestra or group in there playing. But not all the time. Most of the time it was just records, a jukebox.

Is it still around?

I doubt it, 'cause that's been a long time ago.



Top Photo

Ellen DeLand in
1965

*[photo courtesy of
Ellen DeLand;
negative in the
collection of Dennis
McBride]*

Bottom Photo

Ellen and Carole DeLand
opening gifts at their
wedding reception,
August 28, 1971.

*[photo courtesy of Ellen
DeLand; negative in the
collection of Dennis
McBride]*

Tell me about your marriage. [Laughs] Was it like a civil ceremony, or did you
 You [and Carole] were married in the MCC church.

Yes.

Tell me how you decided to become married.

Well, we had been living together for about 6 years. Five years, maybe, I don't know. At least 5 years. You have to be living together 6 months in order to be married in the church.

They don't call it a marriage though.

They call it a holy union now, but at that time they called it a marriage, they called it a wedding and the whole business. And the marriage certificate said Certificate of Marriage on it. But it doesn't now. Now it's a Certificate of Holy Union.

How did you two decide to be married?

We both really wanted it. Before we knew you could be married in the [MCC] church, we considered going down to Mexico and seeing if they'd marry us there.

Had that been done before by anyone you knew?

I don't know. We must have figured that it *had* been done.

What is it about that institution that you wanted to do it again?

I don't know. [laughs]. But we really wanted it. Now, [a] wedding we went to recently [in Las Vegas], those girls had only been together for four months, I think. And they were *determined* to get married. It was really important to them. And I could understand that, but I really don't know why.

Tell me about your marriage [ceremony] then. Was it like a civil ceremony, or did you have bridesmaids and that whole thing?

Oh, no. There had been others. We had the whole business. At the time, some bridal shop must have gone out of business and gave all their wedding dresses to the Salvation Army. And there was an article about it in the newspaper that anybody could get a wedding dress because they had them there. We decided to go look. And, my God! they had any kind of wedding dress you'd want. Most of 'em were \$25. The one that I bought was \$35. It must have cost close to \$300 [retail] at that time. It would cost you \$3000 today.

Describe the dress.

Lace, mostly lace. A big train. Just beautiful. A sweetheart neckline, lace sleeves and everything. I had somebody make a veil for me.

Did Carole wear a wedding dress as well?

No, no. She wore a tuxedo. I never saw her in a skirt. Never. Anytime.

She always wore pants?

Yes. The only pictures I've ever seen of her in a skirt were like when [her family] took a trip to Spain to make a movie. She went along when she was a teenager, right out of high school. And believe it or not, when she was in Paris, she dated Fred Astaire, Jr.³³ Not because there was any reason for them to want to be together, [but] only because they were the only people of the same age to do things with in this huge party of people. They hung around in all the different places in Paris. I didn't even now there *was* a Fred Astaire, Jr.

Tell me about the wedding itself. Tell me how you planned for it.

We ordered flowers and the whole bit. All these beautiful flowers. And printed invitations. Everything was very beautiful. I don't even have a copy of the invitation or anything.

Was this the first [gay] wedding Troy Perry had performed?

Oh, no. There had been others.

What was the date that you were married?

1971. August 28.

Tell me about the ceremony.

Oh, it was absolutely beautiful. I wish that at the time people were doing things like recording the ceremony. I can't even tell you the words. It was just like a regular wedding ceremony. But he [Troy Perry] would *shout!* You know, "I *charge* you that if there's any reason why you should not be joined in matrimony" [laughs] He was very good.

Were the words to the ceremony the traditional words?

Yes.

It wasn't a speech you made up yourself?

No. It was a traditional wedding ceremony and we had to take communion at the ceremony.

Did you exchange rings?

Yes.

Where did you get the rings and what did they look like?

They have a row of diamonds. They're both just alike. Of course, Kelley's hands were as small as mine, so they were both ladies' size. I've just recently misplaced the one [I gave Carole]. Mine was stolen out of my apartment that I had when I was burglarized. And so when we got married again, Kelley gave me her ring.



Ellen Roan's and Carole DeLand's marriage at the Metropolitan Community Church, Los Angeles, on August 28, 1971. [l-r: Rev. Troy Perry, Carole DeLand, Ellen Roan]

[photo courtesy of Ellen DeLand; negative in the collection of Dennis McBride]

Were there a lot of people in the wedding audience?

We had a pretty good crowd.

Music?

Oh, yes.

What kind?

The songs sung were, *There's a Place for Us*. You know, "Somewhere ... ," from *West Side Story*.³⁴ And they played both wedding marches—*Lohengrin* walking up and Mendelssohn coming back. And *Because*. And I had *There's a Place for Us* sung at Kelley's funeral.

Did you have a wedding supper or a banquet or a party?

We had a reception in the church. And there were two fellas, Dave and Dick, who planned the whole thing, the punch and the whole thing. Fixed little goodies to eat. I've forgotten what all was there. They did a real good job. They had a reel-to-reel tape recorder that they taped for us, songs they thought we'd want. Music to dance to after the ceremony. Dave's mother made the wedding cake.

Was it held in that theater?

No. This was in the church. They had the church by then.

Where was the church?

On Union Street right near the five-level [freeway] interchange. I think it burned down. I know one of 'em burned down, and probably the records of our wedding, too. I think everything went. Everything got burned.

Did you go on a honeymoon?



Ellen Roan's and Carole DeLand's marriage at the Metropolitan Community Church in Los Angeles, August 28, 1971. [l-r: Tammy Johnson, Ellen Roan, Rev. Troy Perry, Carole DeLand, Dick Mickalski]

[photo courtesy of Ellen DeLand; negative in the collection of Dennis McBride]

Yes. We went to a lovely hotel in the Marina. It was really nice. [rolls her eyes and laughs]

Did you feel different in your relationship with Carole after the wedding than you did before?

Like I told you, I worked in downtown Los Angeles. I told everybody I was getting married, and I changed my name. I didn't tell 'em who I married. [laughs]

Did they pester you with questions and want to see pictures?

I showed them one picture of me in the wedding dress.

But not one with Carole?

Not with my groom. [laughs]

Was [your daughter] Mary in your life then?

At that particular point, yes. She was [our] bridesmaid. That's a whole completely different story. You see, she ran away from [her father] so much. They kept taking her to juvenile hall and they wouldn't let *me* have her.

Because you were a lesbian?

Um, hm. It was written right in the divorce papers. And any time I made a lot of effort to get her, [Fred would] come running up with his stupid divorce papers that showed that I couldn't have her. And she couldn't be at my house as long as Kelley was there, as long as Carole was there. Couldn't be in the same presence at all. After she ran away so much, they finally took her to YA—California Youth Authority. I guess they'd call it reform school. And she was there quite awhile. And then with all his fighting me [to stop it, the California Youth Authority] gave her to me. The state gave her to me against the ruling by the county court [Los Angeles county].

Was this on the QT?

No, this was right publicly. They decided to give her to me. But then she got so upset one time, and she was so used to running away that she ran away again from me. I don't even remember what she was unhappy about, and she doesn't, either. Of course, she's real sorry [now]. But I said [then], "I'm not going to fight anymore."

Where did she run away to?

She went down to Venice Beach. She'd see people on the beach with babies and she'd talk to them and ask if she couldn't baby-sit for them, and eventually people would take her in and give her a home as long as she was willing to watch their kid while they went out and had a good time. So that's all she needed.

How old was she?

Fifteen. They finally emancipated her. She didn't want to be with her father, and he wouldn't let me have her, so they emancipated her.

Now, in that sense emancipation is a legal term?

Yes. She was absolutely on her own. They got her a job, they got her education.

They?

The state.

They paid for this for her?

Yes.

[pause]

I want to be emancipated!

You're already emancipated. You're old! [laughs] Yes, she was only 15. They got her to take a GED test so she'd finish high school. They got her a job in a government building to start with while she was going to school. She went to that Bryman Medical School³⁵ that teaches people to be a dental assistant. They had nursing courses and things. She had wanted when she was a little tiny kid to be a dental assistant. First time she went to the dentist she said, "When I grow up I want to be a dental assistant." She's been a dental assistant for about 22 years now, at least. She's in Victorville.

This must have been a very confusing time for her, too. Did she understand the animosity her father felt for you?

Oh, yes. She dislikes him immensely.

Is he still living?

Oh, yes.

Has he ever come around [to understanding]?

I have no idea how he feels now. Mary sees him occasionally and talks to him on the telephone. He hasn't changed at all.

How did Carole and Mary get along?

Beautifully. They were really close. I would be off to work and Kelley would be at home, Carole would be at home. And when Mary came home from school, Kelley would be the one that was there. And one particular time was when [Mary] had her first period. And Carole was there to help her and was understanding and it was a really good experience for her.

What did Mary call Carole?

She had a nickname. The nickname was Dooley.

Where did that come from?

I have no idea. She [Carole] never told me where she got that nickname. But [Carole] was called that a long time. That's what Mary called her. Up until, of course, Kelley had the sex change, and then he was called Kelley.

Let's talk about the sex change. When did Carole first broach the subject to you that she was a transsexual? Or did she even use that term?

No, she didn't. And it wasn't *her* [who suggested it]. It was the *doctor*. We had a doctor who was gay. Actually, he had been recommended by one of the ministers at MCC. And he came right out and asked if she wouldn't like to have a sex change.

Why would he ask her that?

Well, to start out with, she didn't seem to have a lot of sex drive. And we went into the doctor's office and the doctor was giving her shots of testosterone, which was definitely improving her sex drive.

Wouldn't that masculinize her?

Well, yes, of course it did. And that's why the doctor brought it up. He said [to Carole], "How far do you want to go with this? Do you want to have a sex change?" And I said, "Nooo! She doesn't want anything like that!"

And she said, "Let me speak for myself."

So, OK.

When you said that she didn't have much sex drive, is this something that developed as your relationship went along, or had she never had much of a sex drive?

Well, I don't think she ever had as much of a sex drive as I did.

In relationships generally that's a pattern.

That one has more sex drive than the other.

I don't think we really had any discussion about it. I think it was just decided. Yeah. And in the beginning there's more [sex drive] than there is later on. And the doctor started giving us names of the doctors that would do some of the surgery.

Yes.

Had she ever mentioned anything like this to you until the moment the doctor asked her? If the doctor had not given her the testosterone, do you think that she would have considered seriously a sexual reassignment?

Yes, I do because she said she had wanted it since she was a little kid. When she saw the first things in the paper about Christine Jorgensen³⁶ she was wishing that it could happen the other way.

Had she ever mentioned anything like this to you until the moment the doctor asked her?

No. I don't think she thought it was possible.

So it was a great surprise to you, too?

Yes.

What was your first thought?

— cause they didn't [have hands]?

That I didn't think she [really] wanted it. But she was so very sure that that was what she wanted then, that, you know, I went along with it. Whatever she wanted was all right with me.

Did you consider the [fact] that she would no longer be a woman and that that would affect you somehow romantically or emotionally?

— cause that doesn't happen to everyone. Now, this girl Billy, who was going

No, I don't think I even considered it. I just wanted *her*. You know, I wanted that person. [laughs]

— ever, ever, in all the time. You know, it takes a couple of

— to go through the whole business. And [Billy's] voice immediately want

How long did the two of you discuss it before she went on with it?

— Did Billy have to learn how to dance?

I don't think we really had any discussion about it. I think it was just decided right then on the spot that that was the way it was gonna be. And the doctor started giving us names of the doctors that would do some of the surgery.

What was the process then from that point when she decided?

First they give you lots of testosterone and there *are* changes. And then the mastectomy comes first. And I felt really bad about that. I just had to tell myself that I was gonna have to live with it and this is the way it was gonna be. But she knew I was unhappy about the mastectomy.

When they started giving her the hormone therapy, increasing the dosages of testosterone, what kind of physical changes [happened]?

The main thing is she grew a beard.

She really did? Was it a very thick one or a sparse one?

Well, to start out with she had sideburns. Other transsexuals that were going through the same thing were really *jealous*.

Because they didn't [have beards]?

Oh, yes. Everybody changes differently. It's just one of those things. With Kelley, the clitoris actually grew into a penis.

So that was going on through this period, too?

Yes. But that doesn't happen to everyone. Now, this girl Billy, who was going through [sexual reassignment] at the same time that Kelley was, that never happened for him. Never, ever, in all the time. You know, it takes a couple of years to go through the whole business. And [Billy's] voice immediately went down low [lowers her voice] like a man. Well, Kelley's never did.

Did Kelley have to learn how to shave?

Well, sure. Yeah.

Who taught her?

As a kid she used to watch her father. Like a girl will watch her mother making her face up, Kelley was watching her father shave. [laughs]

How did she come to choose the name Kelley?

She chose the name of Sean Kelley DeLand. Kelley is his middle name. And he decided he wanted to go by Kelley, and he gave the excuse of going by Kelley instead of by Sean that when he was a little boy people didn't know how to pronounce Sean spelled S-E-A-N.

How come that particular name instead of any other?

I think he probably always liked it. The names Sean and Kelley. And he chose particularly the Kelley because it started with a K, and when people who knew him before started to say Carole, they could change it real fast and say Kelley.

What kind—if any—of emotional changes did you notice in him?

I think more confidence.

Had Carole not been very confident?

No, because she always looked queer.

So now she grew into what she always felt she was?

That's right.

How did her family [accept] this?

It was all pretty much of a shock, but they paid for [the change].

They did?

Oh, yeah. On *my* salary? I couldn't have paid for it!

How much did it cost?

At that time I think probably between twenty and thirty thousand. But now it would cost you close to a hundred thousand, I'm sure.

How long did she go through the physical changes from the hormone therapy?

Let's see. From, like, 1972 to Seems like that by 1973 he was able to pass [as a man]. I think the whole thing took We came [to Las Vegas] in '76 and he'd been living as man for quite awhile. We came to this town as a straight couple. And he was going to school in '75. Went to school to become a respiratory therapist. As a *man*, you know. So I guess probably two years? Seems like it was longer. Seemed like an *awful* long time.

Did they need to complete the hormone therapy before he had his first surgery?

You *never* complete the hormone therapy. You have to take it for the rest of your life. And if you'd like a shot of testosterone, I'll give you one. [laughs]

Did she have a hysterectomy at some point?

Oh, yes.

Was that rather early after she decided?

She had the mastectomy first. And then the hysterectomy, I think. And after the hysterectomy she had the implants of testicles, made out of silicone.

How did they build a [scrotum] for them?

It sort of makes itself. [Her] clitoris grew into a penis, but there was the problem of the fact that the urethra didn't go through it, so that had to be done. Rerouted the urethra through the penis.

Was it a functioning penis?

Sure it was. It was functioning.

Could she get an erection with it?

You get an erection in the clitoris. [laughs] That's the main thing in a woman.

A foreskin?

Yes. And it just stayed there. He didn't have it cut off.

Did you, while these changes were going on, these really radical changes in this person you'd fallen in love with, did you at any point—either of you—feel you needed to reassess your relationship or somehow change how you responded to one another?

No, I don't think so.

So it really made no difference in your basic love?

No, not really, because I loved him so much I'd just do anything [for him].

How did [the two of you] explain the change while it was going on?

We moved a lot.

Why?

If somebody thinks we were two women living there, and one starts looking more and more like a man, we'd move somewhere where we could be accepted as a straight couple.

