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An Interview with Jacqueline MacFarlane

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. Additional transcripts may be found under that series title.

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Preface

Jacqueline "Jackie" Tilman MacFarlane was born in her grandmother's Las Vegas home at H Street and Clark Ave. Her father John Franklin Tilman was a construction worker at Boulder Dam (now Hoover) in early 1930s. Jackie recalls her family having to move several times the Great Depression and living in rural Nevada.

Eventually the family came back to reside in Las Vegas. After graduating from high school, she took a waitress job at the Spot Café (Main & Charleston) and then at the Askew Drive-In. It was there that she met her future husband, David MacFarlane, an Air Force cadet. David continued to work at Nellis Air force Base as a civilian until he retired in 1987.

Jackie describes raising her children in Fair Circle neighborhood during the 1950s and 1960s; a time when Las Vegas was just a "small town of 50,000." She felt safe and always found work in the casinos. Her work career included being a change girl at the Mint of Fremont St. and working as the front office cashier at the Desert Inn and then working at the Sands Hotel and Casino. Eventually she became a night auditor at Sands Hotel and Casino and then at Sahara Hotel and Casino from 1970-1977. She remembers working nightshift, coming home to get the kids and husband off to school and work. After leaving Sahara, she began selling Vanda cosmetics as a home business, something she still does today.

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Jacqueline MacFarlane
Signature of Narrator Date

Claytee D. White 2/4/2010
Signature of Interviewer Date

So it is February 4th, 2010. And I am in the home of Jackie. This is Claytee White.

Jackie, give me your last name.

Jackie MacFarlane.

Jackie, now, you grew up in Las Vegas.

A lot of my years were here, yes.

You were born in Las Vegas?

I was born in Las Vegas.

Tell me about your early life. You can tell me about the time spent in Las Vegas and the time spent in mining camps.

Okay. I was born on Clark Avenue, 710 Clark Avenue on May the 4th, 1934. And my brother Jerry was born 13 months later at that same address. And I have three cousins who were also born at that address in 1936, 1938 and 1939. My grandmother's third husband owned those houses and he was a dealer at the Pioneer Club. Those houses were three green houses sitting on the corner of H Street and Clark Avenue. And I'm so glad they moved those houses. They did not tear them down. When they put the freeway over H Street, well, that's when those houses were moved.

Okay. So you were on H Street?

H Street and Clark Avenue is where those houses were. And that's where I was born in my grandmother's house.

So was that west of the railroad track?

That was east of the railroad track. No. I'm sorry. It was west of the railroad track.

Right. So you were in the area that was considered the area that a lot of black people lived in.

Do you know that I never saw a black person in all these years? And it's so interesting because I looked for the school. I went to that Westside School. So I checked to see what I could find out about it. I talked to the secretary. Do you know the school is still there? You can see some original classrooms. A radio station is there now.

Oh, yeah. They're getting ready to make a historical --

Right. All right. The land was donated by Helen J. Stewart and it was the first public school attended by Native American students from the Indian colony and for black students. I went to that school and I must have been probably in first grade. And I do not remember seeing black children

there.

Wow. So who were some of your teachers?

I could not tell you. Benny Binion's house is on Tonopah Avenue. And it would have been Clark Avenue because that's how long he's been -- his house is still there. He raised his family there.

Right. He's at the corner of Tonopah and Bonanza.

It would be Bonanza, yes. It used to be Clark Avenue.

Oh, Clark Avenue used to be Bonanza?

No. Bonanza used to be Clark Avenue.

Okay. So that's Clark Avenue. Okay. So you were at H and Clark.

Right.

Which today is H and Bonanza.

Right. And the freeway goes right over H Street.

That's correct.

Okay. The underpass used to say, "Clark Avenue Underpass, built in 1936." There is a great history of the underpass on the computer.

Okay, good. Yes.

That's what it was. They also started building Boulder Dam in those years. My father worked --

Boulder Dam was in 1931.

Yes. And I was born in '34. You know, the dam was being constructed; obviously before I was born he worked out at the dam.

