

An Interview with Mozella Sheds Scott

An Oral History Conducted by Claytee D. White

The Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project

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

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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 accompany the individual interviews.

The following interview is part of a series of interviews conducted under the auspices of the Boyer Early Las Vegas Oral History Project.

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Interview with Mozella Sheds Scott

Table of Contents

Mozella talks about growing up in Friars Point, Mississippi, in the care of an aunt and uncle. She was born in 1946, one of six children who were separated after the death of their mother. Attended school through high school in Mississippi. Describes how her uncle supported the family as a sharecropper; chores of children on the farm; crops and other aspects of rural life.	1
Tells of coming to Las Vegas at 18 years old in 1965 to visit. Reluctance of some family members to relocate; cousin and uncle get jobs at Nevada Test Site, other options at Basic Magnesium and Nellis Air Force Base mentioned. Describes summer job at a Las Vegas laundry as a presser and then as a distributor for less than a dollar an hour. Was reluctant to move permanently to Las Vegas.	5
Compares mid-1960s Las Vegas Westside to Mississippi; describes Bonanza Village area; employment of black population, black doctors and business owners; black churches in the area.	10
Talks of relatives who lived in Las Vegas; their jobs including a sister who worked as a hotel maid and as a clerk at Ronzone's clothing store on Fremont Street. Mozella speaks of working in the kitchen at Stardust Hotel in mid-1960s, saving for college; starts at Nevada Southern University (UNLV) and moves out on her own, story about getting apartment with a friend near Sahara Hotel. Job at library and elementary education experience through the university.	14
Sister Beatrice (St. Louis) becomes ill; goes to care for her and also works at a school in St. Louis for over a year; does some tearoom modeling and considers a job with Posner cosmetics. Returns to Las Vegas, marries, begins family which sidelines her education. Works at Centel, phone company. Tells of work discrimination of the era.	21
Recalls her memories of Ruby Duncan from that time; was sent newspaper clippings of march in 1971. Was not personally involved in marches. Talks about 'bonehead English' in college because she was a black from Mississippi. Mentions the changes in black experience on the Strip; clubs on Jackson Street, Westside; enjoyed dancing	25
Husband worked for city when they were first married; Vietnam veteran. He experienced discrimination and cross burning at his job at titanium plant; suffered PTSD and work related discrimination. He started a business; divorced after 14 years; they had two children, both who attended college out of state; her views on value and role of education and reading for young people; her program at CSN to improve reading skills.	31
Recalls children's high schools; challenges of drugs and gangs in neighborhood. Upward Bound program. More about working directory assistance at the Centel (later Sprint) phone company; how callers would inquire how to spell words; describes CALL program made available through public library; created Parent-In-Charge, Word on a Rock initiatives to help parents improve reading skills of their children.	36

Preface

Mozella Sheds Scott was raised in the rural, sharecropper setting of Friars Point, Mississippi. She shares the tale of being a member of a family of cousins and siblings woven together by a caring aunt and uncle after the death of her mother.

In 1965 her visit to Las Vegas began just for a summer with relatives who worked at the Nevada Test Site. Her short-lived summer job as a laundry presser did not excite her to move permanently, but she did like the idea of earning enough money to attend college. Among her jobs was that of a dishwasher in the Stardust Hotel's kitchen where she was encouraged to pursue her dreams by a supervisor named Sonny.

Family illnesses pulled her away from Las Vegas for a short period of time. However, she eventually returned in the early 1970s, married and raised two children. Throughout her life, the importance of a good education has been at her core. This passion is heard in the stories she tells about raising her own children in Las Vegas and about her creation of Parent-In-Charge and Word-on-a-Rock, a program that improves reading skills.

Mozella also talks about the Las Vegas of the mid-1960s when she first arrived and racial prejudices of the times; her career at Centel (Sprint) as a directory assistance operator and observing the deficiencies in reading within the community.

List of Illustrations

Mozella Sheds Scott (2010)

Frontispiece

Appendix

Second Baptist Church – photocopy of church brochure

Second Baptist Church history



Mozella Sheds Scott – 2010

This is Claytee White and I'm with Mozella Scott. It is November 30th, 2010.

So how are you this morning?

I'm fine. Thank you.

And we're in her home here in Las Vegas.

Mozella, could you please spell your first name for the transcriber?

Sure. It is M, as in Mary, O-Z, as in zebra, E-L-L-A.

Thank you. And Scott is S-C-O-T-T?

That's correct. My maiden name is Sheds; so Mozella Sheds Scott.

Right. Okay. Thank you so much.

You're welcome.

Now, Mozella, you grew up in Mississippi. Tell me about that.

That was a good and bad experience, I should say. I was raised by an uncle and aunt with lots of cousins because my mother was deceased when I was three and a half years old. I remember going through all of the changes that happened. There were six siblings with myself. There was five and six with myself and we were divided as children. The middle sister, who was at the time 14, and my brother, who was at the time five, and (me), I was three-and-a-half, were with my aunt and uncle when my mother deceased. My uncle, who was my mother's brother, and his wife took the older daughter, which was my oldest sister. She was married, but her husband was away in the service, armed services. She was only 16 or 17 at the time. The State of Mississippi wouldn't allow her to keep us because she was not at a point where she was old enough to keep the bunch of us. My aunt had promised my mother to raise us if something were to happen to her. There was a disturbance between my uncle and my aunt. So I remember all of that. So that was kind of traumatic in the midst of all of us dividing up. My baby sister was only three months old. Anyway, after that I was raised by my aunt and uncle.

So how many of the brothers and sisters were with you in the home where you were raised?

One brother and one sister.

Okay. So three went one place and three went another place.

That's right.

Was the three-month-old with you?

No. The three-month-old was with my uncle and my oldest sister.

Wow. That must have been difficult.

That was. However, we stayed together—in terms of keeping in touch after all of this happened. We were all in Mississippi, except my oldest sister, who moved away to Illinois with her husband's family. We heard from her and she'd visit. My uncle and my aunt and uncle became pretty close. Therefore, we were pretty close.

Okay, good. You can go ahead and give me the names of the ones that you lived with so it's easier for us to follow.

Oh, sure. The names of my aunt and uncle who raised me were George and Ada Davis. They had five children of their own, who all were older. The oldest daughter, who was Rosie Davis, was married. The other four—George Junior, Gloria, Willie and Brevell—were at home with my aunt and uncle, George and Ada. Soon, they left, after I came. So two of them left. By the time I was about eight or nine, the third child left. Then it was just the youngest child, Brevell. My sister also left when I was six. So we were there. She had a son, my sister, who my aunt kept as well. Her name was Beatrice. And the son stayed with us. His name was Freddie, my oldest nephew, who was like my little brother.

So when people would leave Mississippi to go—I'm assuming that these relatives, your first cousins and your brothers and sisters, went away to the north?

. In fact, they didn't initially all move here. The siblings moved to Chicago. My sister who I lived with, Beatrice, she moved to the north. Then she moved to St. Louis where my oldest sister lived. Then my cousins—we were raised as sisters and brothers, actually—well, after marriage, they went to Michigan. Brevell, Gloria, Rosie and Willie. They only stayed there briefly, four or five years. Then they moved here where Brevell's husband had family.

Oh, Brevell is a female. How do you spell Brevell?

B, as in boy, R-E-V, as in Victor, E-L-L. [Brevell D. Baxter]

Okay.

Her husband, Johnny—his name was Johnny Clemons—had family here. He had first cousins who already lived here. So they ventured to Las Vegas.

Okay. So they were the first in the family to venture to Las Vegas. Now, what part of the

state of Mississippi? Are you northern Mississippi?

Northern.

Northern. Did a lot of black people from that area go north or did they go west?

A lot of people in that area went north, as I can remember, even before I left.

Okay. So you went to school in Mississippi.

I went from elementary to high school. I completed high school in Mississippi.

Were the schools integrated at that time?

No, they were not integrated. In fact, I went to an all-black school from elementary. We'd pass by the elementary schools in the area, the white schools and the black school, well, when I went to school. My siblings went to school in a church actually, because there weren't schools available in the surrounding area in Friars Point, out in the countryside. But they had it separated and the classrooms were separated. By the time I started to school my sister, Brevell, or cousin, was at the school as well. She was in what they called middle school. It was then junior high school by the time I got in school because she's eight years older than me.

So did the classes in the church, did they have regular teachers hired by the state just like at regular school?

At that point, , teachers were hired by the state and they had their degrees—but the schools had first—that was way back when, though. That was before I started to school that they had it in the church. I found out how they went to school. Rosie and the older siblings went to school in the church. However, by the time I had started to school and my sister Brevell before me, we went to Friars Point Elementary School. It had the old buildings that were part of the white school that they had built. But the whites had gone to newer schools and we had the dilapidated school.

And this was in the early fifties?

That's correct.

That you started first grade. Okay.

Right. Actually back then, I didn't start first grade. It was called pre-primer. Pre-primer was similar to kindergarten—or pre-kindergarten, actually—

So you were how old?

Six years old, because of my birth date falling in November. In some cases they were very strict

on rules. But this one rule was followed more so than in the northern cities and northern areas and integrated schools. So I had to actually go to pre-kindergarten, which was like pre-pre-primer, then to pre-primer. I was almost seven years old when I was in first grade.

But that's the way I was. In North Carolina where I grew up there was no kindergarten at that time. I started school at almost seven because my birthday was in November and I had to wait till the next year.

That's right.

Because I would have been five. So I had to wait until I was almost seven.

That's right.

So, yes, the same rule.

Yes. That rule came about years before, of course. So I felt kind of—the other kids whose birthdays were different than mine were already in school, so to speak. And I grew fast, too. It seems that I was taller than the other little girls in my class. But anyway, I was shy as a kid, very shy, and didn't talk very much the first few years of school. Then I started to blossom as I started going into late elementary, like third, fourth grade. By the time I was in junior high or middle school I had friends and I loved school.

Oh, fantastic. So what did your uncle do for a living to raise all those kids?

Sharecroppers, my uncle and my aunt, because nobody stayed home; everybody worked.

So tell me what kind of work the kids did during the summer, you included.

Babysat and chopped cotton, at least I tried, but I wasn't a good candidate they said for chopping. We did everything, farming included gardening. During the summer time of year, we picked the beans and the peas from the garden. During the fall time, even before school would start, we did our fruits, you know, and berries. We would go and pull berries off the levy because we lived close to the levy and went to the trees to do peaches and pears, all kinds of fruits. We canned. My uncle did lots of fishing. So we had to clean fish. Even as little kids, we had to know how to do that, too.

So you learned how to clean fish. Was there a way to preserve the fish?

No. With salt or whatever. What happened is that when they'd all go fishing the fish would be shared with the people in the community, which was in the country. We had our own cows and

chickens. We had a farm, a farm on a farm.

Pigs.

That's right, pigs, too.

So how close were your neighbors?

Close as in proximity of homes? They were not very close. In fact, we were on acreage. When I say acreage, it wasn't ours, of course, but it was the land we lived on. They were a half-mile away, three-fourths mile away down in the fields, down the road. There were some neighbors who were pretty close because one could see the houses together and all. We'd walk back and forth to one another's homes.

So what were the crops other than cotton?

There were beans. What were those beans?

Soybeans?

Soybeans, yes. Soybeans and corn.

No tobacco?

No, we didn't have tobacco, at least not that I remember. No, we didn't have tobacco.

You would remember tobacco. It's unforgettable.

Oh. No, we didn't have tobacco. It was corn, gardening, you know, all kinds of fruits, vegetables and stuff, and soybeans and cotton. That's what I can remember.