Did you feel that people were not going to accept you if they knew what was going on?

We didn't take any chances. We just up and moved, had all new friends again over and over. Of course, we still had, like, for instance, this Billy that we met at the church, the MCC, and they started going through the change together.

Female-to-male is a more rare reassignment than male-to-female?

Yes.

Is there any particular reason for that or theory why?

No, I don't know why. I think an awful lot of real butch women would like to be men. But apparently not so badly that they want to have surgery for it.

You had never felt that you wanted to have a sex change?

No.

You were perfectly happy being a woman?

I'm perfectly happy being female.

The question I want to ask now might be more a matter of semantics than anything. You fell in love with Carole, a woman, and left your husband, divorced, realized that you were a lesbian. And the definition of that is a woman who loves a woman [romantically and sexually]. But after Carole became Kelley, did you go on considering yourself a lesbian?

Yes. [laughs] I guess I never really thought of her as being a different person. She was still the same person, and I suppose I still thought of her as female no matter what she looked like. She was still a soft woman.

Did Kelley ever get sinewy as a man in general is?

No. Never did. [But] Billy got muscles. Her body looked more like that of a man, which Kelley's never did. But Kelley didn't worry about that because his

father hadn't been [physically or temperamentally masculine]. For instance, I always had to do things on the car. I had to check the oil and the transmission fluid and the brake fluid and all that kind of stuff because Kelley didn't know anything about it. His father always paid to have it done.

There was one occasion where we went out to the car and knew something was wrong. We tried to start it. The hose that attaches to the radiator had broken. A whole piece broken out. And Kelley said, "What are we going to do? We can't drive the car to get to a service station or a place where we can buy the hose to put on there. What'll we do?"

And I said, "Oh, I'll fix it." And I came in the house and got a butcher knife and cut off the hose, cut off the piece that was broken, put the clamp back on the other piece, clamped it onto the thing, and that did it! And he was just amazed! [laughs]

How did Mary accept Carole's sexual reassignment?

Well, Mary accepted it quite well. She liked the person that Kelley *used* to be, but she liked Kelley, too. She was very fond of them.

All the time that you were married [to Carole] up to the time of the sex change—you mentioned earlier that Carole had never been able to have a conventional job.

Well, she had *before*, but all the time I was with her nobody would hire her. She went on lots of interviews, but people just didn't hire her.

Then she had the sex change and became Kelley. What happened to her professionally?

He immediately went to school to become a respiratory therapist. And before he was even out of school, he was hired as head of the Respiratory Department at Bear Valley Community Hospital in Big Bear Lake.³⁷

That's a great professional honor.

Yeah. He hadn't even finished school. He had to go down [to Los Angeles] for the final exam and to get his diploma and everything.

Well, then, between that and the sex change, Kelley's confidence must have been enormously improved.

Well, he was an intelligent person. He wasn't like Fred. *[laughs]* He probably had an IQ comparable to mine. He was very good *[at his work]*. The main reason I believe that he became a respiratory therapist was because I had really bad asthma for awhile there. And when you can't breathe, you fall madly in love with the nearest respiratory therapist. Anybody who comes along and makes you breathe when you can't breathe is pretty wonderful no matter what sex they are!

Did the logistics of your sex life change?

Not much.

Did she become more aggressive as Kelley?

A little bit, but not so much.

You see, he hadn't even been there a whole year at Big Bear Lake when he was offered more money by a respiratory company here *[in Las Vegas]* to come here and be just a bird pusher, you know, going room to room with a bird machine.

Bird machine?

Yeah. One of the respirators is called a bird. About the most popular *[machines in respiratory therapy]* is the bird machine.

How did they know here about Kelley up there?

Kelley's *[mom and dad]* had a place up in Big Bear, and they had a place in Cheviot Hills. And they had a camping trailer and they'd come down here in the wintertime sometimes when it was snowing up at Big Bear. *[Kelley's father]* *[met someone in Las Vegas]* and said, "I have a son who's a respiratory therapist. Can he interview for you? You might like him." And the fellow said, "Sure, send him over." So we came over here one time. The fellow also had a beard, and Kelley was wearing a beard. So apparently they got along well and he hired *[Kelley]*.

But there was one catch to it. You had to work in convalescent hospitals. They went [to] all the convalescent hospitals in the area. And Kelley said, "That's fine. I like little old ladies."

Well, he liked little old ladies too much. And little old ladies have a way of dying. Almost every week, somebody that he'd learned to love, died. You know, regular people go to a regular hospital, might stay four days, and you're gone. But in a convalescent hospital they stay and they stay and you learn to love them. And that was too hard on him.

How did you feel about leaving Los Angeles and moving to Las Vegas? Had you been here before?

Yeah. Everybody in LA goes to Las Vegas occasionally. And Kelley's parents had decided to finally buy a house here and sell the[ir] place at Big Bear.

So you made the trek [to Las Vegas] together?

Yes.

Kelley was working for the respiratory company and he just couldn't handle it anymore because of the people dying in the convalescent hospitals. And he didn't work for a little while, but he found out that he could be a pharmacy technician because of the fact that he could read prescriptions. Respiratory therapists have to be able to read prescriptions. Since he hadn't had any experience as a pharmacy technician they weren't really anxious to hire him. And at that time you didn't have to be certified. He eventually got certified later. They call it a grandfather clause where you start working and they teach you as you go along, while you're working. Which they don't do anymore. You have to go to school [now] to become a pharmacy technician. But he kept calling them. This town is not like Los Angeles where they say, "Don't call us, we'll call you." You keep calling and you eventually get a job if you keep pestering somebody. And he kept calling the pharmacy at UMC³⁸ until they finally hired him.

You worked, too, didn't you?

Yes.

Was Herb Pastor a good boss?

Where?

Yes, he was.

When we first got here I worked in a casino. No big deal.

What kind of a casino was it? Or a bar—like a club place?

Which casino?

Yes, he is still alive and owns quite a few of those little places. I think he

One of those stupid places down on Fremont Street, one of those really crummy places. The Golden Goose.³⁹

Topless Girls of Glitter Gulch ...

What did you do there?

They're probably owned by him, too. I don't know.

Stand out there and ask people to come in and get a free photograph. [laughs]

Was that the Golden Goose?

How did you feel about having a job like that?

No, it's between Sassy Sally's and the Golden Goose.⁴⁰

I guess I didn't care. It wasn't that I needed the money. At one time I went in and asked my boss—that was that Herb Pastor⁴⁰—went in and asked him if I couldn't become a change girl because they made more money. And he said, no, he liked me just where I was, but he'd give me a hundred dollars raise if I wanted it.

How long did you work at the Golden Goose?

Were you really good at getting these tourists to come in?

Oh, four months, maybe. Something like that. Not a long time. And I didn't

I guess so. I was just real friendly. [laughs] So he wanted me there standing out in front.

How did you approach the tourists when they walked by? Did you have a certain spiel?

Do you remember how much you earned doing that?

Of course, it's been almost 20 years ago. I think it was like \$18 a shift, something like that. [laughs] And then it went up to like \$20 a shift or something.

Spanish, too.

The Golden Goose wasn't a very big place.

After you left the Golden Goose, where did you go to work?

No. Very small. It had lots of mirrors inside to make it look bigger.

Was Herb Pastor a good boss?

Yes, he was.

What kind of a man was he? Or is he—he's still alive.

Yes, he is still alive and owns quite a few of [those little places]. I think he probably has Sassy Sally's⁴¹ beside the Coin Castle⁴² and the Golden Goose.

Topless Girls of Glitter Gulch ...⁴³

They're probably owned by him, too. I don't know.

Was that the Golden Goose?

No, it's between Sassy Sally's and the Golden Goose.⁴⁴

Did you have to go get a sheriff's card for that kind of work?

Yes. I sure did.

How long [did you work at the Golden Goose]?

Oh, four months, maybe. Something like that. Not a long time. And I didn't work then for awhile.

How did you approach the tourists when they walked by? Did you have a certain spiel when they walked by?

Yes. "Welcome to the Golden Goose! Take this to the rear of the casino and get a free color photograph!" [obsequious tone of voice; laughs] I learned to say it in Spanish, too.

Was the Motel 6 on Tropicana?⁴⁵

After you left the Golden Goose, where did you go to work?

Yes. It was the only one at that time. This one out here by Boulder Station⁴⁶ wasn't there.⁴⁷ We stayed there until September 77. After I got the cast off we

Right about that time Kelley decided that he didn't want to be a respiratory therapist any longer. That was in '77, the spring of '77. We had at one time stayed in a Motel 6, and he had seen the thing in the back of the [guest] book that says if you'd like to be a manager, call and do it. So we did. We took the class. They teach you, a three-week class. We were sent to Ogden, Utah. We got up there and the very first night we went in and met the people, and then we were gonna go to bed, and I went out to walk the dog before we went to bed. Slipped on the sidewalk and broke my leg in seven places.

Seven places!

[laughs] I spent about a week in the hospital there while they put me back together and did physical therapy. They had me in a cast all the way up to my butt, you know. But the break was all down below my knee. Both the knobs on my ankle were knocked off and the fibula in the back was all in little pieces. There was no way I could get into the car to ride all the way back to Las Vegas to recuperate, so I had them put a cast [on] that just came up to my knee. And this was just before we left. And back then casts didn't dry fast like they do today. So the cast looked dry but it really wasn't. And by the time we got to Las Vegas my leg had swollen and so had the cast. And then when my leg went down, here was this big cast hanging on those knobs of my ankle. [laughs] So I couldn't even walk with crutches because I couldn't stand the crutches. So we went to an orthopedic doctor and he put a new cast on. The Motel 6 let us stay in the Motel 6 here. We had Kelley's parents' house here. They were just in the process of moving and they weren't there, so we just moved into their house.

Then Kelley went ahead with his training for Motel 6?

We both did. I was able to use the crutches then, and I was able to work at Motel 6 with crutches. I sat and took reservations. This is such a huge Motel 6 they have about six people taking reservations at all times.

Is this the Motel 6 on Tropicana?⁴⁵

Yes. It was the only one at that time. This one out here by Boulder Station⁴⁶ wasn't there.⁴⁷ We stayed there until September '77. After I got the cast off we

were sent to Phoenix. We stayed there a little while, and then they gave us our own motel in Nogales.⁴⁸ And we had it *made* in Nogales! We had a head maid who absolutely ran that motel. She'd would do *everything*. There's a whole list of things you have to do. Anytime I'd mention anything that came along to do, like inventory, I'd say, "I guess I'm gonna have to start that inventory." She'd say, "Why, I always do the inventory!" Anything I mentioned, she always took care of it! So we just had it made. 'Course, the one thing with a motel is, you can't leave. You can't go out to dinner together. One of you has to be there all the time even though you have desk clerks and maids and a maintenance man. You still can't really go anywhere. The way Motel 6 runs, about once a month you get a four-day vacation that you can spend in any other Motel 6. But by the time you get to that point, you're so exhausted you *sleep* for four days. [laughs] Because you have to be up all night, all day. At the end of the day your employees have all gone, and if somebody comes in in the middle of the night and you have rooms, it's *you* [who has to check them in].

Then you were in Las Vegas [only] about a year before you left again to go to Nogales?

Yes.

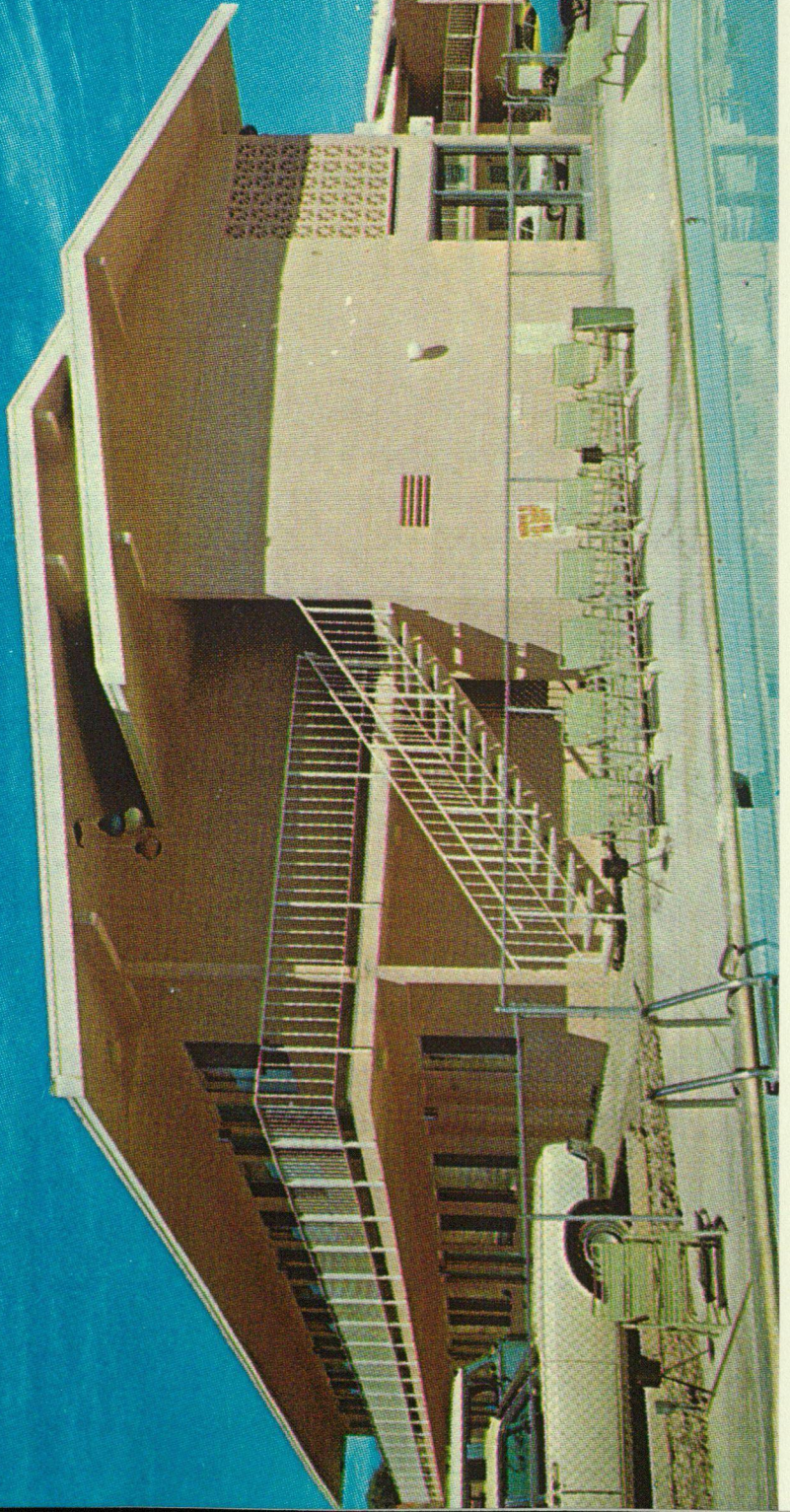
How long did you spend in Nogales?

Almost a year, I think. All the way through the winter. We went there about September ['77], all the way through the winter and past April, May Just about a year we were in Nogales. And, oh! the maids were wonderful. They were just fabulous. They all lived on the other side of the [Mexican] border—except for Amelia [Ayala], who was the head maid. And she'd go over every morning and pick 'em up and bring 'em back on this side of the border. They were really good people. They could clean those rooms and wash those windows until they disappeared! [laughs]

That was a very busy Motel 6?

