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# An Interview with Joan Massagli

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

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The Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project

Oral History Research Center at UNLV

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University of Nevada Las Vegas

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## List of Transcripts

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The transcript received minimal editing that includes the elimination of fragments, false starts, and repetitions in order to enhance the reader's understanding of the material. All measures have been taken to preserve the style and language of the narrator. In several cases, photographic sources (housed separately) accompany the collection as slides or black and white photographs.

The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project. Additional transcripts may be found under that series title.

Claytee D. White, Project Director  
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## Preface

Joan Massagli spent her childhood in the Tacoma, Washington area, singing three-part harmony—a member of a musically talented family that included five children and an aunt and uncle who raised all the kids to enjoy music. By high school in the early 1950s, she and her two older sisters were regulars on a local TV show.

In 1956, the Sawyer Sisters act was formed and they were soon obtaining regular gigs in Las Vegas. Their popularity continued from 1957 to 1964 and they played many of the major hotels, usually as a warm up act for headliners that includes a list of names such as Roy Clark, Louis Prima, Shecky Greene, and Della Reece. At first the Sawyer Sisters included older sister Nanette Susan and Joan. When Nanette quit to raise her family, youngest sister Kate stepped into what was called a “lively and lovely” trio.

Joan met her future husband and musician Mark Tully Massagli, while performing in the early 1960s. Caring for ailing parents while working mostly in Las Vegas, the couple made Vegas home. Even after the Sawyer Sisters name faded from the Strip’s marquees, Las Vegas remained home to the Massagli’s, who raised their children here.

Today they live in the Blue Diamond Village area and recall the changes that have occurred on the Las Vegas Strip—especially from an entertainer’s point of view.



Joan Sawyer Massagli and husband Mark Tully Massagli (1963)

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Mark Tully Massagli 8/19/10  
Signature of Narrator Date

Claytee D. White 8/19/2010  
Signature of Interviewer Date



**This is Claytee White. It is August 19th, 2010. I am on the Blue Diamond Highway in the home of -- could you give me your name and could you spell it for me?**

Joan Massagli, M-A-S-S-A-G-L-I.

**Thank you so much, Joan.**

We're here with Joan's husband, as well. So could you give me your name and spell it, as well?

*Mark Tully Massagli. M-A-R-K, T-U-L-L-Y, M-A-S-S-A-G-L-I.*

**Thank you so very much. Mark is doing the paperwork. So I'm going to start by talking to Joan.**

**Joan, tell me about your early life. And you can include where you grew up and how many kids in the family and what your parents did for a living.**

Susan and Nannette and I were born in Burlington, Washington, and Katie was born in Tacoma. That was in the 30s and 40s. Okay.

**And your brother was born where?**

Also in Burlington.

**So of the three who's oldest?**

Well, actually when we all started singing together it was five, five of us. Nannette was the oldest. Then it was Susan, then me, then Benny and Katie.

**Okay, good.**

However, when I was four and Benny was three, we came to live with Nadia and Grant Sauer. But my brother's and my maiden name is Norris. My father was Nadia's brother. So they were our aunt and uncle. And so anyway, Nadia -- of course, I call them mom and dad, but I'll say Nadia -- she was very musical and played the piano and banjo and guitar. Growing up in the -- it was upper Washington, the state of Washington. She and her brothers performed all over.

**So what kinds of places did they perform?**

It was more up there at that time big dairy farms. So it would be the local, oh, what, the Elks Club and those kinds of things and parties.

Anyway, so she just lined us all up and she taught us harmony. So then we started performing as little kids PTAs and like I say the Elks Club and more. We actually would perform for the governor at his little special dinner things. So that's how we kind of grew up singing. It

was Nannette, Susan and me, Joan. We sang three-part harmony. And then our brother would come in with the bass. And little Katie sang by herself.

**Do you remember some of the first songs that you learned?**

You know, oh, back then there was a song called "Hoop-De-Doo." All those old songs back then. And then my mother loved the spirituals and she taught us all of those. All the kind of little popular songs that were then.

**That's good. So the entire family was musical.**

Uh-huh. And Grant was thrilled with it. He just loved it. He was a very quiet, wonderful man. He just always had a smile on his face. He would listen to us sing. It was nice. And he'd go along with us. It was all of us. So let's see.

**So it sounds like the family was really close.**

Yes, very. And then while Joan and Nannette and Susan -- me speaking as Joan -- we were in high school and we were regulars on a local TV show. Oh, and when we were little, we were regulars on a little radio show, too. While in high school Benny decided that he was going to be a science teacher. So he had had enough of all these girls. And then he went on to become a science teacher. Then he joined the Peace Corps and was sent to Quito, Ecuador for four years. And then after that he and his -- he married Fran Sorg, also a teacher. Then they taught in the Bahamas on Marsh Harbour, Abaco there. And then he was killed there. Oh, that was very hard.

**Oh, it had to be.**

So then also while we were on this little TV show -- and we did it out of Seattle -- it also went into Oregon and this man heard us. So he contacted mother. Nadia, I'm calling mother, even though she's my aunt. He wanted us to come to Oregon and record a song that he had written for a song contest for WSM Network in Nashville, Tennessee. So we did. And the song didn't win, but we got a telegram from Jim Denny, who was the head of WSM, and wanted us to come back and record. So we did. And we recorded for Dot Records. That was in 1955. The song was "I'm Going To Go Home To Mama." And then in 1956 on Dot we recorded "How 'Bout It?" And under the name The Sunbeams. They gave us the name The Sunbeams. And then after returning --

**And this was the three of you?**

Uh-huh. And so then after returning to Tacoma Nannette decided she had had enough. Well, she had fallen in love and wanted to get married and settle down. And she did. And she and her husband, Larry Martin, had two adorable children, Brenda and Michael. And so then Katie, little Katie took Nannette's place. By then Susan and I had graduated from high school.

**And did you attend high school in Tacoma?**

Uh-huh. And we entered the University of Puget Sound while it was still the College of Puget Sound.

**Before you start there, what was high school like with all of the entertaining that you were doing?**

I'll tell you it was kind of crazy because we had moved into this area of Tacoma called Lakewood. It was a very, very upscale -- I mean very upscale area. I mean these were doctors, lawyers, architects, one was Griffin Oil, all of that, those kinds. And they lived in big estates that would take you forever to drive through the driveway to get to the home. It was on the American Lake. And these were the children that attended this school, plus children from Fort Lewis.

**Okay. What are those children like?**

So their parents were career army. Our father was a custom cabinetmaker. And he had his big shop there. He had a shop in Lakewood. And he would just build these beautiful custom -- whatever they wanted. So it was a big grocery store that was empty. And so he took the bottom part and the upstairs was this big area where we lived. He fixed that so beautiful, a big beautiful deck and winding stairs and everything. And we kids were just used to -- you know, we loved outdoors. And we landscaped the whole place and planted trees. It was on some acreage. And it was quite unusual.