Wonderful. So how old were you when you decided to leave home and come to Las Vegas that first summer when you came for the summer [1966]?

I was 18 and part of my family was here. My aunt and uncle were still in Mississippi because their child wanted them to come out here. That first summer my uncle was still there. My cousin, his son Willie, lived here with his family and worked at the [Nevada] Test Site. Brevell and her family—well, she worked at stores, department stores. Her husband Johnny was in construction. My aunt didn't really want to move here, because by that time we had our own house in Friars Point. We had bought a home before Brevell and I left. She didn't want to leave, but her husband came out to Las Vegas. They talked him into coming out to work at the Test Site. He was in his early sixties. He was actually getting old enough to draw Social Security, but he couldn't draw it because the points hadn't been—

Right. He had not paid enough into the system.

Right. In Mississippi, they weren't turning that information in. See, they were as dependents.

I grew up as a sharecropper.

Okay, good. So you understand.

Yes.

All right. So in that point, that's why his children wanted him to come here and work for a little while so that he could add his points. So he worked for the Test Site.

So what did Willie and your uncle tell you about the Test Site?

Oh, the Test Site was a good job to have -- that's the way they understood it -- and that it was an energy-building place where lots of people could get jobs and make money. They didn't understand the detriment of the work there and what it was doing with our citizens around the area. They didn't understand all of it. They just knew that it meant work for the people around the area. And at that point, too, even though Boulder Dam was built, there was still work going on in the area. But, of course, a lot of us, meaning blacks, weren't --

Well, Boulder Dam was back in the 1930s.

Yes, it was back in the Thirties. However, there was work around the area, like Nellis Air Force Base.

Oh, I see what you mean.

The titanium plant, the place out in Henderson.

Basic Magnesium and those factories around.

Right. Surrounding areas. There was work in all places. However, there was certain work that we as blacks couldn't get. Of course, you know how that went.

You're right; Boulder Dam was already built, but there was still construction in all areas of town. In order for blacks to get work, they had to be union and pay into the union. Then, of course, they weren't guaranteed to get work after paying. They were laborers in that field.

So the work at the Test Site, did they ever describe what they were doing; the actual work that black men did out there?

When you say describe, they just told us that they did hauling and lifting, you know, buckets, digging, using back hoes.

Did they ever refer to them as miners?

No.

Like someone working in a mine?

No. I didn't ever hear them say that.

You never heard that term?

No, never heard it. But that's part of what they were doing.

Did they ever describe what happened on a day that a bomb was tested?

They would just say all the dust and all of the agonizing scents and stuff that they would inhale. Of course, it became apparent—my brother Willie was there when—well, wait a minute—in the seventies. Well, when he died—he did die, of course. I'm getting ahead of myself.

No, no, no. You can go ahead.

But he didn't want to say the illness he had; that that affected him. He didn't. And when anybody would bring that up, he says, no, that wasn't the illness. Because he had respiratory problems. It started off with that and a heart condition.

Was he just so grateful for the good job?

Yes. That was the basis of it all; he just wanted to work and be able to support his family.

So when you came out were your relatives, the male relatives, still working at the Test Site?

Yes.

So it was 1965. Was that the first summer that you spent here?

1965 was the first summer. Now, when I first came, my cousin or brother Willie wasn't actually at the Test Site. He worked in construction here in town first and then he was hired at the Test Site. Gloria's husband also was hired at the Test Site. His name was Myles. He was killed a few years later in a car accident.

Was it a car accident going back and forth to the Test Site?

No. It was going—you know, come to think of it, it was. He wasn't going to work at the time he was killed, but I think they were driving on those roads or something. I don't know. But I know he was killed, coming from the Test Site..

Did you ever heard of that road that was the old Highway 95, did you ever hear it called "The Widow Maker"?

Never. I didn't. [My cousins corrected me: Yes, I did. Gloria's husband was killed on that road coming from work at the Test site.]

Okay. So 1965, you're fresh out of high school.

No. I wasn't out of high school.

Ah. You were a junior.

Yes, I was a junior in high school. The reason I came out, because my aunt says—I was going to graduate the next year. So I needed, you know, things like—

Your ring.

--my ring, my cap and gown. I had to pay for that. My picture. You know how all those things go.

That's right.

Actually, I was torn because I wanted to stay in Mississippi and go to school, but my family was kind of pushing me to come here. My family in St. Louis wanted me to come there. So here my aunt told me—and still, in a sense, I was kind of under their wings—she kept saying, well, you go out and help take care of the kids while—Brevell, at that time, was divorcing her husband. Well, they had split up. My aunt said, you can work and then you can go to school there later.

Oh. They wanted you to finish high school here?

No, not my aunt. This was after high school. In '65, I wanted to come out and work. She said you can go out there; you don't really have to stay. My aunt came and she wanted me to come out here then, but I stayed home and finished school. In '65 I was out here on a visit, to work actually.

So now, '65 you came out to work for the summer?

Right. I came to work for the summer.

And you were going to be a senior the next year?

The next year, right. I worked at the laundry where my sister/cousin Rosie worked. She was the oldest. She had ventured out here from St. Louis because she lived in St. Louis longer. Then she came here. Well, she worked for the laundry and she told me she could help me get something at the laundry.

Was it a laundry mat or a laundry?

It was a laundry. Okay. Yes, it was a laundry because that's where the clothes were done for the

hotels.

All the things they needed for the hotel—uniforms, sheets, all that stuff. Working in the laundry, there were different levels of washing, the pressing and folding were done.

So what did you do?

They hired me on to do the pressing with those big machines, the pressing. I had burns everywhere because I couldn't—they taught us how, but you know how that goes, accidents. When my cousin Rosie went on vacation while I was here in the summer -- she had a week off -- so she talked the manager into allowing me -- she was a distributor, which meant she distributed the clothes to the other workers. She talked him into allowing me to help distribute, and that's what I did, well, when she went on a week's vacation. I was here about six weeks. And that wasn't so bad because I didn't get burned every day.

Do you remember how much you earned working in the laundry?

It was—oh, it wasn't even -- it was about a dollar, 95 cents or something.

An hour?

An hour, yes.

But now, is that more than you would have made an hour working in the fields in the south?

Oh, sure. That was much more because that was, what, three dollars a day, you know. That was three dollars a day even back then.

Which was three dollars a day?

Working in the fields. Working in the fields, well, when I did, yeah.

After that summer did you want to move to Las Vegas?

I still had mixed emotions because I thought this was a desert and it was too hot and only at night was it pretty because the lights were on the Strip. But in the areas where my family lived, mostly west Las Vegas area, it was desolate. The homes were being built, but they were little homes, somewhat smaller than the homes in the south.

So describe the Westside to me. What did it look like to you, somebody coming from Mississippi?

Somebody coming from Mississippi, the roads were rock. There was some pavement in some areas. Some homes had, you know, the newer homes had nice yards.

So which streets had some of the nicer homes over on the Westside?

Let's see. Van Buren. My cousin lived on Elliott. So Elliott did. It was a newer development. And Englestad.

Okay, Englestad. I know where that is.

Where Ms. Toland is now, I visited up in there, but you couldn't stay up in there.

So this would be Bonanza Village?

Bonanza Village, yeah.

So it was all white at the time?

At the time, yes. There might have been a couple of blacks. I don't know.

So why did you visit --

Excuse me. (blowing nose)

Oh, sure.

I'm getting a tissue. It's an emotional time talking about that.

So why did you visit in Bonanza Village?

We were in school. When I say in school, there were some people who we knew from the workplace who lived in there I think. Yes. From the year before I had met a couple of people at the laundry. One lady, Dorothy, she knew one of the employees who lived in the area who was white. We didn't go in the house, but she showed me where the employee lived.

I see. So you were just driving through that area.

Yes. I was with someone who drove through the area.

So now, this is 1966 after you moved here when you were driving through the area, is that correct?

Right. That was in 1966.

So Bonanza Village, did it have a wall around it at that time?

At that time it didn't. It was open.

How did you distinguish it from the other part of the neighborhood?

It was different. People had already informed people when they'd come this is the MLK, which was then Highland, was on the other side of Highland were only white residents. It was like a ranch area—so nobody had cars over there. Everybody had cars, so to speak, but it was set aside.

It was like segregated in a sense. It was actually redlining. You've heard of redlining going on. Division was subtle. So I knew from others telling me when I came.

So you were telling me that some of the nicer houses were on Englestad, Van Buren, Elliott.

Uh-huh. In that area. Just in that area. I'm talking about where we as blacks lived.

Right. I know. So I'm not talking about on the other side of Martin Luther King.

Right.

Other side of Highland. I'm talking about the black community.

Right.

So did they still have any tents left on that Westside in the black community?

At that time I didn't—no, I don't remember tents.

So everybody lived in houses.

They lived in houses or trailers.

Okay. Still had trailers.

Uh-huh.

So does that mean that did some people not have indoor plumbing?

There were areas in the Westside where northern Nevada (sic) is breaking off now, there were areas where people had -- they said that there wasn't plumbing. They were areas for horses, little farming areas that they didn't have inside plumbing.

So from Bonanza to Lake Mead, let's say --

Uh-huh. Did I know of anybody? No, I didn't know of anybody.

So everybody had indoor plumbing in the mid-1960s?

Yes.

Okay. Where did most of the women work at that time when you got here?

When I came they either worked at the laundry or hotels or -- that was about it to my knowledge. There were a few at the Air Force base and at the hospitals.

So black women were doing what kind of work on the Strip?

Domestic, of course. They were maids. There were a few bell -- no. They were mostly men, the bellmen. They were probably mostly maids.

So the black men, some of them were becoming bellmen at that time?

Yes. There and at the airport as well. There were a couple at the airport.

Okay. And then black men worked at the Test Site.

Right.

And like you said, they were still working out at the area where BMI was.

That's right.

Who were some of the leaders in the community that you got to know about in the mid sixties?

In the mid-60s, there were—now I need to think really hard. Well, Joe Neal didn't start until later. I took classes with him. There was Woodrow Wilson. There was Bob Bailey. There were -- because they were owning their own little businesses then. There were a few doctors. Tate. I can't think of the names.

Dr. West?

Dr. West, .

Dr. McMillan?

McMillan, yes, Dr. James McMillan. He and his son and daughter now, we knew one another. Ruben Bullock, night club owner. Sarann Knight, club owner. Elbert Lyles, business owner, bail bondsman.

Oh, good.

Yeah. So then there were -- oh, Nichols. These weren't people who were politicians, all of them, but some of them were.

It doesn't make any difference.

Of course, the reverends. There were Reverend Wilson. Reverend Coleman. He was from our church, he was a leader.

Which church is yours?

The Second Baptist Church.

Okay. So Reverend [Vassar] Coleman was there at the time?

Yes.

Do you remember the other ministers at Second Baptist after Reverend Coleman?

Oh, yes. Reverend Jefferson was a pastor just briefly, for a couple of years. And then Reverend

Davis came. He was there 25 years—no—twenty-eight years. Reverend Coleman was there for 25 years.

And then there were only—oh, and Reverend Johnson. Reverend Johnson was before D. Edward Chaney, who we have now. He was an interim pastor.

Okay. How much of the history of Second Baptist did you learn as a new member?

Once I got there I learned quite a bit because my best girlfriend is Reverend Coleman's niece.

So tell me about that history that you were taught.

I was taught that it started in a tent. Well, first it started in a home; the history of it started in a home. And some of the members got together and started the history of Second Baptist in their homes, started meeting. There were about, what, ten, 12 members at a point. Then it started to catch on. And they bought a tent for something like \$35. Then they were instrumental in getting more done. They were interested in centralized cooling, you know. And so then they started to raise money; this is after the years went by and they started raising monies and they started to build a chapel, you know, the first church.