Yes. It's busy in the winter because at that time the truckers are bringing in the fruit from Mexico. And we had a huge lot next door that belonged to our motel just for parking diesel trucks.

MOTEL



Motel 6, Nogales, Arizona

[postcard courtesy of Ellen DeLand; negative in the collection of Dennis McBride]

Did they have a gas station there, too?

No. Just the motel. A Motel 6 is always attached to a restaurant, and Sambo's was next to us. I think Sambo's has probably changed its name now, too. But any [Motel 6] we've ever been [to] has had a restaurant right there.

Were you satisfied with that kind of work?

It was fun. But at the time, the reason we left was we were just getting burned out on it. I learned a lot of Spanish. And the dog learned to speak Spanish. She could take all her commands in Spanish. She had no choice. The maids talked to her in Spanish. She *had* to learn.

Where did you go after Nogales?

We came back home.

Does home mean Las Vegas?

Yes, we came back to Las Vegas and we rented a house. Kelley went right away to the pharmacy [at UMC]. Kept calling till they took him. I got a job as a bookkeeper at the Mardi Gras Hotel on Paradise Road.⁴⁹ I got jobs as bookkeepers all over town. From [the Mardi Gras] I went to Culligan. I was bookkeeper at Culligan Water Softeners. And while I was there I was rather unhappy, and I had had an interview at Tradewind Tours. It was in beautiful offices and I liked the idea. So I kept calling. They said, "We don't need anybody right now, but maybe in a month." *Every single month* I called until they finally needed me. [laughs] And then I got the job [as a bookkeeper] at [UMC] where Kelley was.

You were working together. How did that work out?

I was working in the business office and he was in the pharmacy. We took breaks together and had lunch together.

Did anybody at the hospital know that Kelley had been a woman before?

No.

The two of you kept that a secret?

Yes.

Now I want to know what kind of gay life was going on in Las Vegas during that time, '76, '78.

I don't know. We didn't associate with any gay people.

How come?

Because we were *straight* people. In fact, one time, when we were at the Motel 6 here in Las Vegas before we went to Nogales, there was another pair of managers You see, a manager is *two* people, husband and wife. Another pair of managers was there visiting and said, "Let's all go out to have a drink." And so we were looking for the closest bar to have a drink and we drove down to the corner of Paradise and Tropicana to Le Cafe.⁵⁰ We started in there having no idea what it was and Kelley *immediately* saw what it was, and he turned around real fast and said, "This isn't where we want to go!" [laughs]

When you were Carole and Ellen, you went to the gay bars. But now you were Kelley and Ellen, you couldn't do that anymore?

No, we couldn't. You don't make friends as easily when you're straight as you do when you're gay. You know, when you're gay, the camaraderie is

Sort of partners in adversity.

That's right. We had friends, you know, people that we worked with. And we even had a Christmas party one time with the people Kelley worked with in the pharmacy. The husbands and wives of the other people that worked there.

Did you feel at all personally cut off from the gay life?

A little bit, yes. I was a little disappointed because I *liked* the gay life. I didn't care if people knew I was gay. Kelley was always [As Carole she] looked so queer, she didn't feel that people knew! [laughs]

As Kelley, though, she didn't look particularly masculine, did he?

Yeah, he did. The fact that he was small He was only 5' 4". Short little legs and short little arms.

But very adamant about not being identified [as anything but a straight man].

Oh, yes. That's right. He was definitely straight. He wasn't real muscular. And he would buy trousers that are cut like western pants with a pocket that has a crossways thing because in a pocket that goes down long, he couldn't reach into the bottom! [laughs] He had such short arms.

Did you have any gay friends or acquaintances?

No, I don't think so.

And then he was working with Tina in the pharmacy.

And Tina was

A Filipino girl who [Kelley] thought was just wonderful. She was so thoughtful of everyone and so nice. He eventually decided he was in love with her and wanted to leave me.

How did he approach that subject with you? How did he say [he wanted to leave you]?

He had her around all the time, suggested that she and I go out together for lunch and things like that. And then eventually told me that he was in love with her and wanted to marry her.

What did that do to you?

Oh, I was *devastated*. But he said, "The thing for you to do is go out and make your *own* friends. Make friends of your own." Because my friends were *his* friends, you know.

That sounds a little bit like it was with Fred.

Yeah. Well, Kelley was a selfish person because he'd been raised to be selfish.

[Do] you, looking back now, see similarities in your two marriages, the one with Fred and then with Kelley?

Very little 'cause Fred was so thoughtless. Kelley *did* care. And when we broke up we did it very peacefully. I just said take anything you want and I'll keep what's left. We very carefully divided things up. He took the washer and drier and I took the refrigerator. And even after we were apart he would think of something that he wanted, or I would think of something that I wanted, come to work and say, "Do you think that I could have the Harry Belafonte records?" And he'd say, "Sure, I'll bring 'em to work tomorrow." And he'd bring 'em to work the next day. [laughs]

So there wasn't any animosity?

Not really, no. But one of the things that really started, when he started being interested in leaving me, was the fact that he wanted children *really* bad. And, gosh! I'd *raised* my children. You have to sacrifice for children, and I [was] *through* sacrificing for children. And he just couldn't understand that. He wanted to adopt some children. And I told him no way was I gonna raise more children. And he got *really* upset about that. And Tina *had* children. He liked the idea of marrying somebody that had children that he could love and take care of. And her children, of course, treated him just terrible. Just awful. The oldest one picked him up, threw him across the room, broke his arm.

Why did they treat him so badly?

I think they just figured they were gonna get what they could out of him and then get rid of him. Tina had done that with a lot of men. Course, I had enough

to know gay people weren't something to be scared of. [laughs]

So Kelley was just another in her string of pearls?

That's right.

Did they marry?

Oh, yes.

You didn't go to the wedding?

No. [laughs] I wasn't even invited!

Was it hard for you [being close to Kelley] at work, even though there was no animosity?

Oh, yes. Of course, I worked with 50 people in the business office, and they were all really sympathetic to me and supportive. And they were constantly asking me, "If he wanted to come back to you would you take him back?" And I always said, "Sure, I'd take him back." But he didn't know that.

What year was this going on?

Let's see now. He left me in 1980. Married her Christmas Eve 1980. And we [had] separated about September, I think.

Before we separated he had said, "Go out and make your own friends." So I went down to Maxine's,⁵¹ which was the only gay bar at the time I knew of. I did find out later the Backdoor⁵² was there. I went to Maxine's. Of course, it took me a long time to get the courage to go in by myself. I'd been in gay bars before, but not alone.

Then Kelley was encouraging you to go back to your gay life?

The First Church was on Carous Street and I went to a Wednesday night prayer meeting.⁵³ As religious as I am, it sounds kind of strange that I'd be going to a prayer meeting. But I guess I just wanted someplace to go and

Yes. He said, "Go make your own friends." And that was the only way I knew to make more friends. And they were real nice to me. 'Course, I had enough sense by then to know gay people weren't something to be scared of. [laughs]

Tell me about Maxine's. What did it look like? What kind of atmosphere did it have?

It was mostly girls. It was probably a week night that I went in there, and so there weren't a lot of people. We just sat around. I had quit smoking seven years before, and here I was sitting at a bar [motions as though trying to figure out what to do with her hands]. So I said [to myself], "Have a cigarette." Which was stupid because my lungs weren't that much improved. But I smoked for seven more years.

Did you make a new circle of friends then?

Yes. One [girl] that I was seeing [at Maxine's] suggested we go over and see the Backdoor, which I'd never seen. I found the Backdoor to be very nice. I don't know what it's like now because Rafael⁵³ isn't there anymore. And I think where he is now is only men, isn't it?

Where is that?

Is it the Badlands?⁵⁴

Yes, in Commercial Center. So for a period of about a couple of months before Kelley left you, you were kind of out and beginning to re-circulate. And then Kelley left you and married Tina.

Yes.

What kind of social life did you manage to put together for yourself after that?

Did I ever tell you how I met Randy [Carlson]?

The [MCC] church was on Garces Street and I went to a Wednesday night prayer meeting.⁵⁵ As religious as I am, it sounds kind of strange that I'd be going to a prayer meeting. But I guess I just wanted someplace to go and

something to do. And there were three rows of seats. The front row was taken and the back row was taken and Randy was at one end of the row in the middle and I was at the other end with seats in between. The whole business was going on, we were singing a song, and right in the middle of the song two more people came in. Well, the only place for them to sit would be between [Randy and me]. And they didn't have a book, a hymnal. So I took my book and handed it to them and pointed to the passage where we were, and then went over to Randy, who was a *stranger*, and took hold of the side of his book and went on singing. Without saying anything. We couldn't interrupt the song. I just came over there and took hold of his book! *[laughs]* And from that moment on we've been fast friends. *Very close*. We tell each other the things we'd never tell anybody else.

Let's talk a little bit more about the MCC [in Las Vegas]. You'd been to the MCC in Los Angeles, and you knew Troy Perry. Did you notice any difference in how MCC services were conducted here from what they were in Los Angeles?

The Pentecostal, as Troy Perry is Did you know Ron Gee?⁵⁶ The first time I went to the church, it was down on Nellis Boulevard, south of the Boulder Highway in an Episcopalian Church.⁵⁷

What kind of preacher was Ron Gee?

He was a caring, lovable person. Very nice.

What role did the MCC play in the [Las Vegas] gay community at that time?

Well, I think it worked like the [Gay and Lesbian] Center⁵⁸ does, as a meeting place for people. Just little activities. The activities didn't amount to much. It could have been just a poetry reading or something. But it was something for us to get together and talk. To me, the most important part of any meeting is the time afterwards when you just sit and gab.

How often did you they have activities at the MCC? Was there something going on all the time?

No. Maybe once a week, maybe not even that often. But we'd always sit around and talk after church. Seems like there was an evening service for young people, or for singles. Something like that that I used to go to. Gee, it's been so long ago I don't remember what we did. But I met a lot of people that I liked.

Oh, I didn't tell you who I lived with when I first broke up with Kelley. There was a boy, he was probably, I think 22 or 23, who was phlebotomist,⁵⁹ who drew blood [at UMC]. A vampire! And they didn't need him at the moment, but they wanted him whenever there was a job opening, so they stuck him in the business office and let him be a file clerk until an opening came up for him in the hospital. Everybody in the office knew my marriage was breaking up and I was miserable and everything. And he was renting a one-bedroom apartment for, like \$300 a month. And he said, "Why don't we get together and rent a two-bedroom apartment for \$400 a month, and that'd save us both money." Well, it sounded like an ideal situation. He was a delightful person. He was Mexican—but spoke no Spanish! [laughs] And we just got along real well.

What was his name?

Pasquale Vargas.

Was he gay?

Yes.

Did you know it at the time?

Yes. We had gotten to know each other and he even went to Maxine's with me one time.

Well, then, you would have had to say at some point to him that this life you'd been living with Kelley, which was over now, that everybody thought was straight, that, actually, you were gay.

I didn't tell him right away. I told him I was gay and that I was interested in going to the gay bars, but I didn't tell him for quite awhile about Kelley. And

when I did, he was absolutely flabbergasted! He just didn't believe it! *[laughs]* But we lived together over a year. Then Stevie wanted me to move in with him.

Stevie? Like after you and Kelley broke up, you didn't mourn...

His name is John Steven Hayes. John is a businessman. Stevie is a little fairy. Stephanie is a beautiful lady. And Mona is a whore. That's the four faces of Steve.

Does he do good drag?

Beautiful. Just gorgeous. And he had been an actual female stripper in Los Angeles at the C'est La Vie on Ventura Boulevard.

What else were you involved in that you remember?

How did you meet John Steven Hayes?

We just didn't have things [then] like the [Gay and Lesbian] Center now. And I

I bowled with him. He bowled with me on my bowling team. I joined the league and got put on the team that he was on.

Do you remember Newslans for Human Rights [NHR]?⁶²

The league?

Yes, oh, yes!

What's it called? The Las Vegas Gays.⁶⁰ LVGs. I was trying to do everything just to have something to do. And I really spent as much time with men as I did with girls.

Oh, yes, I did and I loved it. I belonged to Voices,⁶³ too.

You went to MCC and you went to the bars?

Did you join NHR during that period you were [part from Kelley]?

And the bowling league.

Yes, I'd forgotten about that. Other people have told me what happened, but I

Tell me about the bowling league.

We took almost that whole section of the Showboat.⁶¹ There were about two lanes at the very end that we didn't take. One particular day we were in the last lane of the gay league, and somebody over in the lane next to us said, "You know what? There are queers down there!" *[laughs]* And one of the fellas, I think it was Stevie's boyfriend said, "You know what? There are queers right here!"

speakers.

We had fun. I was lousy, but it didn't matter. Nobody cared. And when I got a strike they gave me a hug. I'm into hugs.

It sounds like after you and Kelley broke up, you didn't mourn.

I did to a certain extent. But I had to keep busy. I had to keep doing things. I very seldom saw any television or anything. I was *doing* something all the time.

Was it all in the gay community that you were involved in?

Yes.

What else were you involved in that you remember?

We just didn't have things [then] like the [Gay and Lesbian] Center now. And I really like the Center. It's been wonderful.

Do you remember Nevadans for Human Rights [NHR]?⁶²

Yes! oh, yes!

Did you belong to it?

Oh, yes, I did and I loved it. I belonged to *Voices*,⁶³ too.

Did you join NHR during that period you were [apart from Kelley]?

Yes. I'd forgotten about that. Other people have told me what happened, but I still don't know what happened to [the organization]. It was such an ideal situation. Did you go?

Yes.

We met in the recreation building of a condominium complex and everybody brought something [to eat].⁶⁴ We had wonderful buffet dinners and good speakers.

He had a lover, didn't he? Or was that?

What was the purpose of NHR? What was it organized to do?

They'd been together a long time. Denny actually paid for Mel to go to college.

It was more a social thing as far as I knew. Was it organized for a particular reason? We did have speakers that were ready to help [the Las Vegas gay community politically], but nobody ever seemed to really do anything for it. I remember one particular speaker said that they could take a sample of urine, I think it was, from a group of people and from the sample could tell which ones were gay and which ones were not. [laughs] Yeah!

Now I'm gonna look at my urine and wonder.

Well, I know they tested Kelley once to find out how much testosterone he had. He had to save his urine for, I don't know, 24 hours at least, and take it in this huge container that they give you, to the doctor. And they tested it and what the doctor said was, "You have more testosterone than I do."

I find that a real curious theory. I've never heard of it.

Well, of course, I hadn't either, and I haven't heard about it since. But that's what he said in his speech, one of the fellows that spoke one night.

Were the NHR meetings well-attended?

Yes! There were like 200 of us there. And you could bring anything you wanted. They didn't say *you* bring salad and *you* bring meat and *you* bring bread or something. You just brought anything you wanted and it always worked out.

Did you go with Randy?

Mostly with Randy. And that's where I met Mel Pohl,⁶⁵ the doctor. And I asked him one time, "Do you take care of women, too? Could I come in and have like a Pap test?"⁶⁶ And he said, "Well, I suppose I could if I put a clothespin on my nose." [laughs] We became good friends. Mel Pohl would come to those [NHR] meetings in chains and leather.