**So you really did most of that, didn't you?**

Yeah, I did. And so it was a really unusual way of living for that area. So then the first day -- it was Clover Park High School. We go to Clover Park High School and we wanted to get into the music choir, whatever it was, so Nannette, Susan and me. The teacher or the lady from the office sent us. She said just go on in and he'll stop the class and tell him that you want to be in here. So we walked in. All these students looked up. The teacher looked up and he said, yes? So we said why we were there. And he said, well, you have to audition; do you want to sing? So we just

started in on this big old song that we performed everywhere like we were performing, not thinking anything of it, and three-part harmony. And I remember the look on these kids' faces were like, oh, my, oh, where did they come from?

**In a good way?**

Well, we were so different.

**Okay. I see.**

These children had I'm sure traveled many times to Europe. I mean it was just their different way of living -- servants, maids, all of this kind of thing and the way they dressed, everything that way. So we became sort of like these kids that they wanted to know, like who are you? And it ended up they were very nice and we made a lot of nice friends. But they still weren't -- you know, even to this day I think a little bit -- we were so different in our lifestyle and our -- we did not have the time like they did to -- they belonged to the ski clubs and they would go to all those kinds of places. There were five children and we didn't do that. And we spent our time performing. And so we were just different. But they were very -- it was very nice.

**So when it came to things like high school proms and all of that, were you a part of that?**

Yes. We went to the proms. I mean really with nice boys and had a regular high school good time.

**Good. How many years difference are between Nannette, Susan and you?**

Okay. Let's see. Susan and I are a month apart because we're cousins.

**Oh, that's right. Good.**

And Nannette was four years older.

**So when you arrived at the high school, Nannette was almost ready to leave.**

Yes. And Katie is six years younger.

**Wonderful. We've talked about The Sunbeams and you've already recorded in Nashville.**

**How long were you in the Washington area, the Tacoma area before leaving there?**

Oh, gosh.

**You started to tell me about going to college.**

Yes. So what we would do is -- okay. This is how that worked. So then while -- oh, during that time while we were at college, we would be working in nightclubs in Seattle by then and



Susan, Nannette, Benny, Joan, and Katie (foreground).

Vancouver and all of that. So Mom and we girls and our dad, we decided we really needed to be more professional. So they said, well, we'll go to California. See, during that time that we were at college and high school, there was a talent scout there, Roy Gordon, that we worked for. We were his regulars on Temple Theatre every week. We opened, closed it, and did a specialty number. And so he had a daughter, Peggy Gordon, that lived in California and she was a professional dancer in movies and on TV, the Colgate Comedy Hour, Red Skelton, all those shows. She got us together with the right contacts. And so we worked up an act with -- do you remember the Mickey Mouse Club with Annette Funicello?

**Yes.**

Well, it was their choreographer and their musical arranger that worked with us. So we broke in our new act as the Sawyer Sisters at Izzy's on the Sunset Strip.

**And this is about which year that the Sawyer Sisters get started?**

Oh, that's so hard to remember.

*Around '56.*

**Fifty-six about?**

*I think so. Yes.*

Maybe '56.

**Because you came to Nevada the next year; is that about right?**

Well, I guess. Yes, you're right. And so then after that we got an agent. Then he put us with Dynasty Records. Well, then I wrote the song. I wrote the A side and it was called "Here I Am." It started really doing well. We'd go to the different TV shows and lip-sync to our record while the teenagers danced. Then also he booked us into our first job in Nevada in Reno at the Holiday Hotel and Casino. That was a brand-new hotel and casino in Reno. So we're working there. Our record starts climbing. And then we hadn't seen him for a while or heard from him.

**Who?**

The agent. So here he comes driving up in a brand-new beautiful white Cadillac. Well, guess who paid for it? Yes, indeed. He was not a nice man. He had also forged something on our contract. So mother ripped it up and that was the end of the record, all of it. That was it

**So when you left Washington to go to California and then to Reno, did your mother travel**

**with you?**

Yes.

**Wonderful.**

And I forgot to say when Susan was going to the University of Puget Sound, she met Ken Marsolais and they fell in love. He was a musical student. And they fell in love and got married and then a year later they had Melody. So when we went to -- little Melody. So when we went to California it was we girls, Melody and mother.

**Okay. And Susan's husband?**

No. He didn't go. By then things were a little shaky. So it wasn't long that they were divorced, but parted as friends and are still friends to this day.

**That's wonderful.**

Now, let's see. Okay. So then we got a new agent and we got steady work and we joined the Harry Ranch Review. We worked on new arrangements and the experience was really a good one.

**So the Harry Ranch Review was where?**

The Golden Nugget.

**Okay. Golden Nugget in --**

Here.

**In Las Vegas?**

Uh-huh.

**So was that your first entree into Las Vegas?**

Yes.

*No, no, no.*

It wasn't?

*You guys worked the old Frontier.*

Oh, that's right. Gosh, I completely forgot that.

**So after the Sawyer Sisters were formed in '56, you started coming to Las Vegas pretty regularly?**

*Fifty-seven, yes. And then that's when they worked at the Frontier.*

Yeah. At the Last Frontier. Oh, gosh, I completely forgot. Then we worked the New Frontier.

And then we worked the Golden Nugget with Harry Ranch. And then when we were with Harry Ranch, Susan and Max Daffner, Harry's drummer, fell in love and were later married.

**Okay. So once this started happening in Las Vegas, did you move here?**

Yes.

**So what part of the city did you live?**

Oh, we just lived in apartments because we were on the road. So we'd stay in motels and that kind of thing. So we were just all over the place.

**So you didn't move into a house permanently at that point?**

No, because like I say we were on the Nevada circuit, you know, Lake Tahoe, Reno, all over the place. Okay. So now, after Harry Ranch we're on our own again. So Max joined the Sawyer Sisters. Then Chris Pan, a pianist and arranger, also joined us. And Chris worked out a new show for us. It was very successful and we worked the Las Vegas Strip at the Flamingo, Tropicana, Riviera, Dunes, and a lot of them are imploded. Like I say I had forgotten about the Last Frontier.

**So tell me what that show was like, the show that was on the Strip.**

Oh, gosh, how do I say? Our music was very -- Mark, can you help me out there?

*Sure. They did standards. They did gospel. They did Broadway tunes. They did country. And then they had a special that they would do at the end of the show called the "Hoot-n-Annie." And they had a gutbucket, which is a big washtub with a spring and a post on it, and played bass.*

*Katie played that. Susan played banjo. Joan played guitar. And they would do a lot of rip-roaring old gospel stuff and country stuff and bring the house down.*

**So what kinds of outfits did they wear?**

They were beautiful. Oh, I was going to say the "Hoot-n-Annie" thing, that was very popular then with the Kingston Trio. So that was the rage.

Well, there was a lady here that made the costumes for the DeCastro Sisters. I mean theirs were beautiful. So we found her. I'm thinking about Madonna with her bustier. Of course, ours were more --

**Subdued? Not quite as revealing?**

Yes. But she built the bustier and then she would take this sequined material and put that on top of all of that and cover it with a scoop neck and the straps. And then she would bring it down tight



around our waists and bring it down further. Then she would take this fine, fine tulle. I mean it was just so fine. And she would fix it so it started at the waist very narrow -- and then how she managed -- and then it would flare out.