Reverend Coleman gave us that part of the history just briefly. And there were members who had been there from way back when, even from the first -- well, of course, some of them, they mostly died out. But they would always tell how it got started, and every year they would do a history.

Do they still do that?

Oh, yes.

Do you know what part of the year that they do that history?

Oh. Usually during church anniversary time. And that's in March of each year. But anytime there are new members they pass out the history of the church. In fact, I'm in the new membership class as an instructor now. And so we go over the history of the church.

I'm going to ask you to pull a few photographs together when we get ready to put this interview together. I'd like to have a few photographs in it. I would also love a copy of the history of Second Baptist to go into your interview.

Okay, sure.

I would love that.

Sure.

Is Second Baptist considered the oldest Baptist church in the area?

It is, yes. It's considered the first black Baptist church in Las Vegas.

Okay. And Zion was considered the first church, is that correct, the first black church?

Methodist? Which Mount Zion?

What is the name of it? It's right there on -- what is the street? H Street becomes? Zion Methodist.

Oh, Zion Methodist. Okay.

Is that considered the oldest black church in Las Vegas?

It is I think. It is. Thinking back on their history, it is.

Yeah. They started downtown.

Yes.

So that was your church life. Tell me about beginning to work—1966, you're right out of high school.

Uh-huh. Yes.

Are you living with an aunt and uncle when you first come here?

When I first came here to live in 1966 I lived with Brevell.

Okay. So your sister.

Right, because my aunt instructed me that when I got here to stay with her so that I could help keep her; she had four children. The oldest was Cathy, who is since deceased. But she was, what, seven or eight at the time, because she stayed with us, too. When Brevell first left, she stayed with myself and my aunt.

In Mississippi?

Right, because my aunt wouldn't allow her to take her, being the first baby—I mean the second baby because my nephew was the first. That's why I said I did the baby-sitting. So they were like my little kids.

So Brevell, what kind of work did she do when she first came to Las Vegas?

She worked at the hotel. She tried to work as a maid, but she said that didn't work for her because she wasn't fast enough or whatever. But she did work at the department store downtown at --

that's when most of the stores were downtown on Fremont.

Ronzone's?

Ronzone's. It used to be—well, before it was Dillard's, it was Ronzone's I think. She worked at Ronzone's at the time.

So what kind of work in the sixties --

A salesperson.

Oh, she was a salesperson?

Uh-huh. Yes and in the stockroom.

Okay. So what kind of work did you get? You were working with the children, but did you work outside the house also?

Yes. I worked at the hotel. I worked at the Stardust hotel, in fact.

So tell me about the Stardust.

Well, when I first got here. I wanted to save for school to complete—for college. So the first year I got here, which was 1966, the summer months, I tried to get back -- no, I didn't want to go back to the laundry. I wanted to do something different. I was given a job at the Stardust hotel. And the guy who hired me there, he and his wife knew my sister Brevell, knew her, because she had worked -- well, she knew them I guess from the community and she knew some other people because she worked at the hospital also.

Wow. Do you remember the person's name at the Stardust when you got the job, the person who helped you get the job?

Let's see. His name was Finis, Finis Bowie.

Let me see how his name was spelled. Finis, F-I-N-I-S, I think. And Bowie, B-O-W-I-E. But, yes, he knew a few people. In fact, he didn't live very far from where she lived. They lived in that community over there off Fredrick. Fredrick was another nice neighborhood. Fredrick, right off D Street, in that area.

Okay. So off of D Street. So Fredrick must be -- on the other side of Lake Mead?

It's south of Lake Mead, Fredrick, in that little neighborhood.

So it's still on the Westside?

Right.

Okay. I'll have to find Fredrick.

It was on Fredrick and -- was it Freeman? It's Fredrick. It is Fredrick. And the Childs and all of them lived over there. Those were important people, too, when I found out later.

But anyway, he lived in that area and he was over the kitchen, the kitchen at the Stardust. So that's where I started work for the summer. Then in that kitchen, I met a few people who I got to know and I've known them for years. My little boss at that time, they called him Sonny, but he's now Thomas and Jones Mortuary. At that time he was my boss. His name is Sandy Thomas, but we called him Sonny. That's where he worked. He was over the runners and the dishwashers. I was a dishwasher. It was much better than getting burned in the laundry.

I can imagine. So did you actually wash all the dishes by hand?

No, we didn't wash by hand. These were big machines that we had. They put dishes in the machine. Men would set the dishes in the machine after they had been cleaned by the guys who were in the kitchen. They would rinse them and then we would run them through those sterilizer machines and take them out at the end and stack them the way they were supposed to be stacked. The kitchen was right across the way. We could see the cooks.

So were black men in the kitchen?

Yes, there were black men, mostly. There were a couple of white guys and different nationalities, too, back there. But they had different shifts.

Were the main chefs black or white?

They were white, of course. Well, our boss over the dishes and getting all the material in the kitchen was black.

Sonny?

Sonny; right. He was over the runners, the guys who would go to certain places and get the material they needed and come back. He was real fast.

Anyway, we would have fun back there in the kitchen. We would talk. I talked about school all the time. Sonny used to say that I was going to be a professor because I couldn't wait to get back to school. And I told him why I was saving my monies. And the second semester, sure enough, I started to school. That was in the summer months and up until December.

At UNLV?

At UNLV. At that time it was called NSU, Nevada Southern University. We called it NSU. So I got to get ready for school. And Sonny said, well, you know we're going to pray and wish you good luck and all this stuff. If you need to ever come back—well, I needed to go, but I had saved up, what, \$250. That was a lot of money.

Wow. Isn't that great?

Yes. Well, I was still with my sister at the time. Of course, she kind of didn't want me there anymore, in a sense, you know, because I was a young adult and she thought that I was I guess maybe too fast. I don't know what she thought, but she kind of just wanted her own place to herself. I understood that. Well, I understood later, because I couldn't wait to get my own place, too.

Right.

So I did get my own place in the midst, but that was after I had started to school. I had started to school and it seems that she was -- I shouldn't say that, but it was the truth.

She was jealous.

She was jealous at that point because she kind of didn't want me to go to school, but she wanted to push me out when I started because she said that I wasn't really helping at the house. Well, I was helping take care of her kids and I was trying to work, too, right?

It's okay.

But that was the point. So I did get out. I went to school. I was taking classes, you know, the primary classes. I had saved my money, right? And I went to school. I had put some monies for the next semester in my locker while I was in morning dance. I was taking -- excuse me. It was stolen. My money was stolen. Oh. So I called back to the house to see if she would look in my purses to make sure -- I could not believe it. I knew I had it, right? And my money was gone and I had to pay for my next semester. But I was able to pay part of the monies and still go to school the second semester.

Oh, that's wonderful.

So I was there for about a year taking the classes and all. That's when I met my girlfriend Trudi (Gertrude Woods Toston). I met a few other people—got to know Jean Childs, Connie Nichols Barker, Jerry Lockhart, Wanda Scales-Scott, Raydean Jacobs, Rose Carroll, Don Lyons, Jerry

Chandler, Alexander Turner, Pam Mason, Ann Jackson...all black students at NSU.

So before you finish that, when you were working at the Stardust, did you become a member of the union?

No. I wasn't there long enough.

So were most of the people there, like Sonny and the rest of them, were they part of the culinary union?

Yes. They had culinary and also -- they were part of the culinary. They were people who were -- what was the other part of the union called? God, I can't think now. But those were the ones over the clerical and the administrative part of the workers. Teamsters.

Teamsters, right. Good, good. You know. Yeah, they were a part. There were some blacks in the Teamsters, right, in the administrative part who they had started to hire in other areas. That's what I said I wasn't going to be there if I had to keep being a dishwasher. I felt that I was maintaining myself. I had my high school education. I was going to college. I'm not staying in a kitchen. I had higher dreams for myself.

After all, I can say to my aunt—my uncle never wanted to hear about education and what was going on, but my aunt encouraged it. Neither one of them read very well. My uncle did some, but my aunt didn't. She said, baby -- and I'd be in the fields telling her what I was going to do with my education. And she said that's right, baby, because I want you to be this and that. Everything they had to do, I had to write for them. I was there the longest, right?

Anyway, so those dreams were still there. And from high school most of my friends had gone to college (at HBUC).

In Mississippi?

Or they had gone other places like Tennessee, Fisk, and Chicago, like even the guy I married had gone away and gone to school until he was drafted. He stopped to work and he was drafted. That's another thing. So I kind of felt left out. But I had to stop school to work.

So after that one year being at Nevada Southern, you then -- okay. So you had an apartment.

Yes, I had to get --

Were you able to maintain the apartment?

Yes, I was, well, almost six months. I was still going to school part time, as much as I could. I was in the semester. Then my girlfriend Trudi -- I had a one-bedroom apartment. I was on what they called—not city, what do they call it? Over there off -- wait a minute. Right off Sahara and across from -- I've forgotten that name. The Naked City. They gave it that name years later.

Oh, where the Stratosphere is.

Right. Well, further down because it was across from the—I said the Stardust; not the Stardust, the Sahara hotel. It was across from Sahara. Well, years later they gave it that name.

But it was clean and it was hard to get an apartment, blacks especially, in some areas of the city. In fact, my girlfriend and I—when I was getting the apartment by myself, I got the one-bedroom. She and I called around first. We got smart and called around to see what was there, you know, vacancies. We'd look in the paper and if there was a one bedroom or whatever. When we got there to do everything and look at the apartment, then the guy told us that it had been taken, the apartment. Well, of course, there was a few times we did that.

So I wanted to stay in that area so much because it was close to the bus line, it was close to work, it was close to where I was going to go to school and all, at UNLV, even though it didn't seem close. But it was close to us. And I didn't have a car.

Anyway, when they told us when we got there—we said we're going to fix them. So we had the same guy in that area -- we had our girlfriend Jean, Jean Childs, who was over the—later on she had a position here. Her speech was more as a Caucasian speaks.

Right. That's the family that lived over on Fredrick.

Right. So she was one of our friends. So we were telling her what happened. I said, Jean, I need you to call, and then when we go, we want you to go with us, right? And so sure enough—the same guy wasn't there. There was a lady there. She said, oh yes, sure we have vacancies and one bedroom. What was it, \$250 a month or something? No. \$150, one-fifty a month. So she says, well, sure. She said, in fact, we have two. One was upstairs and one was downstairs and they were open. So we went, she and I and Trudi. There were three of us who went. When we got there, the lady looked surprised. She says, well, you're only renting a one-bedroom; are all you guys going to stay in that one bedroom? She says, no, just me. And she said who are you? She said Mozella Sheds, she called herself. But anyway, I ended up signing it. The lady wasn't really

paying any attention. So she said I thought you were Mozella Sheds. She said, yes, she's Mozella Sheds. She said, but she's going to get it and at times she might stay here, too, but I won't be here all the time and we're going to have twin beds. She said, well, what's your name? She said my name is Star Jones. Well, her middle name was Star, but her last name was—so that's how I got my first apartment.

After all that concluded that I went to school, at the end of that year I wasn't able to go back without working more. I was at the university, but I was working for the—I got a class around my schedule. Well, around my schedule I got to work for the library.

On campus?

On campus. Because they were recruiting young people who were -- I was in elementary education. Instead of CEP -- CEP started later in the year.

What is that?

It's CEP. That was people from the Westside communities who --

Part of the Economic Development?