*He had a lover, didn't he? Dennis Kay?*⁶⁷ *Do you remember?*

They'd been together a long time. Denny actually paid for Mel to go to college, go to school to become a doctor. He supported him. He was his sole support while he was going to school. [Dennis] was the one with the money to start with. And then after Mel graduated and became a doctor, then *he* was the one with the money. So they traded places in that way.

What went on at the gay rodeo in Reno?

*NHR had a women's group, a women's committee.*⁶⁸ *Were you involved in that?*

People did a lot of dancing, and the rodeo itself, the girls did better than the

I went once or twice and didn't feel welcome. *They were sissies. Of course, there were*

lots of them that were not. But it was made a joke of a lot.

How come? *where I met Kathy. She was a security officer there. Kathy Barber.*

She would come here and visit and I'd go up there and visit. We were planning

I don't know. I had the feeling people weren't even looking at me, [that] they didn't even know I was there. They seemed to be busy with their own business. Or maybe they were in couples and I [was single] or something, so I was excluded.

had at Angies—which was Gelo's? then—had a lot of really

professional people there entertaining. And one was a woman who sang and

Did you feel it was rather cliquish? *ward. She was fabulous. And a man who was a*

Yes, definitely. I wasn't that much older than they were then. Now it seems like I'm older than all the girls.

yes, he could. So I had that [for Kathy] one night,

and I was gonna entertain her royally while she was here. And on the 14th of

So am I. *(1984) Kelley called me and said things were going badly and could he*

possibly spend the night on my couch? And pretty soon, he moved in.

No, there are a few that are older than me. And we do have a group now that's

*just older women.*⁶⁹ *Did we ever come?*

to the rodeo?

In general, the gay community at that time, 1979 to 1982, '83, was really beginning to grow and to get very active. What do you remember the attitude, the tone, the feeling among the gay community at that time?

Did you really know at that point that it was going to work out again with Kelley? He

They were cliquish, and I really did spend more time with the fellas than I did with the girls.

I couldn't turn him away.

Were there a lot of things going on that you remember?

Well, twice I went to the gay rodeo [*she pronounces it ro-day-o*] in Reno.⁷⁰ I have to teach myself to say *ro-dee-o* instead of *ro-day-o* because I was raised in California where they said *ro-day-o*. I went once with Stevie and I went once with Randy.

What [went on] at the gay rodeo in Reno?

People did a lot of dancing, and the rodeo itself, the girls did better than the fellas. They kept commenting that the fellas were sissies. Of course, there were lots of them that were *not*. But it was made a joke of a lot.

And that's where I met Kathy. She was a security officer there. Kathy Barber. She would come here and visit and I'd go up there and visit. We were planning on spending the time between Christmas and New Year's [together]. I guess I was at her house for Thanksgiving. This was 1984. She was gonna be here between Christmas and New Year's. And I had gotten tickets to everything. One party they had at Angles—which was Gelo's⁷¹ then—had a lot of really professional people there entertaining. And one was a woman who sang and had been nominated for a Tony award. She was fabulous. And a man who was a dancer. And he was the lead dancer at *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*, at the ... Frontier, maybe?⁷² So I went up to him afterwards and asked if he could get me tickets to the show, and oh, yes, he could. So I had that [for Kathy] one night, and I was gonna entertain her royally while she was here. And on the 18th of December [1984] Kelley called me and said things were going badly and could he possibly spend the night on my couch? And pretty soon, he moved in.

What happened with Kathy? Did she ever come?

I had to call her and tell her what had happened and it wasn't gonna work out between us].

Did you really know at that point that it was going to work out again with Kelley? He was just coming over to sleep on your couch.

I couldn't turn him away.

No.

So I could hardly have her there while he was there.

Why not? You [and Kelley] weren't together anymore.

I was just in a dinky little apartment. It wasn't very long [before Kelley] was sleeping in my bed.

So he stayed longer than one night?

Yes.

Did he ever go back to Tina after that night?

Oh, no, no.

How did the two of you, then, resolve what he'd done? Having fallen in love with someone else and left you. Did you talk it through?

Not very much. No. 'Course, I cared more. He didn't have anyplace to go. He was just destitute. She had brought another fellow into the house. In fact, in October of that year, my daughter [Mary] had another baby and I had made arrangements at work, and I guess [Kelley] had, too, that as soon as [Mary] went into labor, my vacation would start. And I had actually asked it that way, that my vacation start as soon as my daughter went into labor. [laughs] So my daughter called me at one in the morning this one particular night, and I called Kelley and he said he'd be right over. And then I called my boss at home in the middle of the night and said, "My Mary's gone into labor. We're going to go to Apple Valley."⁷³

When you said that Kelley came right over, was he still with Tina then?

Yes. They were still living together and apparently everything was reasonably happy.

people disapproved of that. He was married to somebody else and here he was
But Kelley wanted to be with you [when Mary had her baby]?

Oh, yes. And we were still close friends. He loved Mary. He considered Mary his daughter. And she has the same blood type he does! *[laughs]* They were real close and she would be happy to have him there. So we went and stayed with her while she had the baby.

And when [Kelley] got home—[Tina] was a lousy housekeeper like I am. When he left, the bedroom was a mess. And when he came home the bedroom was all neat and clean, and different things were in the bathroom that neither one of them used. For instance, neither one of them used Listerine mouthwash. There was a bottle of Listerine in the bathroom. And almost everyday after that he would come home and find the toilet seat up. The first time that happened she gave the excuse that her son had come in and used the bathroom in the master suite. Then after that he wouldn't ask. He'd just go in and see the toilet seat was up, and say, "Well, was Michael (her oldest son) in here?"

"Well, no."

"Who left the toilet seat up, then?" *[laughs]*

And eventually the fellow was just sittin' around the house all the time whether [Kelley] was there or not.

That must have humiliated Kelley.

Oh, it did, of course.

Did Kelley discuss these things with you?

He told me about them, yes.

So you were kind of beginning to drift back together again after all?

Yes. We were still having breaks together at work. For a long time we didn't. But at that time [when Kelly was having trouble with Tina] we definitely did every day, every break period. I'd go get him wherever he happened to be in the hospital and we'd go have a break together in the cafeteria. And a lot of

people disapproved of that. He was married to somebody else and here he was taking a break with his ex-wife.

The very ones who'd asked you, "Would you take him back if he wanted to come?"

Yeah! [laughs]

Was there a moment that you looked at each other and decided, "Yeah, we should be together."?

A particular moment? No, I always thought we should be together. See, this was in December [1984]. The next year came right away, 1985, and he was staying at my house. He wasn't working then, I think he'd quit for some reason. I said, "Valentine's Day is coming up and you've got to send me flowers at work. You can't just leave it like this."

"I don't have any money," [he said].

So I gave him money and he had flowers sent to me. But *part* of the money he spent sending flowers to *Tina* and writing her a poem. And the flowers to me he signed with *her* pet name for him.

And this was after he'd left Tina?

Yes.

What was going on in his head that he'd do that?

I don't know. I guess he was still hoping that she would want him. Of course, she didn't. She was busy having an affair with this other guy and she eventually married him.

Had Kelley ever told Tina that he'd been a woman before?

Yes. That was discussed before [they married].

It didn't make any difference to her?

Apparently not. I really think it was the idea she knew he was going to inherit, and if she could stick around long enough, she'd be there [to share it]. As it turned out, he didn't [inherit while married to Tina]. *[laughs]*

How did you find out he'd sent flowers to Tina with money you gave him to send flowers to you?

I believe he told me. He showed me the poem that he was sending to her. I was really disgusted. Especially the fact that she called him Seando. You know, his first name was Sean. She called him Seando. He signed the card with the flowers to me, Seando. And *I* never called him that. That was *her* pet name for him!

Did you have second thoughts and wonder how sincere he was about wanting to come back to you?

No, but I was pretty disgusted with it.

Did you confront him [about] it?

Yes.

What did he say?

Oh, he just shrugged it off, that it wasn't anything important. But I know he was disappointed that I wouldn't call him [Seando], too. He said he liked that name that she called him.

Typical man.

Yeah. *[laughs]* And I had *no* intention of calling him by the same name that *she* did!

You got over all that, though.

Yeah. And we got married in May [1985].



Ellen's and Kelley's May 1985
marriage at the Imperial Palace
Hotel and Casino.

Top Photo, 1-r: Kelley DeLand,
Ellen DeLand, Randy Carlson

Bottom Photo, 1-r: ?, Ellen
DeLand, Kelley DeLand, Tony
Hoover

*[photos courtesy of Ellen DeLand;
negatives in the collection of
Dennis McBride]*

tickets to something, and he always would. And so I would make plans for
It was a mutual decision? Did one of you want to be married more than the other did?

Oh, I think I wanted to be married from the beginning. He called me at work
 on the telephone on Friday and said, "You want to get married tomorrow?" He
 had already made arrangements at the chapel.

Which chapel?

In the Imperial Palace.⁷⁴ He'd already made a reservation. The whole business.

Did you have a honeymoon again?

We had a honeymoon, you know, just a weekend in the Imperial Palace.
 Randy [Carlson] was working in the Imperial Palace and he arranged it all.

*That makes me want to ask two questions. First, the time that you and Kelley had been
 apart you'd had a gay life again, a gay social life, girlfriends. Did you go back to a straight
 life again?*

Yes.

You left the gay community?

That's right. [laughs]

What about Randy?

Randy'd be my friend anyway.

Did Kelley approve of your friendship with Randy?

Oh, yes. In fact, Kathy, that lived in Reno, came down quite often to visit. And
 Kelley liked *her*. And what usually happened Kelley's health was getting
 worse and worse as time went on. And many times she would come down, and I
 would call Gary Campbell at the radio station⁷⁵ and ask if he could get me

tickets to something. And he always would. And so I would make plans for Randy and Kathy and Kelley and me to go see *Splash*⁷⁶ or whatever was playing that we could get tickets for. Kelley so often would say, "I don't feel like it. You just go ahead." So he'd stay home and I'd go with Randy and Kathy.

Did you keep any of your ties from the gay life, aside from Kathy and Randy, that you'd had in those four years or so?

Not much. You know, Randy and I went to LA to the [gay pride] parade and we stayed with Ron Lawrence⁷⁷ in LA.

The second question I wanted to ask, then—you'd been married twice. First to Carole, as women, in a marriage that's not legally binding.

That's right.

But then you were married a second time to Carole when she was Kelley. What difference was there in your two marriages to this same person?

Well, the first marriage at the gay church was *fun*. This was a *serious* thing, when I married Kelley the last time. And, you know, we put everything in both our names. Well, [Carole and I] had before, though, when we'd bought a house together and did everything in both our names. It just seems like a more serious thing. Not that it *wasn't* fun. Of course it was fun. We had a party in the hotel room.

But it came with certain legal strings the second time.

Certainly. But it wasn't something we didn't want.

What kind of legal strings in your second marriage—with Kelley—did you have?

The main thing is, now that he's dead, I can collect his pension, which I couldn't have had he been female. He couldn't have made me his wife. That's what I'm living on, is his pension and my Social Security.

You wouldn't have had that if Carole had died? back to Motel 6, took their class all over again and because we had had a border town motel [in Nogales], we got
 That's right. I think the MGM⁷⁸ here will let you put your [gay] lover on insurance and that sort of thing.⁷⁹

And the Santa Fe,⁸⁰ too, I think?

I think so. There's more than one, anyway. And I think that's wonderful. But Kelley was working for [Clark County]. I'm collecting a *county* pension. Of course, I can still draw from the Merrill Lynch account. I can draw up to \$1000 a month.

Did you find any difference in your relationship with Kelley after you married in '85? Because in the time you had apart, you'd been out living the life that you had lived with Carole. But when you got back together and married Kelley, did you notice a difference in the quality of your relationship?

The relationship was definitely more serious. I think he had realized how important I was to him. But it wasn't as much fun. [laughs]

Fun in what way?

We were playing house before, I think, more. Which was more fun. And we were taking life more seriously by [the time we had our straight marriage]. Both older, naturally. And Kelley had realized responsibilities that she never did before. It was all right to have me support him. It didn't matter before. But he really took responsibility [the second time].

There was a time when neither one of us was working. He'd given up looking for a job. He was just really so tired of trying and getting rejected. He didn't interview well.

Was this before he left you?

No. This was after we were back together and after we'd both been working at the hospital. See, after we were married [in 1985], we went ahead and went back to motel managing. We managed a motel in Sacramento called Best Inns of

America. And after we left there, we went back to Motel 6, took their class all over again and because we had had a border town motel [in Nogales], we got the one right across from Tijuana in San Ysidro [California].

You left Las Vegas in 1985?

'86. 1986. And we went down to San Ysidro and we stayed there about a year. And then we decided we'd had enough again and came back to Las Vegas again.

What year did you come back?

'88. After San Ysidro we got a job in Pasadena with [the] Imperial Inn and we stayed there about a year. We were there for the earthquake in '88.⁸¹ So we came back in '88. The earthquake was in Pasadena in '88. That was cute. The water jumped out of the swimming pool about 4 feet. Our office was glass [windows] all around. I was standing there at the desk in the office and looked out to see the water jump out of the swimming pool. [The motel] was on Colorado Boulevard. 'Course, we were there for the Rose Bowl Parade, which was nice. Every building along [Colorado Boulevard] except ours, the windows were broken. All the store fronts. Ours didn't break and the whole thing was windows. All the way around the office was all windows. I ran out of the office back into the other room. [laughs]

Then we came back to Las Vegas. We stayed in an apartment and I got a job with a collection agency. They sold me, or rented me out, to Sunrise Hospital. So I was in the business office at Sunrise Hospital. I talked to one of the ladies and she said, "I hate my house. If somebody'd just give me \$3000 I'd sign it over to 'em." You know, for a down payment. For her equity in the house. So I thought, Gosh, no matter how bad it is, for \$3000 You see, her payments were only \$300 a month. That sounded like a good deal. So we went and looked at it, and even though it was a dump, we bought it! And actually, it was so filthy I charged her \$250 just for cleaning it. And she accepted that.

Where the house?

North Town.⁸² It was dump, it really was. And by the time we moved out—we were there until '93, from '88 to '93 we lived in that house. Then Kelley



Ellen DeLand managing the Imperial
Inn Motel in Pasadena, California, 1987

*[photos courtesy of Ellen DeLand;
negatives in the collection of Dennis
McBride]*

inherited, and we put \$50,000 down on *this* house [1349 North Belcher Lane]. Kelley became very, very ill.

With what?

Actually, he had been throwing up. I don't know what he had. He was getting more sickly all the time. And he was throwing up. He had diabetes then. But somehow he had, lying on his back, vomited and inhaled his vomit. But I didn't know that. This was actually Christmas Day [1991]. I was working around the kitchen and I thought, I'll let him sleep. He's sleeping and he hasn't gotten a lot of sleep lately, and I'll just let him sleep. It got to be about ten o'clock in the morning and he hadn't waked up. So I thought, He's slept long enough. Well, I couldn't wake him up. Opened up his eyes and, you know, nothing. So I called 911 and they came and got him, and they somehow got the idea that he had taken too much insulin or something. [They] gave him a whole bolus⁸³ of dextrose. Soon as he got to the hospital they had to give him insulin. They had him in intensive care for just ages, pumping out his lungs with a respirator down his throat and the whole business.