**So it would flare out from there?**

Yes, way out and a lot under it. So our waists looked like they were 19 inches. So then she would take a belt and cover that with the sequins. So you put on the bustier. Then you'd put on the skirt. And then the belt also had the sequins like the top. So then you'd hook the belt around it. So it just looked like one piece. And she did it in different beautiful colors.

I remember we opened at the Riviera at Christmas. And she had done snow white skirts and red sequined tops. All the female acts at that time -- there was a shoe store called QualiCraft or Leeds and they'd all go in there. You could get your three-inch heels. They were peau de soie or some kind of linen. You'd have them dyed to match anything. And so they dyed our shoes red. And then we had, of course, the crystal earrings. I would walk out from one side of the stage, Katie would walk out from the other, and Susan at the Riviera you could walk out from the middle. So the music would start and then we had our opening thing that we did. And I remember we just came out. And the whole audience just went, aaah. And it was those beautiful costumes. So that's what we wore.

**Oh, that's wonderful. What happened to those costumes?**

You know, they get beat up so fast by traveling and packing and wearing and cleaning. They're just gone.

**So when you're traveling like that do you have people traveling with you, helpers or people to take care of the costumes? Anybody like that traveling with you?**

No. We did it. We did it. And mother traveled with us until dad retired. And then dad was with us, too.

**Oh, wonderful.**

And mother would take care of Melody while we were working. Then we all played with Melody.

**Tell me about the makeup.**

Oh, this was what was funny. Our first job in Nevada. Okay. And the entertainment director -- we did our first show -- and he says, girls, I want to talk to you. So we went in his office. We

went into his office and he said, you know, this is big time. He says I want to see thick mascara, eyeliner that isn't just barely drawn on, I want to see rhinestone earrings and heavier makeup and darker lipstick. And he said this is show business. You know, because we just kind of came out of the university in Tacoma. So we all looked at each other and said, oh, okay. So after that we just kind of --

**Did you get someone to teach you how to do it?**

No. We just looked at the other acts and did it.

**So you did your own?**

Uh-huh, yes.

**Great.**

So we just thought, well, hey, that's the way it is. It was kind of fun. And let's see. So now we are in Nevada. Let me see how I --

**What are some of your favorite places to entertain during that period, late 50s, early 60s?**

**Which hotel was your favorite?**

Oh. Well, we loved our first job in Reno because this hotel/casino was right on the edge of the Truckee River. And sometimes we would double back during the day. Our shoes, you know, those high heels, you wore them on the stage. You wore them when you got off stage, other high heels, because you were supposed to look a certain way. And we would change our clothes. And then we would go out the back of the hotel and we'd walk down to the river. And we would take our shoes off and sit there with our feet in the cold water.

**That must have felt so good.**

We would say, oh, this is so nice. Nobody could see us. That was nice. And it was just Reno.

We loved Reno. It was small then.

**And it still is.**

Yes.

**Some of the dancers and showgirls who worked at casinos in the line there, after their shows they would go out onto the casino floor and they would have drinks with the guests. Were you expected to do any of that?**

No. No, not at all. Another thing, we would finish our show and we would just go back to the

motel because we wanted to get our sleep because during the day we would go back to the hotel and rehearse with Chris, our piano player and arranger, and break in new things, new songs. But they never expected us to do that.

**So did you become the songwriter for the group?**

I only wrote that one for our record. Chris, he did some fantastic arrangements and some of them were quite you would say jazz like, and a lot of that, and medleys of different songs together, show songs, you know, the Broadways, those. How would you say? I don't want to say difficult because then audience does not want to --

**Yes. But sophisticated.**

Yes. More like that, yes. So that's how we did it.

So anyway, we were booked into the Golden Nugget. Mark was working there, my husband now, with the Hank Penny and Sue Thompson Show. And they were headlining. His stage name was Mark Tully. The dressing rooms were upstairs. So I was heading upstairs to the dressing room and there was a platform there. And then you went around the corner and the stairs started again. I got almost to the platform and he was coming down the stairs. And I looked up and it was Mark. And he goes, hi. And I went, oh, hi. I was just like, oh my. He was in his tuxedo, as they say his gig suit, heading to the stage. So anyway, we kind of hit it off.

But, you know, we would see each other maybe in Reno. There was the Riverside Hotel and the Mapes. And they were across the street from each other. So they'd be booked there and we'd be booked at one. And we'd kind of say, hi, how are you. And then maybe Lake Tahoe, you know, they'd be in one, we'd be in one place. Over the years we just kind of really liked each other. So he eventually asked me to marry him.

I was just telling --

**You missed the good part.**

*I missed the best part.*

And I want you to know -- oh, and Roy Clark was with his band there for a while. And Roy Clark said -- now, Mark, I can say it -- he said, before there was a Tom Jones, there was a Mark Tully.

**Wow.**

Oh, yes.



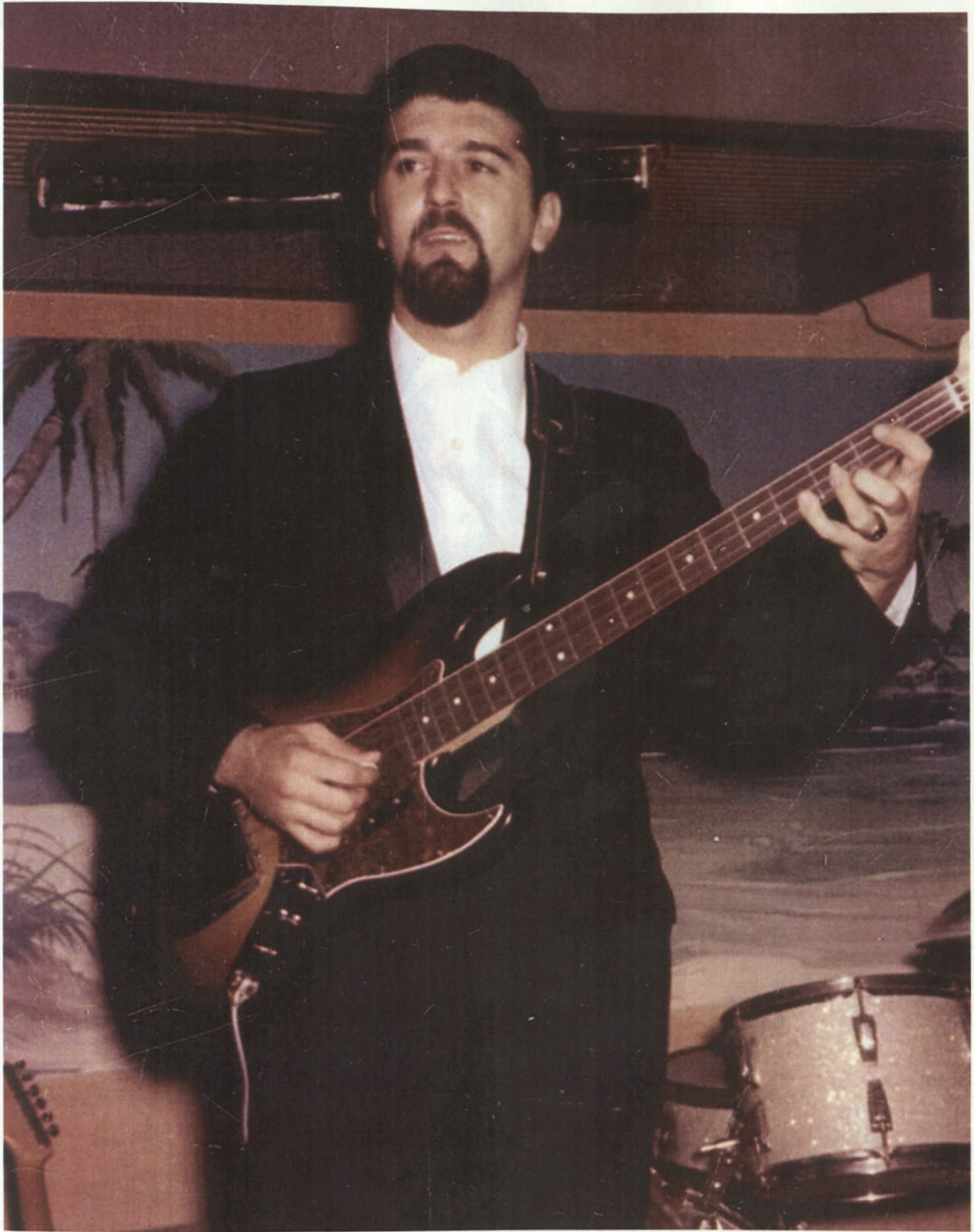
Louis Prima Band recording at Prima's studio at Stairway to the Stars. Prima (foreground) wearing hat. Musicians, left to right: Joey Preston (drums), Sam Melchionne (conductor), Mark Tully Massagli (electric bass), Bob Rozario (keyboard), Roland Di Iorio (upright bass). Other musicians unidentified.