Right, the programs over there. I didn't really know how to get into the program and all, even though I could have, even though I was past a certain age, because they were helping young people fresh out of high school and all that. But anyway, I could have gotten into some programs I found out later, but at that point I was a working young person.

And CEP?

Yes.

That was the name of it? Okay, good.

No. No. It was C, C-E-P.

So it was Comprehensive Employment Program or something like that.

Yes. Right.

Okay, good.

So I was able to work at the library and work on campus. There were a few of us. There were a few of our friends who stayed there, kept those jobs there. But my being in the elementary education program, they were able to send me out to do some pre-teaching, to work with—student teaching. And I chose a job not far from the university, which was Holy Family. It was a Catholic

school. They started with preschool, pre-kindergarten and first grade. So I worked in that capacity because it was near the campus.

So was that a job through the university?

Yes, through the university. They would help us find jobs, through the university in your field of concentration. At the time, my chosen field was elementary education.

I see.

So I chose that job. It was a blessing because when I did get there—it wasn't paying very much. In fact, it didn't pay as much as a hotel, but it was something and I was able to keep those classes. You know, I stayed in school another semester. Then I realized it wasn't enough. So I started full-time working. At that point my sister became ill in St. Louis. At the time she had five boys.

Which sister was this?

This is my maternal sister, the one who left when I was a little girl to get married.

Is this Gloria?

No, no. This was Beatrice, my maternal sister. So she became ill. My oldest sister lived there, too. Well, she had two kids. My older sister was Estella and the middle sister was Beatrice. These were my siblings, my real siblings.

The older siblings, yes.

She became ill. I had stayed in touch with them. In fact, I felt guilty because they wanted me to come there after high school.

That's right.

So I was kind of broken up from that. But anyway, she became ill. So I left. At the same time I was involved -- my husband, who was my fiancé, so to speak. But he wasn't living here. He went to Vietnam at the time I was in college. When he got out of Vietnam, he went back to Chicago. He traveled back and forth here for about a year or so before he moved here.

Anyway, I went there in '71? 1971 I went to St. Louis, and stayed with my sister Beatrice for a year because she had a really bad pregnancy. She wasn't supposed to have any more kids, so she lost the baby at nine months. They had to kill the baby to save her, you know, one of those things. But anyway, I stayed there and took care of her and worked, because I worked in St. Louis at another school on Grand. She had gotten better and I left there about a year and a half later.

But I was torn again. I didn't really want to leave. I was offered a contract. You remember the cosmetic company called Posner's?

Oh, . P-O-S-N-E-R?

. Well, anyway, while I was there and working at Tiny Tot, that school in St. Louis, I went to school for modeling and finishing as well. So that was on Grand. Well, that's when I was offered the contract. My sisters, both of them there, tried to get me to stay there to complete that so I could travel with Posner's. Also I modeled while I was there. So that was kind of fun. Then I found out I had to do bathing suits, and I was kind of shy in that field. We did what they called tearoom modeling.

Oh, that sounds fun.

Yes, it was fun. That lasted, what, about six months while I was taking the courses. Of course, we had to do composites and all that, which reminds me I never got my composites, the pictures, from them. But we were able to keep the clothes we were modeling.

Wonderful.

The clothing from the famous stores, Famous-Barr and all those stores there. The tea room modeling consisted of doing luncheons at the different places where people were gathered for lunch and all.

Anyway, after all that I decided, well, if I stay I'll go ahead and go to Lincoln University. Then they kept bugging me here, my family. Well, when are you coming back? My friends too; my girlfriend Trudi, who worked for the airlines by the way. So she was able to visit me.

What is Trudi's last name?

Tostin, T-O-S-T-I-N. You know Trudi?

Of course. I've interviewed Trudi. Roosevelt's wife.

That's right. That's right. You interviewed my girlfriend?

Yes.

Anyway, so she came there to visit while I was there. We, of course, had a good time. That was before she was married, of course. She had gone to Colorado working for the airlines, Western Airlines, right? Western changed to Delta. Anyway, so we had a good time there. And then she said, well, girl, I don't know; I'll probably end up going back to Las Vegas too because Denver is

so cold. She was saying how much she missed it here because our other girlfriend, Anne, went too. She was a part of us. We were like three, three together. Ann moved back to Philadelphia and got married to a childhood sweetheart. She passed away since, years after though. We even visited her there when she was really sick. But anyway, I ended up coming back to stay.

So which year did you get back?

I got back in '72. Wait a minute. Was it summer of '72? Yeah. Well, my fiancé then, who was in Chicago, wanted me to move to Chicago with him. And I said, no, I'm going back home if I go anywhere. So I came back here. And he said, well, I'll be in Las Vegas. Okay. He was going to move to Las Vegas. Well, he had proposed again and gave me a secondhand ring, of course.

Was it a beautiful ring? Okay.

Yes. I was so in love anything would have been okay. But I had told him, when we do get married I want a real ring. He had gotten it from the secondhand store somewhere.

Anyway, so when I moved back here -- I moved back in the spring of '72. And when he came here we had planned to get married in '72 in November. We got married November 4th, '72. In fact, I had a double wedding with my sister/cousin Brevell. That was her second marriage.

Even though he didn't want to have the double wedding.

I don't blame him.

He was trying to tell me she was trying to keep the spotlight off me and on her. But I didn't. I didn't want to disappoint her, so we did. But anyway, Trudi was my maid of honor.

Oh, great.

Ann was in my wedding. Ann was our other girlfriend. And Brevell's daughter Cathy, she was in my wedding. But with it being double, her friends and my friends were all together. We were married at Second Baptist Church. Reverend Coleman officiated. That was Trudi's uncle.

Reverend Coleman?

Yes. He was her uncle. That's how I knew so much about, well, him, because we would go over and play crochet when I was pregnant, in his yard, with my first child. My kids and Trudi and Roosevelt's kids are god brothers and sisters.

Great.

They are my kids' godparents and their children are my god kids.

Anyway, after marriage and kids, I didn't get to go back to school until years later.

So did you start working or were you a housewife for a while?

No. I was working. I never stopped working.

So were you working when you came back in '72?

In 1972, I was hired first at a child care center for a few months and then at the telephone company.

Ah. Okay.

Actually, did I say '72? No. I was hired on in '71 when I came back from St. Louis.

So you came back in '71, not '72?

I came back in '71. You're right. I'm sorry. Seventy-one I came back and I was hired at what was then Centel—it was called Centel. I was hired as an operator.

Long distance, or?

It was separated. It was information. I got hired in information services. And then the next year, in '72, I was still working there when I got married. My sister Brevell, or cousin Brevell, was working there before me.

She's not the reason I was hired, because at that point the company didn't want relatives working there. So the way people would get there as relatives -- of course, a lot of them had different last names or they didn't tell the truth about who --

Of course not.

Of course not. Even when I was hired, there was some discrimination there even then. It was subtle.

So 1972, black women are now beginning to move into other jobs --

Oh, .

-- other than domestics?

That's right.

Did that start in the sixties or was it the seventies?

It started in the late sixties, early seventies because I can remember some black women being -- oh, and teachers. I didn't never say teachers, but there were a lot of black teachers.

That was always.

Always, right. Then they were becoming professors and principals and all that. So in the early seventies that spearheaded.

So did you know Ruby Duncan?

I did. In fact, when I say know her, I knew of her actions and knew of her involvements.

Tell me what that was like. How did the black community see her activities in that welfare rights movement?

You know, part of the black community saw her as being right on and right on cue and track. And the other part, which was kind of -- I should say the part that wasn't real authentic about how we managed to get where we were, were kind of shunning her, in a sense.

Now, when this was happening, I was here, but I wasn't that kind of involved because when I left that's when everything got hot because my girlfriend Trudi kept me up to date as to what was going on. They used to call her the "Welfare Mom."

Right.

Because she was making ways for people who needed to -- you knew all about her plight. But she was one who spearheaded everything in the social service realm for mothers and unwed mothers and divorcees and all that.

So when you got back in 1971—that's the year you got married—she led a march on the Strip.

She was leading the march before I came back because Trudi sent me the newspaper headings. In fact, she was telling me all about it because she called even once. And she said, girl, it's getting hot here because Ruby. And I'm right with her, she said because of Ruby got it going on. So actually that had started before I got back. When I came back she had already opened the door -- well, it started before then.

Right.

But she was being heard even so.

Okay. So is there more than one march when you actually closed down the Las Vegas Boulevard, the Strip? Was there more than one of those?

There were about two to my knowledge because the first one wasn't as hot as the second one to my knowledge, because they started off doing one and that didn't go that well.

So the second one was the one when Jane Fonda came out here.

Uh-huh. All of the top people were here.

Right. You had some of Martin Luther King's people out here, Abernathy.

Right. Right. Jesse Jackson. All of them.

Okay. I don't remember Jesse being a part of it, but I'm sure he would say he was a part of it.

Yes. As I said I wasn't here, but I thought he was one.

Okay. So in 1972 you were here?

Yes. I came back in the spring of 1972.

Okay. So this is the big march, 1972 --

Right.

-- where they actually closed the Strip. Do you remember that Saturday? Do you remember people talking about that march?

Yes. People were all hyped up as to what she had started and her in particular because there were people with her and behind her who weren't named. But she was one of the vocal -- she was the one who really opened up everything, even though she had a soft voice and talked -- but she wouldn't stop. She kept going until it blew up. And people said, well, unless this is done, unless the people are heard in the west area, nothing else is going to go smoothly. We aren't going to be the entertainment capital of the world; we're going to be the "Mississippi of the West," is what we were called anyway.

So do you have personal memories of that Saturday when the big march took place?

I don't because I don't think at that time I was here. In fact, I don't remember.

It was 1972.

June 1971, I know. But I came back in 1972. It was actually the summer of 1971 that I came back.

Okay. See, I thought it was 1971 that you came back and you got married the next year, '72.

Well, wait a minute.

But maybe it was '72 that you came back and you got married in '73?

No. I got married in '72 because my son came right after I got married. He was born in '73. So it

was '72. You know, I remember -- you're right. I was here. The march was in '72. I was here because -- even though -- what was going on that it wasn't -- it was resonating in my brain that it was happening, but I wasn't involved. I wasn't that involved, but I knew all that was happening. Now, when it first started to spearhead, I was in St. Louis because that's when Trudi sent me the clippings.

Right. So that was probably back in the sixties and '70.

No, '70-'71. That was in '70, 1970, because Trudi went me the clippings. I remember her sending me all of the clippings of what was going on and she kept me informed. But when I got back in '71 -- wait a minute. Yeah. I still get those years -- because I know I was married in '72 and I hadn't been back six months.

So tell me what it was like working at the telephone company because this is now a professional position. You're back in Las Vegas.

Yes. To me it was putting my talent, so to speak at the time, where I could get worthwhile pay for what I knew. You know, I knew how to talk. Again, I didn't have my degree, but I had some college experience and I knew English because I had to go through—I didn't tell you this. When I first started at UNLV—at the time it was NSU—I wasn't permitted to go into regular English 101 because they considered where I went to school wasn't accredited, so to speak.

Well, you're talking about coming from Mississippi.

Yes. The place of my schooling. So I had to take "bonehead English." They called it "bonehead English."

Exactly.

I thought I was proficient in my English. But, then, I wasn't because I wasn't that good in writing, essaying and all that. But I knew my English and I knew the parts because we did a lot of diagramming and all that.

Oh, I used to love diagram sentences.

Me too.

Yes.

So all of that; I thought I was good. And they're going to tell me I need to take some "bonehead English"? I was insulted.

But, still, you were able to get the job probably because of that "bonehead English."