Well, anyway, we ran up \$200,000 worth of medical bills with no insurance. We had already gone to a lawyer and declared bankruptcy, and notified all our creditors that we were declaring bankruptcy. Before we could get to court and do it, Kelley's father died [and Kelly received his inheritance]. And so I called every one of those creditors and offered them all 50¢ on the dollar, and every one accepted it. So we came out clear on that, didn't have to declare bankruptcy. Although our credit thing says we did because it was recorded at that time.

Did Kelley ever go back to work?

Yeah. I didn't have a job and I was out looking for a job and this particular day—every so often I would go to the Bridger Building⁸⁴ for me for the county. And this particular day I went in there and they had Office Assistant I, II, and III. And I thought, Well, I think I'll do it for Kelley instead of for me. So I picked up the application and took it home. Kelley said, "Did you find any jobs?" I said, "Not for me. I found one for you!" And so he went ahead and filled it out and I took it back [for him]. He didn't have to leave the house: he filled out the application, I carried it back to the Bridger Building and didn't fill out one for

myself. 'Cause that's the way I've always gotten jobs from the county—gone down and filled out th[ose] applications. I just went in the other day and filled out a new thing for them to send me a card for when the job comes up.

So [Kelley] filled it out and pretty soon there was [a notice] for the test.⁸⁵ They only take 500 applications, and I always come out in the top 10. Out of 500 people, I've always got the best score of the top 10. And [Kelley's] score was like 152. Still not bad out of 500 people. And then they gave him a date to go take the typing test. And he hadn't typed in 3-1/2 years. He went in there *cold* to take the typing test. When he came home, I said, "Well, how did you do?"

"Oh, I did terrible. I know I didn't do anything at all."

Pretty soon he got the results in the mail—he'd typed 90 words a minute! You know, once he got typing everyday he'd get back up to a hundred words a minute.

Carole had been a typist all those years before.

Yes. Graduated from Willis Business College.⁸⁶

So he went back to work again?

For the county, of course. For the Clark County Sanitation District. I don't want to say the Sewer Department. I always have to stop and say it carefully—Clark County Sanitation District. [*laughs*]

As what?

His badge says Application Specialist.

Let's talk about when he died. What was it he died of?

The death certificate says ketoacidosis.⁸⁷ That's the immediate cause of death. And also included kidney failure and liver failure. He'd been home from work, just Monday and Tuesday. Monday he was *real* sick, thought he had the flu. And we went in to see the doctor on Tuesday. And the doctor seemed to agree that he had the flu. Gave him three different prescriptions and wrote him a note that he could go back to work on Thursday. Well, he had just recently had a cataract

removed from his right eye, so his eyes didn't match and his glasses were [no good]. He eventually popped one of the lenses out of that eye in those glasses so that he could see. But he still couldn't drive. So I had to drive him to work, and he was working those 10-hour shifts, from 6 in the morning until 3:30 in the afternoon. And so I drove him to work at 6 in the morning on Thursday. He called me about 11 o'clock—which was actually half a day for him, when he got in at 6 [a.m.]—and he said, "I just can't make it. You're gonna have to come and get me. I just can't do it anymore." So I went and got him, brought him home.

Friday he was still very sick and in bed. And I asked him, "Is there anything I can get you? Anything at all, I'll go get it. You just ask for it and I'll find it."

And he said, "I'd like to have a bath in the bed." *[laughs]*

So I got beach towels and laid him out on the bed, gave him a bath, played nurse. And he seemed real happy with that. And the next morning he was unhappy, not feeling well. Kind of dead-head, not really knowing what was happening. He mentioned he had to go to the bathroom. He sat up, ready to go, and then he just sat there awhile. Finally, I said, "Don't you think you'd *better* go the bathroom?"

"Yeah, I guess I'd better."

[He] got up and fell against the dresser. I ran over to him and he said, "I'm all right. I'm OK."

So he started into the little hall between the bedroom and the bathroom and he fell [again]. And I leaned down to help him up and he was having a seizure. So I went to put my hand under his head to see if he was OK and this black stuff started coming out of his nose and mouth. So I went to the telephone and called 911 and they said, "Don't try to do CPR." Well, I wouldn't try to do CPR because he was still alive. You do that when somebody's dead. They said, "Just turn him on his side." So I went back to him and turned him on his side, and he had wet his shorts. 'Cause he slept in a T-shirt and shorts. His shorts were wet. So I didn't want the paramedics to see that his shorts were wet, so I ran and got clean shorts, took off the wet ones and they were banging on the door when I was trying to pull his shorts up! *[laughs]* Have to have clean underwear on, you know!

My mother always told me that! You may get run over and have to go the hospital.

That's right!

It just happened I left the front door unlocked—I don't know why, because I never do. But they finally just came in without waiting [*laughs*] and here I was still pulling up his shorts. And they took him away. And they said that he never stopped seizing. That was Saturday when that happened. They finally sent me home because there wasn't any sense in my going in to see him while he was seizing constantly. They were working with him, too. They didn't want me in there. They told me to go home. 6:30 in the morning they called me and said that if he should die, did I want them to bring him back [to life]? And I said, "Bring him back to what? The doctor already said that his brain had been without oxygen too long."

"OK," [they said], "we just wanted to know."

They called me back about five minutes of seven and said he was gone. What more could I do?

But I don't have *any* regrets of anything. I feel that I've said anything that I should have said to him. I've done anything for him. There isn't anything that I can say, "If I'd *only* done that, or if I'd *only* said that to him before." Because I think that I did. Everything I should have said to him, I said to him. And everything I should have done, I did. So I don't sit around and wish that I'd done something differently. That was the end of it.

I called Gary Campbell, my newscaster [friend] on radio station KENO, and asked him if he would do the service for me. I couldn't get any minister at all. Everybody was busy. Everybody was out of town. It didn't make any difference, I didn't really care. Everybody that he worked with had written out on a piece of paper the things they liked about them, and I had Gary read them all [at the funeral service]. His voice is his fortune.

I was in 1610⁸⁸ with a girlfriend—I was going with this girl named Rocky—and we were sitting at the bar. Of course, that always annoyed me anyway because I was a *lady*, [and] ladies don't sit on barstools. [Rocky] was talking to somebody over on the other side and here I was being ignored over here. Right beside me was this kid, looked like he was about 12 years old [*laughs*]. And so we started talking. He was alone and we talked and he was telling me about his boyfriend. He had just started this relationship and he was just so thrilled. He was bragging to me about all the things he could do, that his boyfriend would get me tickets to *Boylesque*⁸⁹ if I wanted. So, you know, I called his bluff. "All right, I want tickets to *Boylesque* next Wednesday night." And he said, "Well, call me tomorrow and I'll see if I can get it arranged." So he gave me his phone number and I called him

the next morning. [laughs] It just happened the night I planned on [going to *Boylesque*] Paul, the kid, had to work. He didn't know that he was going to have to work on the day that I chose [to go to *Boylesque*]. So Gary had to meet me, a *complete stranger*, at the Silver Slipper, only because this lover that he was interested in wanted it! [laughs] And we've been fast friends ever since. A lot of that time that I was alone, without anybody [when Kelley had left me for Tina], I had Christmas dinner with Gary Campbell. For at least three years, maybe four.

And he's been a friend like Randy's been a friend?

Note quite as close. Randy and I are *real* close. I think Paul is a little closer to me than Gary is. Paul is now about, oh, at least 35 now.

Paul and Gary are still together?

Oh, yes. They own a house together. They have a lovely home. They're a couple.

When did Kelley die?

March 20, 1994.

You were a widow for awhile. Then did you get back into the gay life again?

Yes. I went to the [Gay and Lesbian] Center. Actually, what happened, I was preparing [Kelley's] funeral and I didn't know who to get to sing. And so I guess I went in Backstreet⁹⁰ first and asked if they knew where I could reach the gay men's choir. I thought I could choose somebody out of that [to sing at Kelley's funeral]. [The bartender] said, "They're practicing tonight at Goodtimes,⁹¹ the bar that's in Liberace [Plaza].⁹² Go to Goodtimes bar and they're rehearsing there tonight." And he gave me a copy of a report from the Center telling about the women's meetings and things. Randy was with me. We went [into Goodtimes] together. Somebody went in the other room to tell [the choir] and pretty soon this fella came out. He didn't demonstrate for me, but he *did* have a beautiful voice. I told him what I wanted. Kelley had always said that what he wanted [sung] was *My Way*, *I Gotta Be Me*, and *Softly [As I Leave You]*. This is what

he wanted at his funeral. Well, [the singer] could sing *My Way*, and *Softly As I Leave You*, but he couldn't get the music for *I Gotta Be Me*. So there was a whole list of songs to choose from so I decided on *Somewhere* from *West Side Story*.⁹³ "There's a place for us." We had had that sung at our [first] wedding. So I decided on that. And this fellow was so good, *beautiful*, everybody commented on it. The mortuary hired him! He was really thrilled. When he came to see me after for me to pay him—I told him I'd pay him \$25 a song if he'd do it—[and he said], "They hired me! They hired me!" He was really happy. They were definitely impressed by his voice. I was really lucky to find him like that.

Did you get right back into the busy life again?

Two weeks after Kelley died, I went to the first meeting [at the Center].⁹⁴ They go around the room and everybody tells what they're doing, what they've done for the week, and what their name is.

What meeting was this?

One of the women's meetings. Gee, there are all so many different names for them. It was probably the Friday night meeting. What's it called? *Women's Link*. When they came to me, I told my name and [said] that my lover had died just two weeks ago. Then I had my last surgery in April [1994] to put my tummy back together again. See, when [Kelley] died, I still had a colostomy. And I knew ahead of time that I was going to be alone when I came home from the hospital after that. It was the easiest surgery of all those that I've had. They had a corset thing that wrapped around me so that I could lie on my side which I'd not been able to do. You know, you have your stomach cut all the way down, you have to just lie there on your back! And this thing they wrapped around me was elastic. I was able *move*! But I'd planned in advance. I'd bought a lot of TV dinners so that I could take care of myself. I came home all by myself. Everything worked out.

At the [Women's Link] meeting you said your lover had died. They didn't know [Kelley was a man]?

I didn't tell them immediately. I had to tell them eventually.

You have someone new now? but they pay very badly. She always thought that in Reno you could get a better job. She had been a security officer for Maxwell. ⁹⁴
 Um, hm.

Tell me about her.

About Joanne [Kisicki]? She hadn't been with anybody for 14 years. And she just came to the older women's meeting,⁹⁵ which is on Wednesdays at noon. Kathy came and lived with me for 8 months. Kathy in Reno. After Kelley had died.

So you'd kept in touch all of that time?

In fact, the day Kelley died [Kathy] had come into town to visit with us. When they called and told me that Kelly had died, which was at 7 in the morning, [Kathy's] plane was coming in at 8. Before I could go in there and make arrangements for his body, I had to go to the airport and pick her up! *[laughs]* 'Course, she stayed in the guest room. She only had come for the weekend.

Did you have a lot of faith that that relationship [with Kathy] would last?

I really thought it would. And I think Kelley rather expected me to [be with Kathy] because he liked Kathy and he thought we would probably get together afterward. One time I asked him, when she and I would go out when she would come to town, "Aren't you jealous of my being with Kathy?" And he said, "No, not really. I don't think you could ever stand the way she talks." She had very bad English, and I've always been a stickler for grammar. [Kelley] didn't think, you know, that I'd ever go with her because her English was so bad.

What happened?

She wasn't happy here. She didn't like Las Vegas and she wanted to be with her daughters.

Did she work down here?

She worked at Wal Mart, but they pay very badly. She always claimed that in Reno you could get a better job. She had been a security officer for Pinkerton,⁹⁶ and she had taken reservations in hotels. She went [back up to Reno] and got right on at a hotel taking reservations. One of the nicer hotels. She had worked at the [Reno] Hilton⁹⁷ and a lot of places. And then moonlighted as a security officer.

So there you found yourself alone again.

I started going with Joanne [Kisicki] on the third of August [1995]. Actually, we went out a couple of times. We went to a play up at the Spring [Mountain] Ranch.⁹⁸ We went to see a couple of movies, that *Incredible Adventures of Two Girls in Love*.⁹⁹ We went to see that. Then I asked her to go to the luau at the Vicious Rumors.¹⁰⁰ We went to Flex¹⁰¹ last week and they've got food. We went there last night and it was so loud we couldn't stand it. But on Sunday it was OK, and we were able to have dinner and it was nice. But the music there was just way too loud last night.

You met [Joanne] at ...

The older women's group. It's called the *Wise Women*. Rather than Dirty Old Ladies. [laughs]

Has Joanne been in town very long?

Two years. She hadn't been in anything gay until just this last summer, I guess.

What brought her back into the community?

I guess she felt she wasn't doing anything, that she was just stagnating, and somebody had mentioned [*Wise Women*] to her. But she wouldn't go to anything except the *Wise Women* meeting for quite awhile. Now she'll go to the evening meetings, too. She's the first person I have ever dated who carries a purse.

I hope that doesn't get between you.

Most of the people I have dated were masculine women who had their wallet in their pocket like a man. But not Joanne. Her last girlfriend, whose name is Annie, comes in to town quite often but she never sees her. She goes and stays at the California Club¹⁰² and gambles and goes home. Well, [Joanne] called the California Club this particular day knowing that [Annie] would be in town, and made a date for us to go and have dinner with her and her lover. And [Joanne] said, "I think it'd be nice if you could wear high heels." *[laughs]* She wanted to show me off, you know. So I wore high heels and got all dressed up. I guess Annie commented that I looked real femme.¹⁰³ Joanne was always the femme before, but she's playing butch now.¹⁰⁴

No, I don't think so. There've been times I've been places with Maggie, who I think brings up an interesting point about role-playing. Straight people always say, "Which one is the wife and which one is the husband?" And I think today gay people take that as an insult more than anything because people are people. But has there been role-playing [in your experience]?

Oh, yes. Obviously, Kelley was definitely the husband and I was the wife. But there *are* [women] who have a way of making love that is ... Well, they call it a *stone butch* and a *pillow femme*. Stone butch doesn't want to be touched. They do all the touching, but they don't want to be touched. And the pillow femme is one that just lies there and does *nothing!* *[laughs]* There aren't very many people like that.

No, not like before. Because they almost seemed disgusted before. [Now], they would you say maybe that those would be older people who come from a time when that was really what was expected?

Do you feel society's gotten more supportive [of gay people]?

Quite possibly. Now, one that I know that's a stone butch is Maggie. She looks very masculine. She looks kind of like Elvis Presley. She's my age. I'm 13 days older than her. She's 64 years old and her hair is always dyed black, as black as it can be. I'm sure it's gray at times, but I've never seen a *trace* of gray come into it. And she always wears, you know, boots and western-type clothes, and looks very masculine. Although she does wear a little makeup, an eyebrow pencil. And she's definitely a stone butch, doesn't want to be touched.

Are you disgusted with the idea [of being gay]?

You've been involved in the gay community from before Stonewall, from the early 60s, and you're involved in it again. What kind of difference do you see within that 30 years?