1959 photo of Hank Penny and Sue Thompson Show: ( left to right) Hank Penny, Stan Harris, Glenn Blair, Sue Thompson, Frank Maio, Curly Chalker, Mark Tully Massagli and Roy Clark.



El Cortez—1964: Ron Ogden (left), Dennis Kelly, Gregg Blando (seated) and Mark Tully Massagli.



Mark Tully Massagli (circa 1960s) playing his electric bass.

**Fantastic. So were you a singer or did you play an instrument?**

*Both.*

So then we -- okay. We married and we had two sons, Mark the Third and Michael. Katie married a pit boss and had Joe and Danny. And then later Katie got a divorce and married a fireman, Ed Render, and had little Eddie Junior.

But like I say we each had a long career. Our mainstay really was the Riviera. And we would come in for how many weeks, Mark? And by that time Mark had joined our group.

*This was six weeks at a time.*

And then they'd keep us for nine. So that was really nice. And then, one time our contract was over and the entertainment director said, girls -- now, this was when the Beatles had come in and become popular -- girls, the next time you come here we want you in hot pants.

**Oh, wow.**

And that look. And we looked at each other and I knew that was it. So we went back to the dressing room. We just kind of looked at each other and said, you know what, it's time to quit.

**So which year was that?**

Ooh, you have to wait until Mark comes back.

**Okay. So things changed that drastically.**

That drastically.

**Okay. Were the Sawyer Sisters the headliners on most of your shows?**

No, we weren't. We were second and sometimes headlined.

**So you were the opening act for others?**

Yes.

**So give me some of the people that you performed with?**

Oh, okay. Shecky Greene at the Riviera. He would come off the stage and we would go on. But the ceiling, by the time he got finished, was on the floor because in his act he would just get so into his act he'd take the head part off the microphone and he'd start hitting the ceiling with the microphone stand or the pole and just tear it up. So we'd go up there and kick the ceiling bits and pieces out of the way and just continue on.

And then another time at Harrah's -- I think we were in Lake Tahoe -- Jimmy Wakely had



just finished his show. And our piano player, Chris Pan, at times, well, he didn't know when to keep his mouth shut.

**Oh, okay.**

So Jimmy Wakely came off the set and Chris said -- oh, Jimmy had his daughter singing with him. And Chris said, you know, your daughter can't sing and besides that she's ugly. Well, Jimmy Wakely just took his fist and let him have it and knocked him out cold. And we are just coming right up to get on the stage and there's our piano player out cold on the floor. So Mark, my husband Mark, and Susan's husband, Max, they had to find a piano player quick. So they found Elvis Presley's --

Mark, who was it that you found to take the place of Chris Pan when Jimmy Wakely knocked him out?

*Yes. His rhythm guitar player, Charlie Hodge.*

Charlie Hodge, Elvis's rhythm guitar player. Of course, we had our charts that he just could follow.

*But he did more talking than playing our stuff. And you guys sang and we did some tunes.*

Yes. So we got through it.

**So does that mean that you were able to meet Elvis many times?**

No, never did.

**Oh, never met Elvis.**

No, never did.

**So tell me some other people that you performed with. Was it always Shecky Greene?**

Well, when we were at the Flamingo Della Reese was there. Her mother would stay in the dressing room. So we did a couple of little spirituals in our show. And Susan would pick up the banjo and she'd sit on a high stool and she'd start playing the banjo. And it was called "Hear Them Bells." It was just really pretty. I mean it was not slow or anything.

**Right. Upbeat.**

And every time -- I don't know how she knew. But whenever we'd do those two spirituals, she would come out and stand by the side of the stage and listen. And then also at the Riviera it was --

*Ray Anthony.*

Yeah, Ray Anthony. But I mean the one that --

*Lionel Hampton.*

Lionel Hampton. So Lionel asked us, he said, at the end of my show I do "When the Saints Come Marching In," will you girls come up on stage and join us? And then they go marching all through the audience. So that was fun. We did that.

**Wow. So how many years did you perform in Las Vegas?**

Mark, what do you think?

*Fifty-seven to '64.*

**So in '64 is when you ended the act?**

Uh-huh.

**And everybody felt at the same time that it was time?**

Yeah. It was a drastic change. That was over.

**At the time that you were here this city was run by the mob. What was that like? And did you see evidence of that?**

Okay. The night that we girls -- it was our first time at the Riviera. And the Riviera then was a very important hotel.

**Oh, yes.**

And that was really nice to work there. So the opening night -- and our father was in the audience. So after our first show he said, girls, who's hungry? And I said I am. So Susan and Max, they had somebody they had to talk to. And I don't know where Katie went. So my dad and I, went into the coffee shop and we sat down and ordered. And all of a sudden he coughed and he slumped over on me. And the side of his mouth, his face kind of went down. And I looked at him and I knew he had had a stroke. Oh, and the headliner there was Dick Contino in Concert. So I just thought, oh, my gosh. So the young man that cleaned the tables -- I just said my father's just had a stroke. Stay right here with him. I've got to get my sister. So I ran through the casino -- I mean in there where Dick Contino was performing. I just ran right through. I said Susan, come quick, dad, dad, he's had a stroke. And so anyway, she came.

As you call them like we say, the mob boss, he came down. So nice and so helpful. He said, now, you girls -- of course, the ambulance came and everything. He said, now, you girls,

you take a week off and more if you need it. You will not be docked. In other words, you'll be paid. You take care of your family.

Mark, do you remember who it was?

*Charlie Harrison.*

Charlie Harrison.