Right. That's why. God put me through it for a reason because there were people who had their degrees who said they had to take "bonehead English" twice and three times. One lady, her name was Emma. I don't remember the last name. But anyway, I passed it the first semester, but she said she had to take it several times before she passed. But I found out they were only doing it to the blacks who were from other places, of course.

Well, you know, believe it or not, our education was not sufficient in Mississippi and North Carolina and those places.

I know it wasn't. I knew it wasn't sufficient then in certain areas. But, again, the basic education to me was sufficient. When I say the academic part, no, it wasn't because everything we had was left over in the school system.

Exactly.

But then the morals, the values, all the manners, all that was there.

Of course.

And we knew that we needed more.

That's what I would tell my kids when they came. A bachelor's just isn't enough. And even with me I know it took me years to get it, but I knew it wasn't enough. And the place where I went to, the telephone company, wasn't where I wanted to end up, but that's where God put me. And thank God He did because it helped me to raise my family after I was divorced.

Right.

And I didn't change that much there because there I had acquired the seniority to be able to work the hours that I needed to, to go to school again.

Wonderful. Wonderful.

And work other jobs, too, so that I could send my kids to school.

That's great. Now tell me, when you left here in the sixties and you moved away and then you came back in 1971, tell me the difference in the face of integration in Las Vegas. During that time you were away, you had been in touch with Trudi. She was telling you what was going on in the city.

Actually it was in '70, 1970 when I left.

Oh, you were only gone for a year.

About a year and a half.

Oh, okay. Then the question is not valid.

Tell me about Las Vegas in the late sixties. When you were working at the Stardust and other places that you worked as you were going to school the first time, were black people beginning to go on the Strip then to see shows and to have dinner and all of that?

Oh, yes.

Did you actually see that happening?

I saw it and, plus, I was a part of it.

Okay. Tell me about that.

Well, during that time the Strip was opening to us, so to speak, during the late sixties, early seventies. So we were able to go out and enjoy the different entertainment. Then there were people coming in to entertain us. You know, the black entertainers came in to the Strip. At one point they weren't able to, of course. That was in the early and late sixties. But by that time it was opening up. But then there were still some remarks made, you know, going through certain areas of the Strip and people coming to visit the Strip. There were still some things going on. But then we were able to go out and enjoy the shows, go dancing, and go and get tickets for the front part of the show and all that. Trudi's husband, by him being in the media, in the background of the entertainment—he was a newscaster at the time. Anyway, so he had some pulls and stuff. So we'd go out and we'd see these things changing, right. So I would say, yes, it had started to open up pretty much then.

Were there still clubs over on the Westside, on Jackson Street?

There were.

What were some of those clubs in the early seventies?

The Cove. The Cove, it was actually the late sixties, the early -- well, by the early seventies -- '71, '72 -- '71, the Cove had closed down. There was -- God, I can't think of it.

So did we have places like the Cotton Club or the Brown Derby or the Louisiana Club?

Those were the late sixties, early seventies.

So those were still operational?

They were still operating. I can't even think of Bob Bailey's place.

Let me see. Sugar Hill.

That's right. You're right. See, my mind is not --

Well, they named it after that part of the city in New York at that time, affluent black community in New York.

Yes. The Harlem community.

Do you remember Sarann Preddy's clubs?

You know, at the time I didn't know that it was her club, but I knew of her because before she was Preddy, she was Knight. Of course, her kids and some of her grandchildren ran a lot of the businesses that she owned. And so I knew her from a distance and what I had heard, so not personally knew her. But I knew her better over the years. She's a member of our church, in fact.

That's right. So over the years as blacks began to go to Strip to enjoy the entertainment there, how did it affect the businesses on the Westside?

Well, it pulled away from the Westside, in a sense, because they were able to venture out even more and identify and feel a part of society on the Strip, you know, feel that we—I shouldn't say they. This is the way I saw it.

Okay, good.

But it meant that we were a part of the rest of the world and we weren't put in a box, so to speak. In a sense people started to say, well, this isn't all that it could be, so we don't want to be here all the time. But I wasn't a go-outer when I got married. It was different for me, anyway. But before the time—because I enjoyed the black side of the entertainment world. Before I was married we'd go out and enjoy it when we could because we could go and one had to be 21. When I first became a young adult here, I couldn't go out to the clubs, unless you were 21, right?

Could you go to the clubs on the Westside before you became 21?

Yes. We could go in there, but we couldn't go in the gambling area or have alcoholic beverages. We went to dance.

In fact, it wasn't a part of myself and my group to really enjoy the clubs that kind of way. We just wanted to go dancing, not necessarily to gamble. My group, we didn't gamble. Over the years some of us started to. But we didn't drink. We just went to dance and to hear the singers

and all that.

Okay. Did any of the clubs on the Westside have live entertainment?

The Cove did at one point. The Eldorado Club. The Moulin Rouge, they had lots of entertainment. And a lot of the black entertainers came and even some of the whites from the Strip. When I say from the Strip, they were here mainstreaming on the Strip, but they'd come over.

Now, did you actually see the white entertainers at the time you were here go into the Moulin Rouge?

No, I didn't.

So you heard about that from the 1950s when the Moulin Rouge was open?

Right.

Okay. What kind of work did your husband [Joseph D. Scott] do?

When he first came he was hired by the city. When I say when he first came, when we were first married. He was hired at the city to do drafting. But he didn't stay there because he couldn't tolerate enclosures. This was after the Vietnam thing. So he left to start his own business, which was what he wanted to do. That was his passion; to do his own business. In the meantime, he was going to apprentice school to complete his contracting. He took advantage of the military pay.

That GI Bill.

GI Bill, right. He was taking advantage of that when he started to work for Titanium at the time. That's when he was faced with some racial discrimination. He was doing brick work in this side and he was hit. When he left to go to lunch, somebody put a burning cross in his cubicle where he was doing because they had the different areas. So he was faced with a few things, plus carrying the weight of the Vietnam post-traumatic thing. At the time they weren't calling it that. He wouldn't talk about the war. He was going through some [PTSD] and job discrimination problems. In the meantime, he'd go out in construction. He was hit in the head—his head was cut deeply—by some coworkers.

At the titanium plant?

No. This was on another job, other construction job. That was while I was pregnant with my first child. When he came to me, they knocked him in the head, they took him to the hospital and had

to sew switches in his head. I still don't know to this day what exactly happened. But he was the only black on the job. He reported it to several people -- the labor department, the NAACP -- you know, to get it on the news, anything. But they wouldn't help him. Over the years he grew bitter and angry.

However, he did get his business started. So he worked as a bricklayer first and then a contractor. He even got some jobs -- when I say got some jobs, he helped other people who were trying to do their own business get their licenses because a lot of them couldn't read or understand the paperwork of being in contracting and all that, being a contractor.

So is he still here in Las Vegas?

He's still here. He remarried. We were married for 14 years.

Wow.

So much I didn't understand --

Exactly.

-- and some things that he wouldn't take advantage of with himself, it didn't work. He was an alcoholic. I can say that. Plus, he was into drugs that I didn't know about. I was so --

And then with the mental stress of the war.

The mental stress, right. Plus he was injured, too, while he was in the war. So he's been injured a few times. So that affected him mentally.

So how many children did you have?

Two.

Okay. So you had a boy and a girl.

A boy and a girl.

The boy is the oldest.

Yes.

And your children were able to go to school?

They were, Yes. Well, when we were together that was our goal, for them to complete, as well. Then I was going to start back and he was going to -- you know, we had all these plans, but it didn't. Well, God worked all things out. It was and is good now...(Rom.8:28).

So where did your children go to school?

My children ended up -- one went to Jackson State in Mississippi.

Okay. The boy or the girl?

Our son. That was his preference. At one point he said he wasn't going to college. It was in tenth grade that, thank God, he decided—well, I had told him either college or a trade or something. You just don't -- well, he was interested, but he didn't want to follow or call at one point. Then there were other people instrumental in his life who kind of got him to open up his eye and his mind. Hopefully it was me. He said it was me because I kept nagging him, and his father. He had a kind of shaky relationship with his father because he didn't want to follow in his father's footsteps. They didn't get along that well. But they do now. They talk. They went through a few changes, but they're okay.

Good.

And I'm so thankful. I don't think I would have changed anything in that area now. I'm thankful for what I contributed to both their relationship. When I say relationship, I mean education.

Okay, good.

Working those jobs and making sure everything was -- and getting loans and all that.

Yes. So where did your daughter go to school?

She went to Clark, Atlanta. That was her preference. I must say she was checking out colleges when she was in middle school.

Oh, wonderful.

When I was trying to get him to go, she --

So she took after you when it comes to education.

She was very much into that. I'm so thankful that she did. They got to expose themselves, both of them, to our world. When I say our world, I mean actual -- the first year I can say she was kind of traumatized, my daughter was, from being away from home. She didn't want to ever admit that the first semester. So she saw all kinds of things and all kinds of people from everywhere and she didn't understand how they could do all the things they were doing and still get grades and graduate. But I said it would happen, it will happen. She did.

So did a lot of students here, like your children and Trudi's children, did they go away to go to school?

Yes, in a sense. The ones we knew did; that I kept in contact with. Trudi's kids -- well, her daughter, of course, did. Well, her son, his intention was to go to school, but he was going to go here. He did for a little while. Then Claudette's kids all went here, to my knowledge.

We were talking about blacks going away from Las Vegas to go to school. The reason I'm so interested in that because I know a lot of people migrated to Las Vegas with the intent that their kids would have a better life. Sometimes it's difficult to find where blacks were in high school here. It seems that a lot of blacks didn't finish high school. So now, your kids, then, this is in the nineties that they're going away to school?

Right.

So did a lot of their classmates go away?

A lot of their classmates --

Black classmates.

-- didn't, no. There was a sense of high school being, which it is, important; that a lot of the classmates wanted to complete. A lot of them had ideas that if you complete high school, then you can do a trade. Why go away to school when the parent can hardly afford to send them? You know, the degree of education wasn't a big factor. And I can say that because even with some of my family it wasn't. But there were some kids who felt that they wanted to get away, the ones who did, who felt that there was a different culture, and by being exposed before they were out of high school to certain things away from the city that there was another kind of life especially coming with the education, right? And the ones who they associated themselves with were -- I mean closely -- they felt that it meant a difference. And their families, some of their parents had different kinds of values on education and society as a whole.

So, no, that was one of the factors with social services that education wasn't always big here. It had to be pushed, even now. You hear people talking about the role of education and what we can do with education, but they talk about it more than doing it. And some of the older people—when I say older, like me—they'll say, yes, you need your education. But then they stand up and say, yes, well, people with education think they're all that and all this. So it's a contradiction. And the kids, a lot of them hear that. So they go, well, they say one thing but they mean another. And I was told that by some of the young people. It hurts my heart.

Okay. So that's why a lot of black kids are probably not getting the kind of education they should even today.

Even today.

So tell me about the program that you started because of the way you feel about education and how it got started.

Well, how it got started: Well, when we first started the online service of computers and all that—not that that started the reading, because I've always been a passionate reader. When I was back in college the second time and I was doing the adult education thing, I found that young people aren't working toward reading. When I say I found that, when I was working with the alternative kids and the kids at that time it was CCSN, well, CSN [College of Southern Nevada]. And I worked out with Professor Mosley. I was able to teach in his class. He allowed me to do the courses that I needed out there. And I would assign certain parts of the lesson for reading and comprehension, and we'd talk about it the next day. Most of the young people didn't understand, they said, what they had read. But then when I would have them read it in class, they weren't on the level of reading where they should have been, like freshmen in college.

So they need "bonehead English."