With Kelley, when she was Carole, people did stare. In fact, we hadn't been together very long when we were down at the Ocean Park Pier¹⁰⁵ and sitting on a bench resting. A couple of women came by and stared at us, walked on past, and came back to have another look. And I was getting *really angry!* And Kelley said, "Just let it go. Don't say anything. It's all right." She was used to it, but I wasn't. And these people coming back to gawk at you!

That was what the Gender class.

Do you feel that would happen today?

I think all the groups are similar, anyway, that we just sit and talk. Some of

No, I don't think so. There've been times I've been places with Maggie, who I was just telling you about, and I kind of get a kick out of it, now. Having people stare. I think it's kind of fun to be with Maggie. I had to go to the hospital, to the doctor's office or something, and I asked Maggie to drive me, 'cause Maggie's retired also. So many of the women work and you can't get somebody to take you somewhere. I had had a spur taken off my ankle, so I couldn't drive for a little while. So I asked Maggie to drive me, and then rather than pay her for driving me, I took her out to lunch. And I noticed people turned around and took a look. *[laughs]* But I think it's kind of fun!

And that kept people from interrupting each other. [laughs] We'd pass that egg around and it was a very

Did you sense the same kind of judgement in that stare? *there and we tried to do it, and I went outside and got a chunk of rock to use so we'd have something to*

No, not like before. Because they almost seemed disgusted before. [Now], they were just curious. *didn't have to be a marble egg. [laughs]*

Do you feel society's gotten more supportive [of gay people]? *the youth group*

Yes, I think so. *there's a youth group for people under 21. Which I think is a*

wonderful group. And there's [the] Twenty-Something Group and [the] Thirty-

In what ways? *Twenty-Something has one for men and one for women. The*

Thirty-Something, I'm not sure, I haven't been. Of course, there's a transsexual

Well, I don't think [people] are disgusted like they were. They're just curious now. I think a lot of people are more curious than they are disgusted with the idea [of being gay].

What organizations do you belong to [now]?

The [Gay and Lesbian Community] Center is the main thing. I volunteer—big deal!—four hours a week. But at least when I'm there volunteering, I know what's going on in the community. I've been over to the Community Counseling Center,¹⁰⁶ and they also have a meeting early on Fridays, 5:30, for women over there. A group meeting.

Tell me what the Center does.

I think all the groups are similar, anyway, that we just sit and talk. Some of them are more structured than the others. They'll have a topic and we'll go around the room, each one saying their name and giving their opinion on the particular subject. And, of course, you can go around several times because you think of something else by the time they've gone past [you]. And we had one facilitator at one time who was very clever. She was an Indian girl. She's since moved up to Schurz, you know, the Indian reservation.¹⁰⁷ She had a marble egg. You've seen them. People have them sitting around their house as a paper weight or something. And you had to pass it around the room, and you couldn't talk unless you had the egg in your hand. And that kept people from interrupting each other. [laughs] We'd pass that egg around and it was a very good idea. I'd like to get one. One time she wasn't there and we tried to do it, and I went outside and got a chunk of rock to use so we'd have something to pass around. It could be done with anything. A wadded-up piece of paper. It wouldn't matter. It didn't have to be a marble egg. [laughs]

What kind of groups work under the aegis of the Center?

Well, of course, there's a youth group for people under 21. Which I think is a wonderful group. And there's [the] *Twenty-Something Group* and [the] *Thirty-Something Group*. *Twenty-Something* has one for men and one for women. The *Thirty-Something*, I'm not sure. I haven't been. Of course, there's a transsexual group.¹⁰⁸ There are, like, three different ones for women, women's groups. Monday night, and Friday night, and then the Wednesday noon for the older ladies.¹⁰⁹

And that's the one you call the Wise Women?

He said, "Are you gay?"

Yes.

What are the other two women's groups?

I think Monday is called *Lesbian Focus*.

So the Center plays a very active role in the gay community?

Oh, yes. There are lots and lots of things. Things that aren't actually held at the Center, too.

How long have you been with the Center?

A year and half, just as long as Kelley's been dead. It'll be almost two years.

As a volunteer, what's your job?

Just answering the telephone and telling people what's happening. One fellow called last week who was crying, so upset that people had made fun of him. First thing he said was, "Can I come and stay there tonight?" And I apologized and said, "I'm sorry, we don't have facilities for people to spend the night." And he said, "What do you do there, then?"

I said, "We have group meetings. How old are you?"

He said he was 18.

I said, "Well, you should certainly come tonight because the youth group is meeting. It's called *Youth Sensations*."

He said, "I don't want to do that. They'd laugh at me."

"Why would they laugh?"

"Oh, they'd just laugh at me."

"Are you just coming out?"

"Yes."

"We all had to go through that at one time. Everybody has to come out, and these are people that are all teenagers that are just coming out."

He said, "Are they *all* gay?"

"Yes, they're all gay."

He said, "Are *you* gay?"

"Yes," I said. "I wouldn't be here if I wasn't." [laughs] It would have been wonderful for him. I just wish he'd come. He called back a couple of times to get directions, but he never showed up. Kind of sad.

Have you had any trouble from the straight community over the Center?

No. They've had bad phone calls, people calling and saying silly things and something. I've never had any of those calls. We sign in, and then you mark down, scoring, everything that happens. Calls asking about bar referrals and calls about the Board of Directors. And one of [the boxes] is crank calls. I've never had to mark anything in that space.

So you do have a regular form right by the telephone where you keep statistics?

Yes. Just score it when somebody calls and wants to know something.

Where does the funding come from for the Center?

It costs \$35 to join, unless you're over 55 or a student, then it's \$20. And a couple can join for \$60 instead of \$70. Every meeting they take up a collection, [where] most people put in a dollar. Any group [that meets at the Center]. And quite often the group is like 25 people [so] that's \$25. But we do have fundraisers. Do you know Murphy? Her name is actually Mary Murphy. Most people don't even know that. They just call her Murphy. She's a very talented singer and she put on a production using the auditorium of the church.

Which church?

MCC. And charged \$10 a person and put on a *wonderful* show, practically a one-man show. She had a few people helping her. She was *very* good and she raised quite a bit. She raised almost \$2000 for the Center.

Do you get any money from the state or from grants?

Grants. Right at the moment I don't think we are [receiving money from grants], but I think they are *going* to. And they have in the past, too. There's been an awful lot of grants [available], but who's gonna take care of 'em, who's going to file 'em, and all this kind of thing, but nobody ever seems to do it. So I think with the new Board¹¹⁰ we're going to have, we probably will have somebody do it.

To be a volunteer at the Center you've said you have to take classes?

Three classes.

Classes in what?

One of them is on AIDS. It's like two hours [all about] AIDS. They tell you what you can and can't say on the telephone. [Volunteers] must *never* give the impression that you're a counselor, you know, that you're an educated counselor. You always have to keep saying, "I'm not qualified to [say this or that]." [laughs] And it seems like one of [the classes] was nothing. We just sat around and talked.

Tell me some about the transsexual group.

I have never been to the transsexual group, but they've asked me many times to go. One day when Kelley was alive and we were still living in North Town in that dump, these two fellas who had been female and were now male, came to visit because they wanted to meet Kelley, 'cause Kelley had been a transsexual, had been a man for 20 years. They were talking about the different surgeries they had had that were really bad, or good, or whatever. And neither one had had a good mastectomy. This one, his name is Marty. He looks very good, but the mastectomy looks *really* bad. He has half a breast left on one side. They just did a *terrible* job. And he pulled up his shirt and showed it and it really was *awful*. So they asked Kelley to pull up his shirt and he pulled it up and showed it and he looked just like a man! [laughs] Marty has asked many times if I would come in and talk to the group. But I never have. I guess it's on the wrong day or something.

Is it just a support group?

Yes, it really is just a support group, and they talk about their own experiences and everything. But, of course, they're mostly male-to-female. There aren't as many female-to-male in the group.

There's been some controversy over the Center. Can you talk about that?

As much as I know. Everybody is unhappy the way the people have been handling the Center, the Board members. Michael Gentile is the Acting President because the one who was President [is gone]. I don't know what happened, so he had to take over. And Jason Miller is the Secretary, and neither one is doing a very good job. And then Anne Mulford—she works for the [Las Vegas] Bugle—she wrote an article [in] which she described that things were not going well. She was just telling the truth. And Mike Gentile got really upset and called her up and she wasn't there, so he left a message on her machine that ended up using terrible language. And she came to the next Board meeting and recited word-for-word what he had said on her tape, and ended up saying, "Go fuck yourself!" or something. [laughs]

Do you feel that this controversy has compromised the role or the importance of the Center in the community?

I think so, yes.

In what way?

Well, nobody feels that anything is really being done, that everything is slipshod, you know. Like Jason was supposed to send out notices to everybody about the election and the nominations and everything. He didn't have the time, he didn't have everybody's address, he didn't have enough stamps. He had more darned excuses so that nothing got done.

That's going to be changed shortly?

The election is going to be Wednesday, this coming Wednesday [January 24, 1996] and we'll see what happens. I mean, I don't know if this whole new Board, this whole new slate that they have proposed is going to be elected. I don't imagine if all of them will be. I don't know, because we did have a large group of people running. So we've got those already nominated, plus the new ones that are going to be nominated from the floor.

Yes, I definitely do. And the Community Counseling Center is going to have Do you feel that you want to continue your association with the Center? and I are gonna take the classes.

Yes, I do. But I'm not sure that I want all of those people on the new slate. There are still some [from the old Board] I want—not Mike Gentile or Jason Miller. Like, for instance, this Murphy. She's such a talented person. I think she should be on the Board. And Becky Vincent. She's a hard-worker and she's done a lot. I mean, she goes into that Center and sees what's needed and goes out and buys it. We didn't have enough lighting, she goes out and buys lamps and brings 'em in.

Her own money? Center, and then the Community Counseling Center, have not quite worked together or been part of each other. But now that's about to change?

Yes! She brought in a whole flock of chairs 'cause we didn't have enough chairs. She bought 20 chairs, I think.

How do you see yourself fitting into the gay community in Las Vegas? That's a very broad question!

No, I'm just not that much into religion. I think that Deen!!! is a good minister.

Well, I'm just a fat old lady! *[laughs]* I'm not as much a leader as I am a follower. Although I *have* been in leadership positions, they seem to be thrust on me more often than not.

I forgot to ask you about, and this is looking way up, in the early 80s, probably just after you and Kelley broke up, you were involved with Voices?!!?

You're the one who always says, "OK, I'll do it!"

Yes.

I used to. I'm trying not to. *[laughs]*

What was Voices?

How do you assess the [Las Vegas] gay community now as far its cohesiveness, as far as what it does for promoting acceptance and taking care of its own?

Well, we do have a lot of cliques. You know that. But it's kind of a wait-and-see thing, after this election [at the Center].

Do you think that this election will make a big difference in the gay community in general?

Yes, I definitely do. And the Community Counseling Center is going to have classes in facilitating. Which I think is a good idea. Both Joanne and I are gonna take the classes.

Have the facilitators at the Center before been pretty much volunteers?

Yes. Just, "Who wants to be facilitator, go ahead and do it." And last week, Candace, who is one of the adults that are present at the youth group, came and facilitated our meeting and she was *wonderful*. And she's the one that mentioned the classes in facilitating. Sounds like a good idea.

It sounds like the Center, and then the Community Counseling Center, have not quite worked together or been part of each other. But now that's about to change?

That's right. We'll see.

Do you still go to MCC?

No. I'm just not that much into religion. I think that Beau¹¹¹ is a good minister. She's not the best thing I ever saw in a minister, but she's OK.

One thing that I forgot to ask you about, and this is backing way up. In the early 80s, probably just after you and Kelley broke up, you were involved with Voices?¹¹²

Yes.

What was Voices?

Voices was a gay and lesbian singing group, choir.

How did you get involved in it?

Randy must have found out about it and we *both* went to it.

What did they do?

Well, we *practiced*, mostly. We sang. The first group of songs we did were, I think that was the show tunes. We put on a recital at the Charleston Heights Arts Center.¹¹³

Up on Brush Street?

Yes.

Were you with Voices from the very start?

I think so, yes.

Did Voices go on?

After Kelley came back, I quit.

So it was still going [in 1985]?

Yes, but now it's just men, gay men. Gay Men's Choir, Gay Men's Chorus,¹¹⁴ whatever it is. Maybe they decided they didn't need women, I don't know.

Sometimes I've noticed, in the years I was involved in the gay community, and I read the Bugle, of course, and read all of the little snipings—the contention in the gay community between the women and the men. Did you find that contention when you were involved in Los Angeles, for instance?

No. But there were lots more men than there were women involved, like in MCC.

Why, in your opinion, is there this contention in the Vegas gay community?

I don't know, because I always got along with the men.

Have you experienced that contention at all?

Not much. But then, there are women in the groups, even in the *Wise Women's Group*, who *absolutely* don't want anything to do with the men and will not go to a party if men are present. Just won't have anything to do with them. They just don't *want* men and they don't *like* them.

Thirty years after you came out, what's your relationship with your family? Your children?

The last time my oldest son, Terry, the one that's so religious, came over, Kathy [Barber] was here. And he got along *wonderfully* with Kathy.

Did that surprise you?

Yes, it did. They got along real well. They seemed to like each other a lot, and he was even sharing confidences with her, that surprised me.

Obviously he knows the situation?

Oh, yes. He has from the beginning.

What about the other son?

Christopher is up there in Washington [state]. He was with me for awhile, way back when. He was about 20 years old. He's always stuttered a little. And for some reason the Selective Service gave him a 1-Y rating which meant they'd only take him in the case of [a military] emergency or something. And one time he didn't report, so they sent him a notice which said, "You *must* report by a particular day or you *will be* inducted into the army." So he didn't [report, and got drafted]. And he's put in 20 years now. He's out and retired now and receiving his pension. He *wanted* to go in. He spent a lot of years in Germany and that's where he met his wife. She was also in the army.

One last question to wrap all of this up. Have you learned anything in your life, in your gay life, that you feel gay people today would benefit from knowing?

That's a hard one! I suppose probably the idea that both men and women, even though they're gay, can get along with each other. And Joanne feels a lot like I do. We absolutely *despise* bigots. It's just one of those things. Kelley and I, when he was still female, we bought a house in Simi Valley. And I was still working in Santa Monica at Douglas and I was carpooling with three straight men. And they were really *irritating* men. They were middle-aged men that had been ex-smokers and couldn't stand anybody smoking around them. And one particular day that made me so angry, I just couldn't ride with them anymore. Driving along the freeway, over at the side, some black people were in a car and a policeman had pulled them over to give them a ticket. And this guy was *ecstatic* [*shouts and gestures*], "Look at that! Look at that! The *niggers* are getting a ticket!" And I was so *disgusted*, I mean I was *really disgusted*, I wouldn't ride with them anymore. *Just* wouldn't have any part of it. And these were adult people. These were executives in Douglas that could say something like that. And I think if that happened with Joanne she'd [feel] the same. She just hates bigotry so badly, and I do too.

So that's been a guiding ethic in your life?

Absolutely. And it's been that way with Joanne, too. That's one thing we agree on so much.

End

Ellen and Kelley DeLand, ca. 1992-93

Diets courtesy of Ellen DeLand; negative in the collection of Dennis McBride



Ellen and Kelley DeLand, ca. 1992-93

[photo courtesy of Ellen DeLand; negative in the collection of Dennis McBride]

1-13-92

MY DARLING ELLEN

IF YOU ARE READING THIS - IT IS BECAUSE I'M GONE, BUT NOT VERY FAR MY LOVE.