**So that's an example of why people say it was better when the mob ran it?**

Yes. But that's what he said. In other words, your family is first.

**Mark, do you have any stories that you can tell us that show what the city was like when it was run by the mob?**

*Well, let me see. The old guys -- I prefer to call them the old guys. The old guys knew that they would lose money on food, on entertainment, rooms, and maybe break even on the booze. But if they could get people in their establishments, at the end of the day they were going to make a profit on their gaming. So they thought very vertically across the board.*

*Then when the corporations came in they thought very structurally. Everything had to pay for itself -- food, booze, entertainment, rooms. So under the corporate structure one department didn't have a great concern for the other. We have to survive; that's our goal. Food department has to survive on its own and each one of them had to stand alone. So there was not the broad look about let's all get this going so at the end of the day boss makes money. Our survival is what counts first. Well, that doesn't auger well for the patron. Prices have to go up.*

**In every category.**

*In each of those categories. So on their standalone basis they could show the support for their existence. And the old guys, again, didn't think that way. Let them come in and have a good time. Lose a little here. Lose a little there. If they have a good time, next time they come to town -- they're coming back -- they're going to be gambling at my place.*

**That's right. So did you have any personal experiences with any of the old guys?**

*Well, at the Riviera when I worked with them after we got married the fellows that were running the place then, they were short, little guys. I'm pretty tall. And I had a beard and a goatee. And we had been there I think two nights. And the piano player, Chris, also had a beard. And the boss walked up to -- and I think he had a brother -- walked up and he just pointed up to my beard and*

*to the piano player and he said, that will be gone tomorrow or you will. In other words, shave or you're out of a job.*

**Why?**

*They didn't want that look. It was at a time when Fidel Castro had become pretty well known as a desperate.*

**1959.**

*And this image must have bothered them because I had the beard. In fact, when we got married she had never seen me without it. So that was one of those things. It wasn't, well, you have a two-week notice on your contract or the contract is good for six weeks firm. It was get rid of that or I'm getting rid of you. Getting rid of you meaning letting the group go.*

**Yes, of course.**

*Yes. Not anything more serious.*

**Not out in the desert.**

*Right. But those were really the only experiences that I can recall.*

**So is there anything else that you'd like to add about the show business life before we move on?**

Well, actually, my sisters and I think back and we're just so -- I guess you can use the word grateful or maybe proud or whatever to have been in the middle of it in those times because you would walk into any hotel/casino and it was live music 24 hours a day, live wonderful music. I mean you were just kind of lifted up when you walked in. And then in the showrooms the curtain would be closed and then you would hear the orchestras tuning up. And the excitement would build in the audience. And then the curtain would open and there was this big orchestra and they're all dressed in their tuxedos and the women in their black gowns. And then the lights, stage lights shining and reflecting off the brass. It was just so wonderful. But they don't do that anymore.

But I was going to say that when we girls quit, Mark and Max did continue being musicians for a while. And then Mark eventually became the president of the Las Vegas Musicians Union and later the international president of the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada. And then I graduated from UNLV in 1990 with a bachelor of fine

arts degree. I'm a painter. And then Susan is part owner of a landscape business and winery. And Katie formed a company that provides canvas tarps for semi-trucks. And we're all now grandmothers. And Mark and I are now great-grandparents.

**Oh, that is wonderful.**

So we're very happy and grateful that we got to be there.

**Yes. What is it like now when you go to the Bellagio or the Venetian or Paris? What is it like when you compare it with the old days?**

*We rarely go there. We go only if we have company in town that wants to go somewhere. Then we go.*

**Yes. That's how most of us who live here do it.**

*Yes. And so we don't see much on our own. And then when we were out there we see very little. We don't see the wall-to-wall entertainment that we you used to see that would start at ten o'clock in the morning. And I remember working one shift that we started at two in the morning and worked till eight at the Golden Nugget downtown. Well, that certainly isn't there anymore, not in any great way. There may be an isolated case here or there when they have a late shift somewhere. But the entertainment, that being our interest and our business, has certainly not reached its demise, but is certainly reduced in great measure from what it was before.*

**So how do you feel when you walk into a place now?**

Sad. I do because I look at the people in there and at the young people. They have no idea what Las Vegas was and they're missing out on so much. Everybody's just in a big hurry. I remember the people would be at the slot machines back in those days playing their slots and then the little cocktail waitress bringing them free drinks, rolls of nickels, and everybody happy and everybody friendly -- the waitresses, the cocktail waitresses, the bartenders. It was like a big family. Also when you worked downtown it seemed like everybody knew everybody. I just feel sad for the -- I guess you would call them visitors, customers now. I feel like they're being cheated.

**When you decided that Las Vegas was going to be the place where you spent most of your time, where did you decide to live? Where was your first home?**

Oh, well, Mark as a young single musician, he took care of his parents. His father was very ill. And his mother took care of his father. So Mark as the young musician bought a home.

And you can say.

*Yes. I bought a home here in 1959. My parents were up until that time living in Burbank, California. But then when my dad had a series of strokes and he was really not well, I had them come over here. I got this house. I think I bought it in February '59. So I had the comfort of knowing that they were in a place where they couldn't be hassled or bothered or evicted or any of that. They were in, quote, their own home.*

**So what part of the city?**

*It was 23rd and Bonanza. It was almost at Bonanza and Eastern, almost in that area. And from the back of the house, except for a nursery and a gas station, there was nothing until you got to Sunrise Mountain.*

**Oh, wow.**

*So anyway, yes. I bought that home and on very good terms. Someone made the kind of deal that I could handle. My house was \$104 about month.*

**Wow.**

*So that was '59. But I had come here in '57 and I was in the Army for seven months and released on a dependency because of my father's illness. That was in '58. So after I got out of there, then I rejoined the group that I was with and bought the home.*

**Okay. What happened to your father after the stroke, Joan?**

Well, we found an apartment for them. And then it was kind of difficult because we would work until, say, four in the morning. Katie and I stayed at the apartment, too. Mark and I were not married then. We were engaged. So Susan and Max were married. They had their own apartment. We would all get off work and go straight to that apartment and relieve mom. And we would just stay up so she could get some rest. She would wake up and then we would sleep. It was really, really difficult. And like I say, we were about to be married. With working and about to be married and dad's illness. I was so thin. I broke out in little blisters all over my legs from nerves. But we got through it. Then after that we found them a little home over -- where was that?

*I don't remember what the area was called. But it was at Nellis and Tropicana.*

*Yes. So we painted it and got them in there. So, after Mark and I were married, we were living in*

the house that he had bought his mom and dad because by then his dad had passed away. And his mom was working as a cashier downtown and she needed an apartment close to where she worked. So anyway, my sisters and I would go over there and help our mother with dad. That's how we did it.