That's right. Professor Mosley would say—I was so passionate about it because I thought my voice level would start changing as I talked to them; when I had asked them what did they get out of this. He'd look at me. And after class he'd say, man, you're really into making them read at this point. He said that's great. He said, true, they don't read, but we need to find a way to get them interested in reading. And I said, well, that's hard for me because—again, you said "bonehead English." Well, when my kids were little, before they were born actually—because I loved to read and I wished I had read more when I was younger. So I says, well, while these kids are fetuses in my womb, especially my first child, I was reading to him. Oh, and singing to him and humming and reading the Bible. I did all that. Well, he loved to hear me read.

As my son grew, he didn't want to really, really, read-read. I had to make him read. I said where is this coming from? Well, I found out he was reading when I wasn't around. But, I don't know, I guess it was the rebellious thing. When he was in middle school and high school, I always took them to the library. They are two and a half years apart. I'd take them to the library

when they were little. They had their little cards and all. I would make him get him—because he wouldn't get one on his own. I said we are going to get a book of something you like to do. He loved trucks. And you're going to read to me while I cook dinner and when I come home from work. I'd want him to read. That's how I understood if he could actually do what I had taught him. This is even before he started to school, right?

My daughter—I never had to push her because she was always ready. She'd go to the library and get four and five books. He wouldn't want to get one. But they're all different. But still I know that I wanted them to know how to read. How are you going to comprehend anything else if you aren't able to read?

That's right. So what are your children's names?

Zabadee, Z, as in zebra, A-B, as in boy, A-D, as in David, E-E. That's the boy. It means a blessing in Hebrew. It was changed around from Zebedee to Zabadee.

And what is your daughter's name?

Aikena, A-I-K-E, as in Ed, N-A.

Aikena. Now, what does that mean?

Aikena was one that I came up with. I found out later it meant—before his name—it meant power and -- what did that guy tell me?

Wow. So Zabadee --

Means a blessing in Hebrew.

So now, Zabadee does not enjoy reading.

He didn't. That was when he was younger. But then I found out later he would read books, books, books. So both of them. But he was one I had to push.

Great. So where did he go to high school?

Here, in Las Vegas, Western High School. Both of them attended—well, he started off at—because I was living in a different area of the city. He was at Rancho. I moved out of the area. That was my basic reason for moving was that it got so hot over there with drugs in the apartments, in the area where I lived after I left my husband. So we moved because I had gone to the school a couple of times to see what was going on. My daughter was who told me. My son and a couple of his friends wanted me to drive them to school every morning, but he wouldn't tell

me why. He was in walking distance. He didn't want to tell me why because then his other friends would say he was being a wimp. But my daughter was the one who told me. Because I had to be at work early in the mornings, I would drive, but I would drive them to make sure that he got there okay. I kind of figured, but I wasn't sure.

So I went to the school and talked to the principal at the time about the drug trafficking in that area and how they were trying to recruit little gang members and all. So when I did talk to him and it continued, I said, well, I've got to get out of here. So we moved to a different area and he was in the Western vicinity to go to school. But before that I had gotten my cousin Brevell's address. I used hers to get him into Western. Then I moved the next semester.

Okay. So both Zabadee and Aikena went to --

Western High School.

Okay, good. Were you satisfied with the level of the education that they got there?

Well, at the time, with my son I kept trying to embrace the information that was being passed, trying to add other information to him—no, not actually at that point. But I was more so satisfied to a point than I was at Rancho because -- now, not the instructors at Rancho because he got to know Reverend -- not Reverend, the teacher by the name of Johnson. He's deceased since then. He was one of the ones who was instrumental in changing my son's mind about going to college. My son told me that later that he did.

Great.

And then Professor Sullivan --

Oh, yes.

You know him?

Yes.

Yeah, he had a program (Upward Bound). He was able to go through that program in the summer at UNLV.

Was it Upward Bound?

Upward Bound. That's right. He was one of the first mentors for the young men here. And I don't see how come he's not honored even more so, even now. Every once in a while I hear some of the young men talk about him. My son never stop.

That's great. So now, you're helping out at the community college.

Right.

You become interested in helping children read. So how does that go?

Okay, back on that. Working at the telephone company, again working in information, I was a trainer there within our department and working also with people calling in, with adults and children who weren't able to look up numbers—not just me. There were others in our department who were able to help—mostly us and Hispanics—how to look in the directory to find certain numbers. At one point at the telephone company the customers needed to know exactly what they were looking for. Well, at one point they could just say -- our city was small -- you know, the business down the street around the corner from this, that. And then somebody would know. Oh, that's called. You think they'd write it down? No, they wouldn't write it down because they'd call back in and say the same thing. So numbers. That was before they were being charged for numbers.

The children would call in asking how to spell simple, simple words like how do you spell taxi? How do you spell bus? And these weren't little, little kids. You know, I'm saying -- so it wasn't just me, all of my coworkers, too. Most of my coworkers had to have a high school education, of course. Then they'd say these kids can't read. Of course, we know that. This is our job to help them find numbers. And the Hispanics would get -- the parent, of course, they're learning a second language. So they would put their children on the line to get numbers that they needed.

And forget about calling in for city listings. They are listed under the city listings. And county numbers. Even schools. One has to find them by name. So those are the kinds of things that happened.

At the CALL program that Connie Barker works with through the libraries—that's somebody you should interview. Her name is Connie Barker. I volunteered there starting in 1999-2000. I volunteered there as a worker with the CALL program. C-A-L-L means “Computer Assisted Literacy in Libraries”; therefore, they call it the CALL program. So when I worked with that group I found that there were quite a few adults who didn't read, young adults. As I was working in the school district, I found that in the alternative schools a lot of kids were frustrated.

They're young adults. Some of them haven't learned how to read. So they would disrupt the classes and distract others. Those are different examples. That's how at Sprint, or before it was Sprint, Centel—that's how the idea happened; when the computers came about. I came up with the name because I was so into people knowing the basics of reading, right? We were talking about it. I was at the switchboard at the time. There were three of us there most of the time when I wasn't training for inter-company training or new hires. We would talk about things. So we talked about how the reading and the education level was here in the city and just different things. I announced, well, you know, that's what I'm going to call myself online (email), Parent-In-Charge, because these children don't have the parent who are interested or who are showing them any kind of educational stability and teaching them. They've got to know this before they start to school.

So this was in '99 or 2000. I said so I'm going to put out Parent In Charge. And when people start thinking about parent in charge, they've got to be in charge of their social, their educational ability, their every kind of ability to enhance these children's lives. So the parent has to start to act as though they're interested. Then also I said if we're pushing children to go to school and to learn, what are we doing? I said we've got to be examples. Then my coworkers started to agree. You know, we've got to be -- so not just us, but as a grandparent, too. I wasn't a grandparent, but I'm still thinking along these lines. So that's how we came up with Parent In Charge, and I used that as an e-mail address, Parent In Charge.

However, Word on a Rock came later. That idea came about when I was visiting my daughter in New Jersey and she took me to the Poconos. We were at the Poconos. We went to this candle shop. And it's like the spirit—I was still enhancing Word on a Rock, not just me. It was the spirit, of course, who gave me that vision and gave us that vision. And we said, well, we'll help him, but we're going to start this program and see what happens. That was a couple of people. I talked to some people at church. They said, yes, you know, we need something really going here and we don't need to just talk about it, we need to do it.

So I had some buttons made. We're going to start with the parent, any parent. Even before they get to be a parent, if they're thinking about being a parent, we're going to tell them. We wrote up the information on how it got started, the Parent In Charge. They said, well, you'll be the founder and we'll all be the workers.

Okay, back to the original idea. So when we got to the Poconos, we were looking -- and it was a novelty shop, actually. Of course, I had seen something similar before, but it was this big barrel. It was like God drove me over to it because there was a lot. You've been in novelty shops. It had rocks in the barrel and they had been printed. It was sketched. These were spiritual rocks. So I picked out some. I said, wow, this would be used; word on a rock. It's like the Bible says, if you don't praise God, the rock's going to cry out. If we don't teach these kids to read, the rock's going to cry out. And this was all coming in my mind. My daughter came up. I was standing there just looking at the rocks, saying this in my head. And then she said, mom, what are you doing with rocks? I said this is a revelation. I said: Word on a Rock; that's what this program is going to be called.

So now, did you call it Parent In Charge or Word on a Rock?

Parent In Charge was the first part of it. That's the parent as a group. When we came up with the teaching of the kids to read, this was the part for reading.

Okay. So you teach parents how to parent?

Yes. Well, how to help their children read.

Ah, okay. So the parent has to be taught how to help the child?

Right. Starting with the letters, the alphabet. When my children were little -- and this was before all this came about, so to speak -- when they came in their bedrooms I had alphabets on the wall. My husband said at the time, well, I know the concept of this, but what are you going to do. I said, I want them to recognize while they're babies, start to recognize the letters. And then comes the words and then comes the reading. He says okay. So we painted on their bedroom walls alphabets, their names, and numbers. You know how people do wallpaper? Well, we did the painting.

I love it. I think that's a great idea.

Yes. With my grandson, he was reading at three. His mother is good with him. Oh, when my grandchildren started coming over, out on the patio...

Oh, so your patio has letters. Oh, that is beautiful.

Yes, letters.

Oh, but that's great.

You know who did it for me? My neighbor who used to live next-door -- he's not there anymore -- but he went and found -- because I told him what I wanted. I was going to cover the patio. I said, I want letters, because my grandkids will be growing and coming over, so they could learn their alphabet.

So instead of having tiles, you have tiles that are letters. That's wonderful.

Right. Right. So they can learn, at least the concept of reading.

That's great. So how do you institute this program? How do you find the parents and the children to put in this program? And is it federally funded?

No. I didn't do anything that -- well, when I first came up with the idea, with the Parent In Charge and all that, I says when I finish with my courses here and get my degree that's who I'm going to work with, adults, the adult education division. I said, maybe it will be charged and maybe it won't. But I just want this to be something open to the public, especially the young parent and the guardians of these children, so Las Vegas can get off the map being one of the cities that doesn't value education. Another thing -- that was my concern -- because when I went different places, people talked about, well, that's all they do is gamble there.

I know.

You know how that goes. My daughter, too, she was really concerned because she said when she went away to college, the concept, the idea that people had, the students there had of her city, the way people were and that educational values was low. So I said, oh, no, we've got to change that. So all of this kind of came into play.

Well, I figured that if we help the parent, especially the young parent to know—not that I'm the perfect parent, far from being one, but I knew the concept or the idea of what it takes to help a child to learn. So not just me, but others too. I said, we're going to start. Even Trudi, Trudi and I. She was in the group when we had the meeting three years ago about the Word on a Rock. So the questions came and says, okay, so how are we going to work with these parents to get them to do this? Some people felt that, well, nobody can tell me how to raise my child. I said, not just to raise but to help to educate them. That's supposed to be a vital point. So when they are educated -- when I say reading, then everything else will be easier, right? So I said, if they can just listen to, or we can write out something. If they can't read it—that's what my friend said, my

lifetime special friend Ed, he said, if they aren't able to read it, how are they going to understand? I said, well, we'll talk to them about it. So talk about it. And then let them know we can help them to help their children.

We aren't just going to take the children themselves and say, okay, come over and I'll help you read. But we're going to have the parent listen to the children as they cook. This is the way it started with me, as they cook, do laundry—make a song out of the word, spell the word, you know, just play with the words. And then according to the child's age level, they'll catch on.

So did you start this at Second Baptist? Where did you go to find the first parents?