REMEMBER HOW STRONG OUR TIES ARE & THE BOND THAT HAS EXISTED BETWEEN US. STRONG ENOUGH THAT NO ONE COULD EVER BREAK THE CLOSENESS WE HAVE SHARED.

I WILL REMAIN NEAR SWEETHEART. I'M SURE YOU WILL FEEL MY PRESENCE IN YOUR QUIET TIMES PLEASE LISTEN TO ME AND KNOW IT'S OK... IT'S ALL RIGHT YOU WILL MAKE IT LWV! BECAUSE I'LL BE AROUND TO HELP FOR AS LONG AS YOU NEED ME I AM ABLE.

2

THERE IS A TIME FOR US ALL AHEAD, AND THIS TIME IT WAS MY TURN.

KNOW THAT I'VE HAD A GOOD LIFE WITH PARENTS THAT LOVED ME AND DID THEIR BEST TO MAKE MY OPPORTUNITY HERE DECENT WITH KINDNESS AND THEIR ACCEPTANCE.

THEN, ONCE UPON A TIME I MET THE LOVE OF MY LIFE AND HAVE BEEN BLESSED BY HER LOVE EVER SINCE AND EVEN BEFORE THEN.

OUR LOVE HAS TRANSFERRED THROUGHOUT TIME AND SPACE SINCE TIME BEGAN BECAUSE YOU & I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ONE.

KNOW THAT MY LOVE FOR YOU IS STRONGER THAN MY FAILED BODY, MY BODY ~~IS~~ DIED, BUT MY LOVE EXISTS!

- 3 -

NOW YOU MUST GO ON WITH YOUR LIFE, IF NOTHING ELSE BUT AS A TRIBUTE TO OUR LOVE, YOU ARE SO LOVELY, & SO FULL OF LOVE & LIFE DON'T DENY THAT TO YOUR FRIENDS & FAMILY AND TO THOSE YOU HAVE YET TO MEET.

LIVE BABY LIVE, FOR ME, FOR YOU, FOR US & FOR ALL THOSE YET TO BE.

PLAY & ENJOY - HAVE A GOOD LIFE (THAT'S AN ORDER!)!!

~~I~~ Love you forever & ever & even then
Your Kelley

Ellen found this three-page good-bye letter from Kelley in their safety deposit box shortly after Kelley's death in 1994.

[courtesy of Ellen DeLand]

Notes

1. Ellen's maiden name was Terry. Her father was Samuel Terry, and her mother was Jessie Knight. Her sister's name is Trudie [Terry] Latka; her half sister was Peggy [Terry] Van Gundy [d. 1967]; and her twin half brothers are David [d. 1988] and Derwin Terry.
2. Preceded by several economic, political, and social developments throughout the 1920s, but immediately precipitated by a stock market crash late in 1929, America's Great Depression lasted from 1930 until the United States' entry into World War II in 1941.
3. The Stock Market Crash was a financial panic which began on Thursday, October 24, 1929 in the United States when British interest rates were raised. English stockholders began a wholesale unloading of American stocks, which sparked panic selling among American stockholders. Stock prices plummeted that Thursday, Friday, the following Monday, and on Tuesday, October 29, which became known as Black Tuesday. A slow market collapse and economic deflation continued until by March 1933 the value of all stocks listed on the New York Stock Exchange was less than 1/5 their value on October 1, 1929.
4. Ellen Terry and Fred Roan married on March 20, 1948.
5. Samuel Terry, before marrying Ellen's mother, Jessie Knight, had been married to Sudie Southwick by whom he had three children: Peggy, David, and Derwin [see note 1].
6. Ellen here refers to Carole DeLand, the woman she loved and married in a ceremony at the Metropolitan Community Church in Los Angeles. Carole underwent sexual reassignment surgery in the early 1970s and adopted the name Sean Kelley DeLand. Ellen uses the names Kelley and Carole interchangeably throughout this interview when referring to the *person* she loved and married twice, and whose last name she assumed.
7. Diana Lynn [1926 - 1971] was a child star who made a successful transition to adult leading lady roles in the 1940s and 50s. She starred in such films as *They Shall Have Music* [1939], *The Major and the Minor* [1943], and *Bedtime for Bonzo* [with Ronald Reagan, 1951].
8. El Segundo, California, 15 miles southwest of Los Angeles on the Pacific coast, was founded by the Standard Oil Company in 1911. El Segundo, Spanish for "the second," refers to the town's having the Standard Oil Company's second California oil refinery.

9. A *pesary* is any intrauterine device used for medical reasons. Types of pessary used for contraception include cups and diaphragms.
10. This is Joanne Kisicki, Ellen's lover at the time of this interview.
11. Margaret Gerrugthy.
12. The Douglas Aircraft Company was founded in Santa Monica, California by Donald Wills Douglas in 1920. The McDonnell Aircraft Company was founded by James McDonnell in the late 1930s, and built airplanes for the military shortly before World War II. The McDonnell and Douglas companies merged in 1967.
13. *Butch* is a term in gay parlance which means masculine in all its connotations. It may be applied to both lesbians and gay men.
14. A *chubby chaser* is an individual sexually attracted to overweight people.
15. A residential and resort community on the Pacific coast 14 miles southwest of Los Angeles, Manhattan Beach was incorporated in 1912. The town's modern claim to fame is as the scene of the longest and most expensive trial in California history, the McMartin Preschool child molestation trial. First investigated in August 1983 when the mentally-unbalanced mother of one of McMartin's students claimed her son had been sexually abused during Satanic rituals at the school, the case eventually spread to include interviews with over 400 children, investigations and closure of nearly a dozen local pre-schools, and the arrest and indictment of dozens of teachers, aids, and volunteer workers. In the McMartin case were joined two great hysterical obsessions of the 1980s which swept the country: child molestation and Satanic worship. None of the cases reported and investigated throughout the decade proved to be true, yet hundreds of innocent lives were destroyed for the sake of sensational publicity on the part of law enforcement officials, ambitious politicians, and self-righteous social workers.
16. On December 8, 1963 Frank Sinatra, Jr., 19, was kidnapped at gun point from his suite at Harrah's Lodge at Lake Tahoe. Barry Keenan, Joseph Ansler, and John Irwin demanded a \$240,000 ransom from Sinatra's father, Frank, Sr. Frank, Jr. was released, but the kidnappers were soon caught and most of the ransom money recovered. [See *His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra* by Kitty Kelley (New York: Bantam Books, 1986), pp. 329-332.]
17. Having a frame to himself means that Kelley's father's name appeared by itself in the credits of some of the films he helped produce.
18. Released by Paramount in 1960, starring William Holden and Nancy Kwan.
19. An Oscar-winning vehicle for Jane Fonda, released in 1971 by Warner Brothers.

20. *The Sterile Cuckoo*, starring Liza Minnelli, was released by Paramount Studios in 1969.
21. The game of foosball is played by two people on a table with raised sides. A series of bars with paddles are fitted through two sides of the table with handles on either end of each bar. Turning these handles causes the paddles to sweep the surface of the table. A small ball is dropped onto the table and each person, by manipulating his bars, tries to sweep the ball into the opposing side. Foosball is essentially a table-top soccer game.
22. *The Beverly Hillbillies* was a popular sitcom which ran on CBS from September 26, 1962 through September 7, 1971. The series starred Buddy Ebsen, Irene Ryan, Donna Douglas, and Max Baer, Jr. as the Clampett family who struck oil on their land, became instant millionaires, and moved into a Beverly Hills mansion.
23. Character actress Nancy Kulp [1922 - 1991] portrayed banker Milton Drysdale's secretary, Jane Hathaway, in *The Beverly Hillbillies*. Kulp was active in film and television from 1952. She played small parts in the movies *Shane*, *Sabrina*, *The Three Faces of Eve*, and *The Parent Trap*. She was best known, however, for her television roles. In addition to *The Beverly Hillbillies*, Kulp appeared in *The Bob Cummings Show* [1961-62] and *The Brian Keith Show* [1972-74]. In 1984 Kulp ran unsuccessfully for Congress from the state of Pennsylvania.
24. Kaye [DeLand] Hall.
25. The exclusive Cheviot Hills section of Los Angeles includes Century City and Rancho Park, near the interchange of the Santa Monica and San Diego Freeways.
26. The radical Gay Liberation Front was founded in New York City in July 1969 within two weeks of the Stonewall riots [see note 32].
27. The Rev. Troy Perry founded the Metropolitan Community Church [MCC] in Los Angeles in October 1968.
28. This was the Encore Theater.
29. Troy Perry has published three books: *The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay* [Los Angeles: Nash Publications, 1972; 25th Anniversary Edition published in Los Angeles by the Universal Fellowship Press in 1994]; *Don't Be Afraid Anymore: The Story of Rev. Troy* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990]; and *Profiles in Gay & Lesbian Courage* [New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991].
30. This incident occurred in an April 1969 demonstration on the steps of the Los Angeles offices of the State Steamship Lines. For Perry's recounting of this confrontation, refer to pp. 165-170 of the 25th Anniversary Edition of *The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay* [see note 29].

31. The Reverend Troy Perry officiated at the Metropolitan Community Church in Las Vegas on August 25, 26, and 27, 1995.
32. On the night of June 27-28, 1969, gay men and lesbians fought back against a police raid of the Stonewall Inn bar on Christopher Street in New York's Greenwich Village. There followed three days of riots and protests, and within a month the National Gay Task Force, the National Gay Alliance, and the Gay Liberation Front [see note 26] had been founded. These riots mark the beginning of modern gay liberation and are remembered each year on June 28 with the Gay Pride celebrations.
33. Fred Astaire, Jr. was born in Los Angeles on January 21, 1936.
34. As a stage musical *West Side Story* premiered at New York's Wintergarden Theatre on September 26, 1957. The play was released as a musical film in 1961 by United Artists and starred Natalie Wood, Richard Beymer, Russ Tamblyn, Rita Moreno, and George Chakiris. The music was composed by Leonard Bernstein, and the lyrics written by Stephen Sondheim.
35. California's Bryman Schools, Inc. has campuses in Long Beach, Los Angeles, Rosemead, San Francisco, and Winnetka.
36. Christine Jorgensen was born on May 30, 1926 as George William Jorgensen, Jr. Jorgensen underwent sexual reassignment from 1951 till 1954 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Until the publicity which accompanied Jorgensen's treatment, transsexuality was a forbidden subject in the United States, and Christine's frank and open attitude in the matter of her own sexual reassignment helped bring dignity and sympathetic consideration to thousands of others like her. She went into show business in a small way, performed on Broadway and in a few films. In 1967 she published *Christine Jorgensen: A Personal Autobiography*. She died in San Clemente, California on May 3, 1989.
37. Big Bear Lake lies in the San Bernardino Mountains northeast of San Bernardino.
38. Southern Nevada Memorial Hospital became the University Medical Center in about 1986.
39. Las Vegas gamer Herb Pastor opened the Golden Goose Casino at 20 E. Fremont Street as a slot joint in the spring of 1975.
40. Herb pastor has held a Nevada gaming license since 1975. At one time he owned the Treasury Hotel Casino [115 east Tropicana Avenue, formerly the 20th Century and a Howard Johnson's, currently the Hotel San Remo]. He is the owner now of Sassy Sally's, the Coin Castle, and the Topless Girls of Glitter Gulch strip joint, all on Fremont Street.

41. Sassy Sally's Casino opened at 32 Fremont Street in the fall of 1980. The neon cowgirl reclining on the casino's roof has been the feminine partner of Vegas Vic, who is attached to the front of the Pioneer Casino across the street.
42. Herb Pastor's Coin Castle Casino opened at 15 East Fremont Street in the fall of 1970.
43. On December 3, 1991, without city approval, Herb Pastor turned his Glitter Gulch Casino into a strip joint he called the Topless Girls of Glitter Gulch. Las Vegas mayor Jan Laverty Jones and the city council were outraged and tried to force Pastor to shut down Topless Girls because it didn't fit the family image Las Vegas was trying to build at that time. Pastor prevailed, however, and Topless Girls eventually absorbed his Golden Goose Casino next door. Today, under the high-tech canopy of the Fremont Street Experience and next to the bright souvenir shops and larger casinos, Pastor's Topless Girls are still glittering.
44. See note 43.
45. 195 East Tropicana.
46. Owned by Station Casinos, Inc., the Boulder Station Hotel Casino opened on August 23, 1994.
47. 4125 Boulder Highway.
48. Nogales, founded in 1872, straddles the US-Mexican border along the Santa Cruz River 57 miles south of Tucson, Arizona. A fence divides the US and Mexican parts of town.
49. The Mardi Gras Inn Best Western opened at 3500 Paradise Road in the fall of 1977 as the Mardi Gras Hotel and Casino.
50. Le Cafe, one of Las Vegas's most famous gay bars, opened on August 18, 1954 as the Club Black Magic, a popular straight nightclub at 4817 Paradise Road. It became a gay bar in the 1960s when its name was changed to Le Cafe. Arson fires burned the club on August 8, 1978, and again on May 5, 1979. The bar was closed until October 20, 1983 when it re-opened in the old Rebel Steak House restaurant at 2710 East Desert Inn Road as Disco Le Cafe Bar and Restaurant. The business failed and closed its doors in April 1984.
51. Opened by Maxine Perron at 5110 East Charleston Boulevard as Max and Mary's in the late 1950s, Maxine's was Las Vegas's only lesbian bar. It was a legendary place, earning mention in the notorious Las Vegas exposé *The Green Felt Jungle* by Ed Reid and Ovid Demaris. When Perron sold the place in 1981, the name was changed to Maxie's, which it remained until closed in January 1989. The site now is occupied by Duffy's Tavern II. [See *The Green Felt Jungle* by Ed Reid and Ovid Demaris (New York: Pocket Books, July 1974), p. 97.]