**Wonderful. Tell me about the safety of the city, how safe it was during those years.**

*Oh, you could walk anywhere day or night. It used to be said, and I think accurately so, that Las Vegas was one of the safest places on Earth because the security forces equaled the size of the police department. So it was like having two police departments going inside and outside of buildings all day and all night. The old guys wouldn't allow any trouble. There were no gangs because somehow they knew that there were already people here that would take care of that problem if one of them existed because they didn't want to have any bad publicity or fear because they had to depend so much on tourism. The local community couldn't support these establishments.*

*So people had to know that it was safe to come here. They had to make it look like it was fun to come here, not just coming to gamble. You were coming to swim in the sunshine and all of the beautiful pools at all of the hotels and you were going to be here to see the greatest entertainment anywhere. The entertainment -- live entertainment capital of the world. Oh, and by the way, if you want to gamble, you can do that too. But they played that part down because they knew once people got here they would gamble. So the safety was always here.*

*If someone got sick inside a casino, they took care of it right away, as they did with Joan's father. You would never see any trouble. I don't think there was a robbery of a casino until recent years. And by that I say maybe the last five or six years because it just wasn't going to happen before.*

**So did you consider yourself having a career? I know that art is your life. Did you see yourself as a career woman after the Sawyer Sisters?**

I was so happy. When I married him I was one week shy of being 25.

**Oh, wow.**

And I was so happy to be in a home and settled down. And then I really wanted to be a mother. I mean that was a thrill. So I didn't even want anything. I just wanted to be a wife and a mother and

stay in one place.

**That's wonderful. That's a great career.**

At the University of Puget Sound my emphasis was education. I was going to be a teacher. And I went there for five years. Yes, I did. I didn't graduate because we came out here. I was doing my student teaching, everything. So then later on after the boys were older I thought I've just got to go back and finish, but I thought, well, now I'm going to do what I always wanted to do because my aunt back there at that time was a teacher and teacher of the year and she said you are going to be a teacher. I said, oh, okay. Back then you kind of did that.

**You obeyed.**

And so then I finished.

**Good. Good. This is wonderful. Do either of you want to add anything else?**

*No.*

**This is wonderful. I really appreciate your time.**

*Well, thank you.*

**And all of the information. This is great.**

Well, we've just enjoyed you.

**Thank you so much.**

And so glad to meet you.

*You want to see if there are any of these photographs that you would like to use?*

Yes.

*And now how about some fruit?*

**Just a tiny bit would be great.**

Those are all Mark. And it's getting cold in here, isn't it?

*A little bit. We don't want to see her pull her scarf.*

Yes.

I didn't mean to take your hand from your face.

*You were just getting fresh.*

But I did.

**So now I want to see some -- I love this one of Mark. And this is you playing with whom?**



*That's with Hank Penny, the Hank Penny Band.*

**Who is the guy with the hat?**

*That's Hank Penny.*

**Okay. I should have known that he had to be the leader looking like that. Okay. Sawyer Sisters?**

McGuire's.

**Oh, these are the McGuire Sisters.**

*Yeah. I recorded with them.*

No, that's not me.

**I can't wait to find you.**

Oh, no. I put all of him -- those are all him.

**I see.**

Mine are over here.

**So which ones of yours do you like best because we also have an interview with you that we can use some of yours in as well?**

*Okay. My picture with Roy, is that there?*

Oh, wait a minute.

**So if you look through those, tell me which ones you'd like to see especially in your interview, the one you did with Cork.**

**Now, what is the name of this group that you're with?**

*That's Hank Penny, P-E-N-N-Y.*

**And do you remember which year? Approximately.**

*Fifty-nine.*

**And Hank Penny's group was just called Hank Penny?**

*Hank Penny and Sue Thompson.*

**But there's no woman in -- oh, so the woman is the woman in --**

*No. This was a different group. Sue Thompson is -- she's going to have to find that other photo that has Sue in it. It's not here.*

**Now, what is the name of this group?**

*That's the Greg Blando Quartet.*

**Now, when were you with them?**

*That's me with them. And that would have been '64.*

**B-R-A-N-D-O?**

*Blando, B-L-A-N-D-O.*

**And so now, did you play be the group or are you just posing with them?**

*No. I played with that group at the El Cortez.*

*I can't find that other picture, Joan.*

**These are great right here.**

*I'll find it.*

*You want the McGuires, too?*

**And do you know where they are in this picture?**

*The McGuire Sisters? That's the three of them singing there.*

**Right. Do you know where they are?**

*I found it.*

*Where they are?*

**They're in a casino?**

*Oh, no. This was for a commercial, for a Coca-Cola commercial. It was done in the showroom at the Hacienda.*

*Here it is. That's the one.*

**And do you remember the year?**

*That would have been '64. And this is Hank Penny and Sue Thompson. And that's Roy Clark on the far end. He was on Hee Haw. Did you ever see him?*

**Oh, yeah. Roy Clark is a name that I know well. Do you want this photograph or do you want this one?**

*Probably that one. Yeah.*

**So this is Hank Penny and Sue Thompson.**

*Right.*

**And this is about the same year, '59?**

*That would have been '59.*

**Can you identify everybody in the group?**

*Yeah.*

**Oh, wonderful. Could you do that for me?**

*I think they've done it here.*

**Oh, it's on there already.**

*But it's only first names. I'll put the last names.*

**That would be wonderful.**

*Sherry must have done this.*

Look at her beautiful writing.

**Where?**

*That's Sherry.*

**So this is great. So let me see some of yours.**

Oh, okay. See, we have a big scrapbook, but it's in California. So I had these.

**At your sister's?**

Yes. This is so funny. Here's our little record.

**Oh, my goodness, a 45 (rpm).**

We had one record between us, right? We had one record. But we didn't have the sleeve. So this friend just recently presented me with a sleeve.

**He had a sleeve?**

No. He somehow found it through these collectors.

**Oh, yes. Like eBay or something.**

And then there's somebody in Norway that's charging \$98 for that. I think he got that for 26 or 36 from somebody in Wisconsin. How he found that? And do you know I guess these collectors -- the sleeves are worth more than the record.

**Isn't that something?**

So that was when we were just --

**Oh, that's great.**

*This is with Wingy Manone. I don't know if you want that one. I wrote with Wingy Manone in '65.*

**Okay. Wonderful. So when we get ready to scan, I think that's a nice stack.**

*Okay. Here's a recording I did with Louis Prima.*

**Oh, okay. That's a name that everybody knows. I don't know if this is going to scan well or not.**

*I have a smaller one.*

**Oh, let me see.**

*I think this was sent over a computer or something.*

**I don't know if this one will work. It's a good one to have. I don't know if it would work. So are you satisfied with this stack?**

*Oh, yeah, absolutely. Sure.*

**So let me see yours.**

Oh, okay. Here we go.

*Claytee, can I put out some fruit now?*

**Oh, thank you, yes. That would be wonderful.**

That was at the Showboat. And they had just got this new sign. And then the photographers were there and they were going to put it in the paper. And the crane was going to lift it up like we were holding it.

**Oh, that's great.**

So that day they lifted the sign up and put it in place.

**Oh, that's beautiful. I love your dresses.**

Remember in those days?

**Yeah. These are beautiful. I definitely want that one.**

That was of the Showboat.

**Oh, this is beautiful.**

I forgot about the Showboat.

**Oh, isn't that great?**

Yeah.

**So how are you standing? Who is on the left?**

That's Susan.



Joan, Susan and Katie performing at Showboat (1961).



we were married then.

Talk to Donald.

And then to my uncle Paul.

Wow, I'm going to let Mark do this. Mark, do you know which year this was taken at the museum?