Now, this was your grandfather. What was his name?

My father.

Oh, good. Your father's name is?

Jack Tilman. I've got it in here. It's John Franklin Tilman. But, yes. We lived in Boulder City. Whenever you see anyone talking about the dam and they talked to Lee Tilman, that was my dad's eldest brother. And he was there in Boulder City from 1931 until he died last year. They lived in Las Vegas. Then, when there was housing, they moved to Boulder city. He started off as a truck driver and then worked to become an engineer, electrical engineer or whatever that kind of work they do there. That's what his profession was. And he retired.

Okay. Now, tell me what your father did on the Boulder Dam.

You know, where they come down and do that thing hanging on the side with the --

Yeah. Like a high-scaler?

Right. That's what he did. Okay. Then we moved to --

Before we leave Boulder Dam, do you ever remember going to Boulder City with your father or your uncle?

Many, many times because we visited a lot. And I have cousins. Aunt Noma and Uncle Lee. In fact, Timothy, who would be their youngest boy, still lives in Boulder City. So, yes. We've stayed friends with them all these years.

Give me some of your first impressions of this area, the things that you remember as a little girl.

Well, it was not crowded. Very few people lived in Las Vegas. I have to say that I don't remember much about it. I had a head injury in 1968 when I fell at the ballpark and whacked my head. And I think maybe that could be why a lot of those memories have gone. I don't know. But there are things that I just don't remember. I barely remember even going to Westside school except that I know that I went to that school. Like I said during that Depression, we moved around a lot and he worked at the dam. Then we went up to Silver Peak. Are you familiar with that at all?

From here which direction is Silver Peak?

North. This is NIVLOC. And that's the house we lived in.

So she is showing me-- is this from a newsletter or a newspaper?

And this is a picture of it. This is in 1966.

So this is Esmeralda County.

Esmeralda County. Right.

"A small mining town of the early 1900s situated on a canyon a few miles west of Silver Peak."

And this is the house that the family lived in?

That is correct.

Now, do you remember this house?

Oh, yes, very much.

Tell me about it.



NIVLOC, Esmeralda Co. - A small mining town of the early 1900's, situated in a canyon a few miles west of Silver Peak. A couple of old houses were still standing in 1966, along with several foundations. Most of the buildings were erected on the canyon floor, an extremely dangerous practice because of the constant threat of flash floods. Many towns built in canyons like this were swept away when hit by a 20 foot wall of water that came roaring down the canyon.



Personal photo of the same house where Jackie lived at one time

Okay. It was obviously a wooden house. We had a lovely outhouse in case you think things—

If there's any such a thing as lovely.

Well, you use the Sears catalog for the toilet paper.

That's right.

Two and a half years ago, my son Stephen and my brother Donald, who lives now in Fernley, which used to be a wide spot on the road with a service station and now has a big golf course and homes, but my brother, he also lived up at Nivloc; he was just a baby up at Silver Peak when I was little. And we went up there. In fact, I have all those pictures that we had taken. The building is still there, but it's a pile of wood. I was so glad that my brothers had gone up to take this picture because that's where we lived. On December 7th, 1941 when Pearl Harbor was attacked that's where we lived. That's why I remember this so well. I went to school in Silver Peak, which is nine miles down from -- see, if you're going to Silver Peak, if you're coming down from Reno, which my brother did, you can go from the north side of it. If you're going from the south side of Tonopah. If you're going from this direction, you go on the north side of it. It would be the, yeah, north side of it. So either way you get to Silver Peak. It's about 20 miles or so off Tonopah Highway.

Okay, good.

And we had like a station wagon that took us down to the school. And I remember we went to a one-room school. There must have been maybe 10, 11 children in the one-room school. I remember that very well that for one teacher to teach all those grades. And I was seven years old. So I must have been in what I would guess would be probably second grade. When they heard about the bomb, I mean the war or attack on Pearl Harbor, we moved to Tonopah.

But before you did that, what kind of mining? Was it underground mining that your father did?