52. The Backdoor Lounge at 1415 East Charleston Boulevard opened in November 1977.
53. This is Rafael Navarre.
54. The Badlands Saloon, located at 953 East Sahara Avenue in the Commercial Center, opened in January 1991.
55. An article in the *Vegas Gay Times* [March 1979, p. 3] notes that there had been a congregation of the Metropolitan Community Church [MCC] in Las Vegas some years before. The church was re-established in Las Vegas and held its first services on October 7, 1979 in St. Matthew's Episcopal Church at 4709 Nellis Boulevard. From 1979 and throughout the 1980s, the MCC was the focus of the gay community in Las Vegas, providing meeting space for various groups, housing the first gay library/bookstore [known first as Alternatives and then as the Las Vegas Community Bookstore] and the Las Vegas Gay Archives, and hosting seminars, study groups, lectures, and fundraisers. The church has moved several times in its history and Ellen refers to its home at 510 Garces Street [1983-84]. At the time of this interview the MCC has offices at 1140 Almond Tree Lane, Suite 302, and conducts worship services at the Wesley United Methodist Church at 2727 Civic Center Drive in North Las Vegas.
56. The Rev. Ron Gee was first pastor of MCC-Las Vegas.
57. See note 55.
58. The Gay and Lesbian Community Center was conceived in August 1992 and held its first Board of Directors meeting on November 9, 1992. Interim officers were elected on January 11, 1993, and the Center shared office space with the Community Counseling Center at 1006 and 1008 E. Sahara. The Board of Directors bought its own building at 912 East Sahara and held a grand opening on October 15, 1993 [see "Coping With a Hostile World," in the *Las Vegas Sun*, September 24, 1993, p. 4A]. While it proved to be a popular place for Las Vegas gay community groups to meet, the Center was plagued from the start by political infighting, turf battles, and violent personality clashes. This ugly atmosphere seriously compromised the Center's mission and proved an embarrassment to the gay community in general. On January 24, 1996 an entire new Board of Directors was elected, and at the time of this interview the situation shows signs of improvement. One positive development is a closer working relationship with the Community Counseling Center [see note 106].
59. A phlebotomist is a medical technician whose job it is to draw blood as a therapeutic measure.
60. The LVGs is the Las Vegas Gay Bowling League, officially sanctioned by the American Bowling Congress. The LVGs began in 1978 as informal Sunday

get-togethers by friends. Founder Don Crawford approached lane officials at the Showboat Hotel and Casino in early 1979 who helped him form a legitimate league. The LVGs bowled their first tournament at the Showboat lanes on February 25, 1979. The league has grown steadily in popularity and membership. The league's popular Showgirl Tournament, first held at the Showboat on September 1-2, 1984, is a large and well-attended event. By December 1985 there was a second gay bowling league known as the Fun One League. The LVGs bowled at the Showboat Hotel's lanes, while the Fun Ones used the lanes at the El Rancho Hotel Casino. [See "Las Vegas' Gay Bowling League," by Dave Cohen in the *Vegas Gay Times*, issue 19 (December 1979), p. 4; and "Good Times with Community Bowlers," in the *Bohemian Bugle*, v. 8:12 (December 1985), pp. 12-13.]

61. The Showboat Hotel, Casino and Bowling Lanes, 2800 Fremont Street at the Boulder Highway, opened in September 1954.
62. Nevadans for Human Rights [NHR] was born from the Human Rights Committee of the Clark County chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union [ACLU]. NHR, founded by Lamont Downs [aka Alan Shawn] and Steve Hinkson, held its first meeting on January 13, 1979. Downs and Hinkson had been publishing the *Vegas Gay Times* since June 1978, and at the first NHR meeting in 1979, the organization adopted the *Vegas Gay Times* as its official newsletter. NHR was a political organization whose activities included—but were not limited to—support for gay rights in Nevada. From 1979 until 1981, NHR was active in sponsoring seminars, lectures, media interviews, and speakers as well as publishing the *Vegas Gay Times*. The organization was ahead of its time, however, and participation declined. NHR was dormant by June 1981 when the last issue of the *Vegas Gay Times* was published.

By January 1983, NHR had revived with a membership over 100. The first issue of their newsletter, renamed the *Nevada Gay Times*, appeared in January 1983. For several months NHR was the premier organization for gay Las Vegas and spawned several significant groups: a Political Awareness Committee, a Religious Outreach group, and a Women's Affairs Committee [which evolved into a group known as Women's Concerns]. NHR provided a popular social opportunity for the gay community and held monthly potluck suppers and meetings. Through the spring and summer of 1983, though, many felt that NHR had become more of a social organization than a politically active one. And like many organizations, Nevadans for Human Rights was riven with interior political fights and personality clashes. This infighting reached a critical point in September 1983 when Dennis McBride, the new editor of the *Nevada Gay Times*, published an editorial condemning NHR for having drifted from its original purpose, and for the bitter fighting among the board members, officers, and membership. A letter to the editor in the same issue brought up a number of scandals which had plagued the organization, but which had gone unaddressed. At an angry and rancorous meeting on September 10, 1983, Dennis McBride was removed as editor of the magazine. A schism ensued in which much of the membership left the organization. Several members of the NHR Political Action Committee,

together with several former officers [including founder Lamont Downs] split from NHR to form the more politically-active Community Action Committee with its own publication [*Desert Gaze*, November 1983 - November 1984].

Interest in Nevadans for Human Rights declined and it never again enjoyed the popularity it had before September 1983. The October 1985 issue of the *Nevada Gay Times* was compiled by Rob Schlegel whose printing and publishing firm, Newspaper Service Associates, had taken over production of the magazine with the July 1985 issue. With the November 1985 issue Schlegel changed the name of the magazine to the *Bohemian Bugle* and severed its association with NHR. NHR's last announced activity was a Christmas 1985 potluck hosted jointly with the University of Nevada, Las Vegas Gay Academic Union and the Metropolitan Community Church. The January 1986 issue of the *Bohemian Bugle* lists a post office box for NHR, after which the organization evidently ceased to exist.

63. First proposed by a member of the MCC congregation in December 1982, *Voices* was founded in February 1983 by Ron Guthrie. The choral group was open to men and women, gay or straight, and they performed their first concert at the March 12, 1983 general membership meeting of Nevadans for Human Rights. The *Gay Men's Chorus* which exists today, founded in 1993, has limited its membership to gay men.
64. This was the Century Village Apartments club house at 4801 Spencer Street.
65. Dr. Melvin Pohl is a prominent member of Las Vegas's gay community. He wrote a medical advice column for the *Nevada Gay Times* and, with his lover, Deniston Kay [d. January 2, 1995; see note 67], hosted successful political fund-raisers. Pohl and Kay published two books together: *The Caregiver's Journey: When You Love Someone With AIDS* [City Center, Minnesota: Hazelden 1990], and *Staying Sane: Caring for Someone With Chronic Illness* [Deerfield Beach, Florida: Health Communications, Inc., 1993]. Socially, they were a vibrant and popular couple, lending their support to many gay causes and events. [For reviews of these two books, see the (*Las Vegas*) *Bugle*, August/September 1993, p. 35.]
66. A Pap test is given to determine the presence of incipient cervical cancer.
67. Deniston Kay [February 14, 1947 - January 2, 1995] came to Las Vegas in 1979 with his lover, Dr. Mel Pohl [see note 65]. Educated as a librarian and in public administration, Kay served as an administrator for the Clark County Library District, and as director of the Clark County Law Library. In April 1993, Las Vegas Mayor Jan Jones appointed Kay a Clark County Library Board Trustee, which made him the county's highest-appointed, openly gay official. It was Kay who posted the bond money for the *Vegas Gay Times* in 1979-80. Kay died of AIDS-related illness. [See the "Library Board Trustee Deniston Kay Dies at 47," by Bob Shemelgian in the *Las Vegas Sun*, January 5, 1995, p. 2B; and "Farewell to Denny Kay," by Earl Dax in the *Las Vegas Bugle*, January 1995, p. 47.]

68. Begun as the NHR Women's Affairs Committee, this group evolved into the semi-autonomous Women's Concerns Group [see note 62].
69. This is the Wise Women group which, at the time of this interview, meets at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center on Wednesday afternoons.
70. One of the state's most popular gay social activities, the Reno Gay Rodeo was first held during the summer of 1976.
71. Gelo's Lounge [4633 Paradise Road] started life as Kelly's Tavern, a straight cocktail lounge, in 1957. It went through a number of name changes during the next twenty years: the Valley Inn [1959]; the Rubaiyat Cocktail Lounge [1960]; Lido's Lounge [1962]; Gelo's Lido Lounge [about 1963]; Gelo's Lido Lounge and Chinese Restaurant [about 1968-69]. Gelo's became a gay bar in about October 1980 [the October 1983 *Nevada Gay Times* Calendar notes a party to celebrate the bar's 3rd anniversary]. Jerry, the bar's owner, in 1982 bought the Cantonese restaurant attached to Gelo's and expanded the bar. In 1989, Marlon Tenana bought the Gelo's shopping center and renovated it. Gelo's became Angles, and a women's bar attached to the back of Angles was known as Lace. Angles and Lace opened in June 1989, was briefly known as Angles-n-Curves, but at the time of this interview is once more called Angles-n-Lace.
72. At the time Ellen describes, *The Best Little Whore House in Texas* was being performed at the Union Plaza Hotel.
73. Apple Valley, California is located just west of Victorville.
74. The Imperial Palace Hotel and Casino [3535 South Las Vegas Boulevard] opened in 1976 on the site of the old Flamingo Capri Hotel and Casino. In 1988 the Nevada Gaming Control Board discovered that Imperial Palace owner Ralph Engelstad, a collector of Nazi memorabilia, had twice thrown birthday parties for Adolph Hitler in the hotel, complete with a cake and Nazi posters decorating the walls. His employees' attendance was compulsory. After being publicly vilified in the international media, Engelstad paid a \$1.5 million fine to the gaming control board and promised not to display his Nazi memorabilia or host Hitler birthday parties anymore.
75. Radio Station KENO.
76. Jeff Kutash's *Splash* production, which opened in the Riviera Hotel's Versailles Theater in September 1985, is still running at the time of this interview.
77. Ron Lawrence, founder of the Community Counseling Center, is one of the great figures of Las Vegas's gay community. He and his lover, Ernie Egyed, arrived in Las Vegas from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1979. From that time, Lawrence has been involved in some degree with the founding and

development of most of Las Vegas's gay organizations and institutions. [See the oral history interview with Ron Lawrence.]

78. The MGM Grand Hotel and Theme Park [3799 South Las Vegas Boulevard] opened in December 1993 twenty years after its predecessor, the MGM Grand Hotel and Casino [Bally's Hotel and Casino at the time of this interview], held its grand opening in December 1973.
79. Employment contracts at the MGM carry a non-discrimination clause based on sexual orientation, as well as domestic partner benefits.
80. The Santa Fe Hotel and Casino [4949 North Rancho Drive] opened on February 14, 1991. Like the MGM, the Santa Fe forbids employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and provides domestic partner benefits.
81. The earthquake to which Ellen refers hit Pasadena, California on December 3, 1988. Epicentered directly under the Rose Bowl Stadium, the quake registered 5 on the Richter scale and was followed by several violent aftershocks.
82. North Town is the local colloquial term for North Las Vegas.
83. A bolus is a very large hypodermic.
84. The Bridger Building stands on the corner of 3rd Street and Bridger Avenue in downtown Las Vegas and was home to Clark County's administrative offices, including the personnel office. In 1995 a new county administrative building opened in the former Union Pacific Railroad yards several blocks west.
85. The tests Ellen describes are knowledge and aptitude tests given to prospective county employees for various positions on the county payroll.
86. Willis Business College, which no longer exists, was in Santa Monica, California.
87. Ketoacidosis is a fatal condition whereby the blood is excessively acidic and is combined with an accumulation of ketone bodies.
88. 1610 was a small gay bar at 1610 East Charleston Boulevard which closed in about 1983.
89. Kenny Kerr's *Boylesque* first opened at the Silver Slipper Casino in 1977. His show has become a Las Vegas institution, moving several times to other hotels in the last 19 years. In November 1995, the show settled into the Debbie Reynolds Hotel at 305 Convention Center Drive.
90. The Backstreet Bar and Grill [5012 South Arville Road] opened in November 1987.

91. The Goodtimes Lounge in Liberace Plaza [see note 91] was a straight bar until June 10, 1987 when it opened under gay management. The estate of Lee Liberace, through his sister-in-law, Dora Liberace, at that time filed a lawsuit to have Goodtimes shut down because it was an "undesirable element" in Liberace Plaza. Goodtimes won the lawsuit and held its grand opening celebration on October 24, 1987.
92. Liberace Plaza, so named for the Liberace Museum and Foundation located there, is at 1775 E. Tropicana Avenue.
93. See note 34.
94. The Gay and Lesbian Community Center [see note 58].
95. See note 69.
96. Allan Pinkerton was a renowned detective who founded the Pinkerton National Detective Agency in the mid-19th century, the first private detective agency in the United States. The agency became internationally famous and still exists today as Pinkerton Security and Investigation Services.
97. Located at 2500 East Second Street, the Reno Hilton was first the Reno MGM Grand Hotel and Casino, and then Bally's Grand Hotel and Casino.
98. The Spring Mountain Ranch, 25 miles west of Las Vegas in the Spring Mountain Range, was established in the 1830s as a campsite on the northern route of the Old Spanish Trail. The site was named for famed livestock rustler and mountain man, "Old Bill" Williams, who stopped here in 1840 to rest and water a herd of horses he had rustled from a number of southern California missions in 1840. By 1869 the area was noted as the "Old Bill" Williams Ranch. Unknown farmers tilled the ranch briefly in 1860-61, and then abandoned it. James Wilson filed a claim on the land in 1876, and called it the Sandstone Ranch. His two adopted half-Indian sons, Jim Wilson, Jr. and Tweed Wilson, worked the land until they lost title to it in 1929. The ranch was privately owned for the next 45 years: Hollywood furrier Hampton George owned it from 1929 till 1944; Chester Lauck [Lum of the famous *Lum and Abner* radio program, who renamed the ranch the Bar Nothing], 1944-55; Vera Krupp, divorced wife of the German arms manufacturer, 1955-67; Howard Hughes, 1967-72; and William Murphy and Fletcher Jones [father-in-law of Las Vegas Mayor Jan Laverty Jones], 1972-74 when they sold it to the Nevada State Parks System. Today, the park and ranch buildings are open to the public and are the site of outdoor theater performances and concerts.
99. *The Incredibly True Adventures of 2 Girls in Love* [Fine Line Features, 1995] is a light comedy about an interracial lesbian love affair between two high school seniors. The film was popular and well-received. An invitation-only special

screening was held at United Artists' Paradise theaters in Las Vegas on July 19, 1995, then opened for the general public on July 21.

100. Vicious Rumors [6370 Windy Street] opened on December 25, 1994, and held its grand opening on New Year's Eve. A gay bar, restaurant, and nightclub, it closed in November 1995.
101. Flex Lounge and its adjacent Cinnfully Delicious Restaurant opened at 4347 West Charleston Boulevard on November 15, 1995.
102. Owned by the Boyd Group, the California Hotel, Casino, and RV Park opened at 12 Ogden Avenue in 1975.
103. *Femme* [or *fem*] is a gay man or lesbian who is feminine in appearance, speech, and/or manner.
104. See note 13.
105. Ocean Park Pier was an amusement pier on the coast west of Los Angeles between the Santa Monica Pier and Lick Pier. The Aragon Ballroom stood on Ocean Park Pier, which Ellen notes on page 8 was a favorite place to dance with her husband, Fred Roan.
106. Founded by Ron Lawrence, the Community Counseling Center opened its doors on April 1, 1990. This organization, the Gay and Lesbian Community Center, and the Metropolitan Community Church together are the foundation of the Las Vegas gay community.
107. This is the Walker River Indian Reservation located on the north shore of Walker Lake, Nevada along U.S. Highway 95. Schurz is a small town on the reservation.
108. At the time of this interview the Transgender Support Group is meeting at the Gay and Lesbian Community Center on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month.
109. These three women's groups are *Lesbian Focus* [Monday nights], the *Lesbian Discussion Group* [Friday nights], and the *Wise Women* [Wednesday afternoons].
110. See note 58.
111. This is the Rev. B. J. "Beau" McDaniels of the Metropolitan Community Church of Las Vegas.
112. See note 63.
113. The Charleston Heights Library and Arts Center opened at 800 Brush Street in June 1979. This library was replaced by the new West Charleston branch

of the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District which opened at 6301 West Charleston Boulevard on January 18, 1993.

114. See note 63.

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