That's before we got married. Let's see. This is probably '61 would be my guess.

Okay. We'll let him identify this one, put the name on.

So who is the lady?

That's H. P. Yelton. Her husband was a musician. What it was -- the musicians' wives formed the Musicians' Wives Club. And they thought because musicians had such kind of a low life reputation that they were going to show that -- you know, the club did charity for charities -- and show that the husbands were fathers and teachers and had a normal life and took their kids to school, had other games and whatever they did, just all of that. And so this was -- oh, and we did a number of bombing people --

Oh, my goodness.

**So Susan is on the left.**

Who's in the middle? Oh, Katie.

**Katie's in the middle. And Joan is on the right. And why does Katie have --**

Wait a minute. That's -- okay. I think you have Susan -- oh, no. You put left. Oh, I see. Okay.

**So why does Katie have on a hat?**

Okay. She's doing some -- I don't even know which song it was. And then you'll see it -- I don't know what she was --

**This is at the Showboat. Let me put the Showboat. And do you know which year you were at the Showboat?**

Ooh. Mark will have to -- anything to do with numbers.

**We'll see if Mark remembers when you were at the Showboat.**

Okay. There's the gutbucket and Katie with her hat.

**Okay. Wow. So are these the husbands?**

No. That's Chris Pan, the one that told Jimmy off. And that's Max, Susan's husband. And that's -- we were married then.

**This is beautiful.**

And this is my uncle Pal.

**Wow. I'm going to let Mark do this. Mark, do you know which year this was taken at the Showboat?**

*That's before we got married. Let's see. This is probably '61 would be my guess.*

**Okay. We'll let him identify this one, put the names in.**

**So who is the lady?**

That's S.P. Valdez. Her husband was a musician. What it was -- the musicians' wives formed the Musicians' Wives Club. And they thought because musicians had such kind of a low life reputation that they were going to show that -- you know, the club did charity for charity -- and show that the husbands were fathers and teachers and had a normal life and took their kids to games, basketball games and whatever they did, just all of that. And so this was -- oh, and we did an auction of famous people's --

**Oh, my goodness.**

*We're going to have some fruit.*

Yeah, we're going to have some fruit.

**So now, are these the only two pictures you have with Liza?**

Yeah.

**So which one of the two would you like?**

Which one do you like? You choose.

**Who is this person?**

Irene Alvarez. And she was married to a musician.

**This one is much clearer. Why don't we use this one? We'll let Mark -- wow. Wow. And I only want just a little.**

*No. Come on.*

We'll all have some.

Yes. Joan Rivers.

We'll join you.

**Good.**

Look. Can you imagine?

**Look at Joan River's hair.**

I know. And she was not happy.

**Oh, I can understand.**

Oh, she just --

**Who's the black lady?**

*Micky Thompson.*

And her husband --

*Was a musician, yeah, Fred Thompson. She was a dancer.*

Yeah.

**She was a dancer here in Las Vegas?**

*Yeah. I think she was a dancer over at the Moulin Rouge.*

**So this must have been taken in 1955?**

*No. This is later because Joan and I are married. She had been a dancer.*



**Okay. So now, who is this lady?**

*That's Joan Rivers.*

**Okay. So this one is better. Let's not use this one of her. Let's use this one.**

Okay. That's me on the back.

**Oh, okay. So this is a publicity shot?**

Well, it was -- that was in our scrapbook. I don't know. Oh, those were just some of the shows the musicians' wives did. It was fun. What was so neat was during that time the mob ran the hotels. Okay. The mob loved the musicians. And so the mob -- oh, I didn't get you a thing here.

*I'm fine.*

Are you sure? Oh, okay.

So they knew the musicians and all this kind of thing. And so the musicians' wives would be in and around there. Oh, hello. So the girls went to these guys and said, hey, could you help us? What do you need, darling? Whatever you want, you've got it.

**That is great.**

They provided -- see this table? Loaded with food. And they said to their guys deliver it. And the booze, everything.

**And this was just for a regular meeting?**

This was for the celebrity auction.

No.

*No cookies.*

**I am trying to break the sugar habit. And I'm doing real good.**

That's great.

**Thank you so much.**

I mean it was just whatever they wanted. But that's how they were. I mean for the celebrity auction and everybody came, eating. Phyllis Diller was our auctioneer auctioning off like Andy Williams' tie and things like that, the Soo Sisters' outfit.

**Wonderful. Okay. I have one of everything.**

*You didn't get grapes. You didn't take an apple.*

**Well, I had an apple for breakfast.**

I should do what you're doing.

**Well, I have to. But, see, you're so tiny you don't have to worry about it.**

*How big are you? You're about as big as a minute.*

**No, no, no, no. This is perfect. So we put these over here.**

*Okay. Are these the ones that you want?*

**Yes. So that you can label those for us. Now, these two we already have labeled.**

*Okay. Now you want names and dates?*

**Please. So now, you told me, but I didn't write it down. Which hotel was this that was putting the sign up?**

Showboat.

*Okay. You want this as well?*

**Yes, please. If you can put the Showboat on back of that because I didn't do it.**

**So how big was the Musicians' Wives Club? How many members?**

Oh, gosh. Oh, Mark, you knew so many of them.

*The wives?*

Because you knew the guys.

*There were probably 45.*

**Oh, that's great. I actually did an interview with about nine or ten of the musicians' wives and we videotaped it. But I was running the video camera and I never turned it on. All the lights were on and everything, but I didn't know how to use the camera. So I didn't get it, but I have the audio. The video would have been great because I could identify the faces.**

*Oh, gee.*

I bet that was fun.

*Do you want the names on here?*

**Please.**

Well, you know, how we like I say became in contact with you was through Carrie. So they were all out here for lunch. And it was -- okay. Our friend Roberta Greenwood, who I think should be in your archives. She was Lee Greenwood's second wife. And at that time she was a go-go dancer here. She was a cocktail waitress through the era. Oh, she's great --

*[identifying photos]Excuse me one minute. I wrote down Joan Sawyer Massagli. I shouldn't have done that, or should I? You want Sawyer, that stage name for them?*

**Oh, yes. That's fine. I mean, that's the way people know them.**

After they divorced, she went on to California because they had a daughter together. And she had a son from a previous marriage to a musician. You know, they didn't have any money then. I mean Lee was just like all of us just working job to job. So she became a makeup artist, extra in movies, a cocktail waitress, all of that while she was in California. And she had some friends there. Her good friend is Sherry Sturges, whose husband is Humperdinck's conductor.

*Yes. Jeff Sturges. Roberta is now a mystery author under the name Roberta Taylor.*

Yes. So Sherry was there for Roberta.

**I would love to have a copy of this. This is wonderful. Do you remember which year or the month or the date at all?**

*Well, I might be able to help.*

**Right. Because if we can remember which year "Play Misty for Me" came out --**

Oh, my gosh, that's long ago.

**I think that's wonderful. Your photographs are just beautiful.**

We have this big scrapbook. What we did is stupid. And another thing we didn't do -- we had all these different beautiful costumes. We never took pictures. It's like we didn't care. Isn't that awful?

**Well, it's not that we don't care. I think it's we don't see how that could be valuable in the future.**

I guess. I don't know.