The first parents started at work, believe it or not. It started where we are. We were at work. So that's when I started with them. Well, at that point, I wasn't at Sprint, when I came with the Word on a Rock. I gave it to the ones who were because I had eye problems then. I gave the idea to them. They started it at work. Then we went to the library out on the foyer. We had a group meeting. We started with the people in the group, you know, their families. It started at church. We were at church. That was a few years ago. They didn't want to catch on to it, even with the Bible reading. There are kids who go to church and adults, too, who don't read.

I see.

So I started passing out the rocks at church. Then I would explain to them. Then I gave them a setup, a written—not just me. Myself, Helen, Trudi, Kanika.

Is that Helen Tolen?

No. Helen knows about it. She said she was going to help. In fact, she did. She said give me—you know how Helen is. I told her about the idea before I even came up with the details and she thought it was great. She said I will help. She's always ready to help.

She said, so let me know. But seven years ago when this all started to happen with my eye -- this was before Word on a Rock. This was after Parent In Charge. And then after Parent In Charge we were passing that throughout the community and the different groups that we would contact. It was Trudi that said, Mozella, this is your idea, really; you're the founder and you're the one who wants to tutor these parents. She said put it in writing. We've got to put something in writing. Don't give your ideas out because somebody is going to take them. I said it doesn't matter. I just want it to be done. I said a patent is so much. I said everything else is so much. So

501(c)(3), I started off to do that. But then I said no; I'm going to pass it along to whoever will take it.

Okay. So you didn't become a 501(c)(3)?

No, I didn't. I didn't. It was last year that I started the process. I said why do I need this? Because it's some steps into doing it. It's monies involved. My e aren't that great. My daughter likes the idea. She said, but, mom, that's your idea; it's not mine. I was trying to pass it on to anybody who would take it. But even the ones in the group said, no, we won't do it without you. Well, it's nothing to me that's so sacred that it's mine. It's something for communities to take and do it and work with it as long as the idea is grounded.

So do you see people using it now?

There are people who've taken it. I've even given it to the homeless when we have group through mission and we have fashion fair in the spring. I even told -- well, Pastor Chaney got it. When he first came I gave him a copy. He says, well, this is something that can be implemented if it isn't already. Well, I had talked with previous people about it in church and gave them, but they kind of don't -- they said what is it for? even after you explain it. So they don't really, really embrace the idea. But they look at the tutoring part and say, well, we had tutoring in the church before. But it seems like the understanding isn't clear or precise enough.

Okay. So where do you see the future of this program?

I see it as being in every community in the neighborhood. Do you know how before elections that there are signs every place of how candidates promote themselves.

Yes. Vote for this person.

Yes, all that. I see it as being some of those signs in neighborhoods, especially ours, that says not just tutor but be a Parent In Charge.

Have you ever taken this to the West Las Vegas Arts Center over there or where Marcia Washington works, Marcia Robinson?

Marcia, oh, yes. Well, I haven't taken it to her in person, but John McCoy at West Middle School was very interested.

Wonderful.

I was sick at the time and couldn't meet him because he wanted to take on the project.

That's great.

Kim, who worked at the school, who's a teacher -- she's a social service person, too -- she was one of the ones who signed up with the group, a Parent In Charge. Then two years ago I distributed the rocks in the community, West Las Vegas community, at the barbershops. That's where a lot of parents -- at the school, that barber college, and some of the beauty shops.

Good. That's where you'll find us on Saturday mornings.

Right. Right. Just anybody who will work with their children or guardians who will. It doesn't have to be their children, per se, any children in the neighborhoods or adults responsible.

When we do this—like I said I wanted a copy of the history of Second Baptist to go into your interview. I also want a copy of this to go in your interview, as well, so that people reading this interview will know exactly what we're talking about and how it works.

All right. Sure.

This is wonderful and I really appreciate all of this information.

Oh, well, thank you.

Is there anything else you want to add now that I have you thinking about the good old days and today, I have you thinking about okay the whole thing?

You had me crying.

Yes, I had you crying. So is there anything else that you want to add?

To prick my memory, I think I talked about it. I think I probably kept you longer than you wanted to stay.

[Additional thoughts from Mozella: Like a garden of flowers, God has planted a huge support group of family members and life-long friends around me and through His power, my strength is fueled by their energy and encouragement. Word-on-a-Rock presented by Parent-In-Charge (P.I.C.) is catching on in the communities among concerned parents and guardians. Sir Speedy is our partner in print and design.]

No. No.

This is an hour fast.

This is wonderful.

I'm not able to think of anything else except meeting all the people who were instrumental in my life, not that I've done anything so great. But Reverend Scott was one, Reverend Jesse D. Scott. He inspired my children, especially my daughter because she worked with him when she was in high school.

Oh, that's great.

She even got me more involved, even with the NAACP. I was involved before—then Bishop Rogers. He was part of it when I was working with them. Sister Tolen, of course, I can't forget her. Roosevelt, Trudi and Roosevelt, my best friends. And Connie Barker, she doesn't know, but I really did appreciate her, the kind of work she did with the community, even though most of our people don't take interest in what she does as her job, in fact. But to me, it's a very vital part of helping to teach young adults to read and how to work with the computers.

That's great.

That program really inspired me to do the Word on a Rock.

Well, I appreciate this. And all those people you just named, I've interviewed all of them.

Connie Barker is the only one that I don't know.

Is it? Now, you've got to interview her.

Yes, she's the only one.

All right. Well, you've just got to do her. I think she said she was going to retire in a couple of years.

So I'd like to interview her. And Daisy Miller I haven't interviewed yet.

You haven't interviewed? Oh, yes. She was a plus. You know, I got to know her over the last couple of years because I knew of her, but I didn't know-know her. Sister Tolen—when I say Sister Tolen, that's how I feel about her. She's a sweetheart.

Yes, she is.

And I knew of her through Trudi. Remember, see, I didn't go to high school here. I knew her through Brevell, my sister, because they went to Africa together. So I knew her before she actually knew me, actually.

That's great. Well, I really appreciate all these memories.

Oh, I appreciate your coming out because it gave me a chance to talk about things—to reflect, reveal, and release.

That's right.

And they say I really talk too much.

No, no, no. This was perfect. Thank you so much.

All right. You're welcome.

"bonehead English", 27, 28
Bailey, Bob, 12
Barker, Connie, 17, 38, 45
Baxter, Brevell D., 2, 3, 5, 8, 14, 15, 23,
24, 37, 45
Bonanza Village, 10
Boulder Dam, 6
Bowie, Finis, 15
Bullock, Ruben, 12

CALL program, 38
Carroll, Rose, 17
Centel telecommunications, 24, 39
Chandler, Jerry, 18
Chaney, Pastor, 13, 43
Childs, Jean, 17, 19
Coleman, Rev. Vassar C. L., 12, 13, 23
College of Southern Nevada, 35

Davis, George and Ada, 2
Duncan, Ruby, 25

Famous-Barr department store, 22
Friars Point Elementary School (MS), 3

GI Bill, 31

Jackson Street clubs, 29
Jackson, Ann, 18
Jacobs, Raydean, 17
Johnson, Reverand, 13

Knight Preddy, Sarann, 12, 30

Lockhart, Jerry, 17
Lyles, Elbert, 12
Lyons, Don, 17
Mason, Pam, 18
McMillan, Dr. James, 12
Mississippi, 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 14, 18, 26,
27, 28, 33

Mosley, Professor, 35

Neal, Joe, 12
Nevada Southern University, 17
Nevada Test Site, 5, 6, 7, 12

Parent-In-Charge, 39, 44
Posner's cosmetics, 22
Preddy, Sarann (Knight), 12, 30
Rancho High School, 36
Ronzone's store, 15

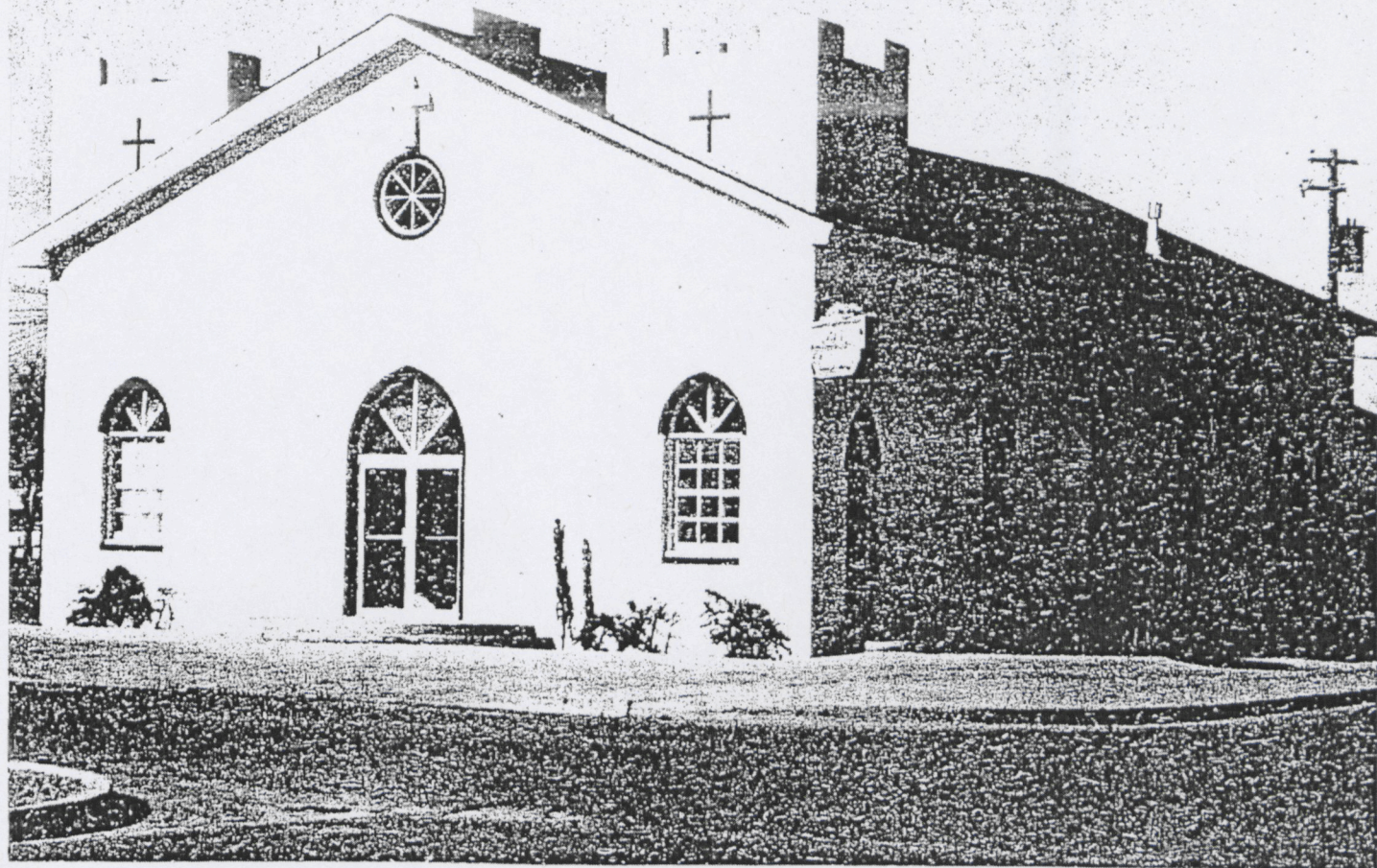
Scales-Scott, Wanda, 17
Scott, Aikena, 36, 37
Scott, Joseph D., 31
Scott, Rev. Jesse D., 45
Scott, Zabadee, 36, 37
Second Baptist Church, 12, 13, 14, 23,
42, 44
St. Louis, MO, 2, 8, 21, 22, 24, 27
Stardust Hotel, 15, 16, 18, 19, 29

Thomas, (Sandy) Sonny, 16, 17, 18
titanium plant, 6, 31
Tolen, Helen, 42, 45
Toston, Trudi (Gertrude), 17, 19, 22, 23,
25, 27, 28, 29, 33, 34, 41, 42, 45
Turner, Alexander, 18

UNLV, 16, 17, 19, 27, 37
Upward Bound, 37

Western High School, 22, 36, 37
Westside, 9, 10, 11, 15, 20, 29, 30, 31
Wilson, Reverend, 12
Wilson, Woodrow, 12
Word on a Rock, 39, 40, 41, 42, 45

Zion Methodist Church, 14



Second Baptist Church

500 MADISON STREET

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

REV. VASSAR C. L. COLEMAN, Bth, D. D., Pastor

MOTTO.