**It never occurs to us, okay, so we should have taken a picture in most of these outfits.**

Yes. And we didn't.

**But you were too busy living and entertaining and helping family and doing everything at that time.**

You're right. Didn't even think.

**Now, who are the albums here?**

*That's Roy Clark.*

Mark is in all of these.

*I'm not on the one with Curly.*

Oh, you're not on the second one there?

*No. That's after he left the band.*

But Curly was with your group.

**But you were with Capitol Records at one time?**

*Roy was.*

**Roy Clark?**

*Right.*

**And this is the Hank Penny Show on stage.**

*Now, that one I think I'm not on that one either.*

No. Sherry -- see the young girl there? Okay. That's Sherry Penny. That's Hank's -- what wife, third?

*Third. His last wife.*

Well, did you ever see the movie "The Thorn Birds?"

**Oh, it was on TV. Yes.**

*TV. It wasn't a movie. Yeah.*

In Australia.

**Yes. He was a priest. Yes.**

Well, the girl who played Megan as a little girl was Hank and Sherry's daughter, Sydney.

**Oh, isn't that something.**

And she was in "Pale Rider" and soap operas and Hallmark Hall of Fame TV shows. She did a movie with Sophia Loren, their little girl.

**That's great. So these are the ones --**

*Yes, I dated those. I think this was '68.*

**The newspaper?**

*Yes.*

So what we did -- you know those big wallpaper books, wallpaper samples and they're this big?

**Yes.**



McNeil Island, Washington – 1963: (back row, left to right) Chris Pan, Max Daffner, Mark Tully Massagli; (seated) Katie Sawyer, Susan Sawyer Daffner, Joan Sawyer Massagli.



McGuire Sisters, Hacienda, Coca Cola commercial (1964).



Above: Joan singing with Wingy Manone (1968).



Left: Joan (left) with Joan Rivers and Mickey Thompson (1968).



Joan (left) with Liza Minelli and Espie Valadez, backstage at Riviera Hotel (1968).



We got one of those and just started pasting stuff, but on both sides.

**Oh. So that's why that picture had both sides.**

On that other one. I don't even know how that got out of there. Anyway, on both sides of the -- which was stupid.

**But you never thought you were going to take it out of the book.**

No. We never just thought of anything, really.

**When you're doing things you don't think of yourself as I'm part of Las Vegas history. You never think of that.**

It was hopefully we've got another gig after this one.

**That's right.**

I'll get a knife. Would you like an apple or anything?

**No. I had an apple this morning, so I'm fine.**

*Claytee, have you ever been to what we call the Media Group? You've been there.*

**Yes.**

*I thought we saw you there.*

**I thought I recognized your face. Yes.**

*It was there at the Las Vegas Golf Club.*

**That's correct.**

Oh, for heaven's sake.

**Yes. Because my hair was black and a lot longer.**

That's right. That's right.

**I decided a couple of months ago that I'm tired of dying it. I'm not going to dye it anymore.**

**I'm allergic to all the chemicals. I can't go into beauty shops because I cannot stand that smell.**

Oh, yes.

**None of that stuff. So I just stopped. I went to a beautician. I said cut my hair; this is it.**

*It looks great.*

You know what? It's beautiful.

*It looks great on you.*

**Thank you.**

And once it's all that beautiful silver, ah. Is it -- I forget his wife.

**Bill Cosby's.**

Yes. That's the one. How beautiful hers is.

**Yes. So this is it.**

Neat.

*Did you come there with Joyce?*

**We work together.**

*That's what I thought.*

That's right.

**She is in Special Collections. She's one of the archivists and I run the Oral History Research Center.**

What a good job.

**Oh. This is the best job in the universe. I love it.**

*Great. That's wonderful.*

Well, I couldn't think of a better person because we just feel so at ease. This is nice.

**This is wonderful. And I love your house. I mean I'm looking out this window. Isn't that amazing?**

*It's such a great view.*

**This is a wonderful view. So from now on -- I go to Blue Diamond --**

Well, you come here.

**-- about once a month. For about eight months out of the year I go to Blue Diamond one time. When we first started the Oral History Research Center, Blue Diamond called and said we want to collect our history; we need help. So I went out and I taught them how to do oral histories. They got a group of people together. Now they have done over 70 interviews -- people who live in Blue Diamond now, people who lived there at one time, people who worked in the mine, just everybody they can find. Last year at our oral history conference they did a performance. So they took their oral histories. They went through and found samples and different people read from the different oral histories. So they did a**

**performance for us. It was wonderful.**

*That's great.*

**So that's why I go out there once a month.**

*Oh, you must be proud of your prodigies.*

**I am so proud of them. I am so proud of them. Yes. They are just great.**

*Well, aren't there a lot of retired UNLV professors and teachers that live in the village?*

**Yes.**

*We get our mail there because we don't get mail delivery here and we didn't want one of those things sticking out on the highway.*

**So you have to drive into Blue Diamond to get it. Oh, great.**

*Yes, I go in three days a week. I go in Monday, Wednesday and Saturday.*

**Oh, that's great.**

*We love that little village.*

**I love the little place myself.**

*And I painted the church sign, Blue Diamond Church.*

**Oh, really?**

*Yes, I did.*

**So that little church as you're entering?**

*Yes.*

**Next time I'll pay more attention. So Pat van Betten -- do you know the van Bettens?**

*I've seen Pat in the post office a couple of times.*

**Well, she is the one who has the meetings at her house of the committee. She's the one who keeps everybody together. She's sort of the president of the Blue Diamond History Committee.**

*That's great.*

*She's a very active woman.*

**Oh, very active.**

*And she's a bright lady. She writes those letters to the editor. Yeah. She's very good. And her daughter is a real estate agent, isn't she?*

**I don't know. The one that I know of lives back east someplace in the south. And she does history and performance and makes films, all of that.**

*Oh, Pat van Betten?*

**But now, there could be another daughter that I don't know anything about.**

*How old a woman is this?*

**Is the daughter?**

*Oh, it's the daughter.*

**No, no, no. Are you talking --**

*I think the mother and daughter are both here.*

**Okay. So that daughter I don't know.**

*And the husband --*

**Herman.**

*Herman.*

**Used to teach at UNLV. But this is a small world, isn't it?**

*It is. It's a small community, too, 300 people. We had company because our convention was here in June. And so friends of ours that are still with my old convention came out and we had them over for dinner. We took them for just a quick little trip over into Red Rock. Went up into the overlook area just for a few minutes. It was later in the afternoon. Then we went over to the village to show them the Blue Diamond Village. And we got there and there must have been 15 burros out there in the park in that little ball field there. He's from New Jersey. And he just loved it. He loved it. He's a real animal lover. He said I can't get over it. They're wild. They're wild, aren't they? I said, yeah, they're wild. So that just turned out perfectly for that day.*

**Isn't that something? Well, I'm going to get back to work. This is wonderful.**

*Well, you know, you come back. Give us a call. Give us a call if you're going to --*

**Now, remember that. Remember that you said that. One of these days I'm going to be out here in Blue Diamond and I'm going to give you a call.**

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Record sleeve of Sawyer Sisters 45-rpm

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