"WE ENTER TO WORSHIP; DEPART TO SERVE."

From the Pastor's Pen



REV. V. C. L. COLEMAN

This yearbook directory brings to my mind a wide range of thoughts: **First**, as a memory of the great works of those of humble beginnings in the last score. **Second**, the scars of Christian-war on many who now occupy these pews proudly from one Sunday to another. They have builded, strained and struggled for what we now have at Second Baptist. **Third**, I see the happy anticipation if those of optimistic Christian spirits who feel that the days ahead will be brighter.

I am grateful to each member, and leader for the worth of our present program that is in existence. You are a wonderful people. I am happy to be assigned Shepherd of this flock. As we together walk up the King's Highway let us remember we are walking out! We must work the works of Him that sent us while it is day, the night cometh when no man can work.

The Preacher, V. C. L. Coleman

Services

SUNDAY

9:45 a.m. Sunday School 11:00 a.m. Morning Worship
 10:55 a.m. Concentration 6:00 p.m. Baptist Training Union
 7:00 p.m. Evening Worship

MID - WEEK SERVICES

7:00 p.m. - Monday	Usher Board	7:00 p.m. - Thursday	Brotherhood
5:00 p.m. - Tuesday	Youth Department	6:30 p.m. - Thursday	Youth Usher Board
7:00 p.m. - Each Fourth Tuesday	General Mission	7:00 p.m. - Friday	Teachers Meeting
7:30 p.m. - Wednesday	Mid-Week Prayer Service	7:30 p.m. - Friday	Choir Rehearsal
4:00 p.m. - Saturday	Junior Choir Rehearsal		

YEARLY CALENDAR

March

10 - 14 Church Anniversary
 21st Fellowship with the Bethel Baptist Church

April

12 - 18 Lent Week
 18th (5:00 a.m.) Sunrise Service
 18th (7:00 p.m.) Easter Program

May

9th Mother's Day
 9 - 16 Spring Revival
 30th Women Annual Program - Senior Mission in Charge

June

1 - 10 Daily Vacation Bible School
 13th Choir Anniversary
 16 - 18 State Sunday School and B.T.U. Congress at Second Baptist Church - Las Vegas, Nevada

July

4th Men's Annual Day
 4th Association Drive - The Pride of the West

August

5 - 8th Usher Board Anniversary
 29th Jr. Mission and Jr. Matron Day
 National Baptist Convention Drive
 Each Member to give \$2.00

September

12th Jr. Church and Youth Day
 National Baptist Convention
 Jacksonville, Florida

October

Sept. 29th - October 3rd Pastor's and Wife Anniversary

November

Thanksgiving Drive - Yearly Annual Reports

December

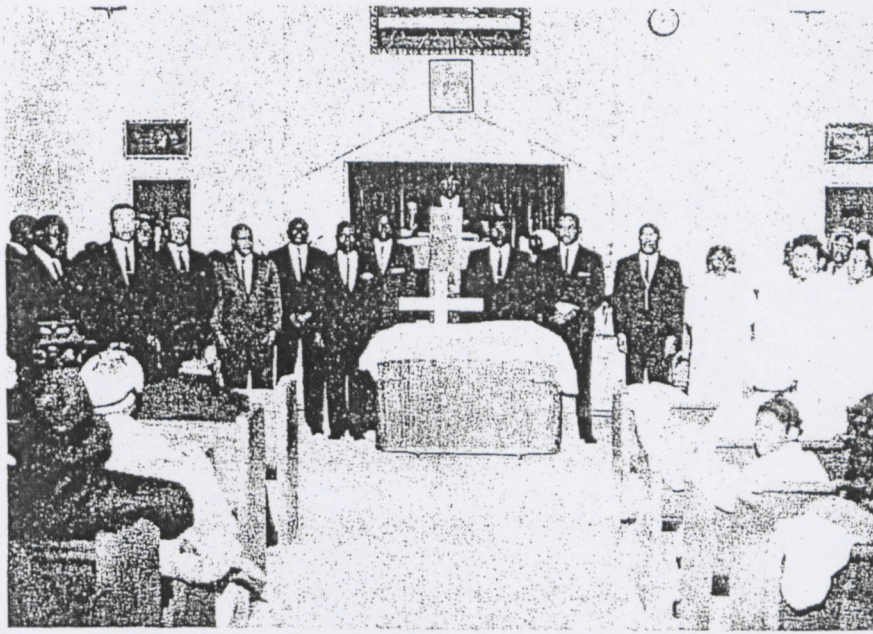
Christmas



MONTHLY

First Sunday Night Lord's Supper
 Fourth Thursday - 7:30 p.m. Deacon's Meeting
 Fourth Tuesday - 7:00 p.m. General Mission
 First Monday - 7:30 p.m. Church Reports

History of Church



Pastor and Deacons and Deaconess at The Lords Supper

On February 22, 1942 a group of disciples met at the residence of Brother and Sister Robinson for the purpose of organizing the Second Baptist Church.

The first members of the Church were Brothers Verenette Anderson, F. W. Wilson, R. H. Robinson, Willie Harris, Sisters Helen Marie Pope, Lola Hayes (Clerk) and Bessie Mayfield.

The first Pastor was the Rev. B. T. Mayfield. Under his leadership they purchased a lot and tent where they worshipped for about 9 months. They built a building at the cost of \$4,500.00.

In one years time the membership grew to 300, and 16 departments were added to the church.

The spirit led Rev. Mayfield to Reno, Nevada, and he was followed by the Rev. C. H. Haden who served for approximately 2 years. He was followed by the Rev. I. W. Lewis who served for 1 year.

In September, 1949, the Rev. V. C. L. Coleman accepted the call to the Second Baptist Church. The Church had started a building fund under the pastorate of Rev. Lewis and \$3,500 had been saved.

Due to the growing membership the Pastor and members decided to build a larger building to accomodate the increasing membership. Under Rev. Coleman's leadership the present building was erected in 1950. New church furniture was purchased, central air conditioning unit installed and plans are now being made for the addition for a new educational building. Today the mantel is on Rev. Coleman's shoulders. Today it is up to Second Baptist.

Our history is still in the making process. Let us lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help, ask God for strength and keep on climbing, singing as we go that glorious hymn,

"We Love Thy Church O God.

*Her wall before Thee stand;
dear as the apple of thine eye
engraven on thine hand.*

*For her our tears shall fall,
for her our prayers assend;
To her tears and toils be given
till toils and cares shall end."*



Pastor and The Deacon Board

Church History

Second Baptist Church, the "Miracle on Madison Avenue," has a rich legacy of triumph and challenge! On February 22, 1942, a group of dedicated disciples seeking to carry out God's command to go and "build my church upon a solid rock," met at the residence of Brother and Sister R. H. Robinson for the purpose of organizing a church. The founding members were Brothers, R.H. Robinson, Verenette Anderson, F.W. Wilson, Willie Harris; Sisters, Helen Marie Pope, Lola Hayes (Clerk) and Bessie Mayfield.

After organizing, the question of a name arose and it was suggested that since the other Baptist church in the area was an all white church, the First Baptist Church, it was agreed to name our church, the Second Baptist Church. Initial worship services were held in the homes of the organizers for approximately 9 months.

God blessed the followers with a parcel of land currently where the old Sanctuary is today, and the members purchased a 20' X 40' tent for \$35.00. Thus the first Second Baptist Church service was held. The first Pastor was the Reverend B. T. Mayfield. Regular worship services were held in the tent for approximately 9 months, followed by the building of a brick and mortar sanctuary at a cost of \$4,500. In only one year, the membership grew to 300 members and sixteen auxiliaries were established.

When Reverend Mayfield was called to Reno, Nevada to fulfill his spiritual calling, the Reverend C. H Haden became the second Pastor of Second Baptist. He served as Senior Pastor for two years, followed by Reverend I.W. Lewis who served for one year. Under Reverend Lewis' leadership, a building fund was established and \$3,500 was raised.

In 1949, The Reverend V.C. Coleman became the fourth Pastor of Second Baptist and served faithfully for 25 years until failing health caused him to retire.

The Reverend Joseph Jefferson was the fifth pastor serving for two years. He had previously served faithfully as Assistant Pastor under Reverend Coleman.

In June, 1978, Reverend Willie Davis became the sixth Pastor of Second Baptist and served for 29 years. Under Reverend Davis' tenure, Second Baptist's membership, ministry and outreach programs grew tremendously. In 1987, ground breaking begun for a major church expansion which included a new sanctuary with a seating capacity of 1600, a small chapel, dedicated in memory of former first lady Mrs. Jeannette Davis and 13 additional classrooms were added.

On March 17, 1991, the Second Baptist Church and the greater Las Vegas Community celebrated the completion of Phase I. Reverend Jesse L. Jackson was the keynote speaker; it was at this service that Second Baptist Church was honored and given the name of the "Miracle on Madison Avenue." Soon afterwards, Phase II followed, which included eight additional classrooms, a Pastor's study, administrative offices, finance office, commercial kitchen, a custodian room and deacon board room. A state-of-the art sound system and radio broadcast studio were installed and a marquee placed in front of the church.

The old sanctuary was converted to a fellowship hall that is used today for banquets and special events. It was named, the V.C.L. Coleman Fellowship Hall in memory of Reverend & Mrs. Coleman. In 1996, a cornerstone was placed on the front lawn bearing the insigne', Second Baptist Church, the "**Miracle on Madison Avenue**".

Additional land was purchased for parking in 1997 and in 2004; Second Baptist celebrated its 62nd church anniversary and mortgage burning ceremony. Today, Second Baptist Church remains debt-free!

Second Baptist started its outreach ministry years ago and continues to provide food, clothing, and other amenities to the needy, homeless and many others who have fallen on hard times. A live radio worship service is broadcasted on KCEP FM 88.1 at 8:15 a.m. each Sunday morning for those unable to attend a regular service.

In November, 2009, Second Baptist Church was once again blessed with the leadership of yet another dynamic anointed shepherd, the Reverend D. Edward Chaney to lead the congregation as its seventh Senior Pastor. He comes to us with a wealth of biblical knowledge, high energy, extraordinary vision, and strong outreach sensitivity. He is an enthusiast, committed and innovative.

In 2009, under the administration of Reverend Chaney, Second Baptist Church went through a quarter-million dollar sanctuary and vestibule renovation which included: the installation of new multimedia technology, new carpeting and pew refurbishment, vestibule redesign to include a welcome center, and bookstore. With his guidance and direction, Second Baptist has purchased a national landmark the old "Hamburger Heaven Restaurant". Second Baptist is being led through structural reorganization which is fostered by leadership training and development, biblical teaching and doctrinal education.