Silver. And I can tell you that the kind of -- they have the hard hat. And the kind of lights that they used -- he walked back into that. The light was carbide light that you lit it to go back into the mine. Yes, that's the kind of mining.

You lit it with a match?

Well, yeah. It was however they lit it. It was the light. That's how you went in.

So you had something burning here on top of your head?

Yes.

Oh, my god. Okay.

Well, that was 70 years ago, girl.

Okay. Okay.

We moved to Tonopah. And during the years from 19, well, could have been 1942, we moved to Tonopah. And my father ran the Ely-Tonopah stage line. And he drove the bus. He also was the manager of that bus line. My mother ran the office.

Okay. When you say stage line --

Bus. And it was Ely-Tonopah stage line, which nobody has heard of now. But it went to Ely, which they would take military. Right out of Tonopah is where they had that gunnery range. So we were there for, oh goodness, until the war was over for a short time. Well, do you know I do not remember the house we lived in or any of that in Tonopah. I don't even remember much of the school that I went to. I do remember my fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Rauch. Of course, when the war was over, I suppose the bus line was not running anymore. We moved to Deadwood, Idaho, which was a mining camp.

Silver mining again?

Probably, yes. My mother got quite ill. She was pregnant. And I do remember us flying out of Deadwood, Idaho, it was snowing, in an airplane; a little airplane that had skis to get in that we flew out of there into Cascade. And then we went to Boise, Idaho. That's where my sister, Patricia, who is now 63 years old, was born. We moved to a lot of different places that we had gone back and forth. It's just really hard to remember where you've moved and different places like that. But we have relatives in Nampa, Idaho, where my dad's brother Carl lived. We went to visit with their family. We did a lot of traveling when we lived in Las Vegas, just went vacationing up to see the family. So we have stayed very close with all of them.

So after Deadwood did you come back to Las Vegas?

After Deadwood, we went to Mountain Home, Idaho. We moved to Klamath Falls, Oregon. That was when I was in the sixth grade. My father was on the police department in Klamath Falls, Oregon. And we lived on Modoc Street. Even have a picture of my father in his uniform standing by that house. But I can't believe what an old house looking that was. I don't remember it that way

then. But, yes. And he was on the police department. And in about six months before I would have graduated from high school, my parents moved. They went back up to Nivloc for a very short time. Then they moved to Henderson and he worked at Basic Magnesium. But I stayed in Oregon so that I could graduate from high school.

So when they came back to Henderson, about what year was that?

It would have been in '52.

Now, it wasn't called Basic Magnesium anymore, was it?

Yes, it was. Yeah, it was Basic Magnesium. The town was called Basic in those days.

BMI was active during the war.

Yes, it was. But that's when he went down there and that's where he worked because they still kept working for a long time. In fact, it may still be working now. Isn't it now? But it did for a long, long time because he did work at Basic Magnesium.

So did you ever come back to Henderson with the family after high school?

No. I came probably for maybe a short time. Well, let me tell you when I came back to Las Vegas. I stayed there until I graduated from high school. They were living in Henderson at Carver Park. But I may have just gone in there if it was just a short time. But I moved to Vegas and rented a room down on Fifth and Bridger. That would have been whatever that Fifth Street would be, Bridger and then go down five blocks if you were going like towards Charleston, not toward town. 522 South 3rd.

So Bridger crosses Las Vegas Boulevard.

Right. But it would be going like--

Toward Main Street?

It would be toward Main, yes.

Okay.

And I rented a room there. And I went to work as a waitress at the Spot Cafe, which was a little place. And right next to it -- I was trying to find it on my computer, but couldn't find it -- a huge Texaco gas station, service station. And the Spot Cafe was right there. And it was right on Main and Charleston. I don't know whether I got fired because I didn't know how to do that or whatever. I don't know. But anyway, I got fired after a month working there. And that's when I went to work at

the Askew Drive-In. And the Askew Drive-In was at 2222 East Fremont Street.

Wonderful. So 2222 East Fremont is out toward?

It would be like Fremont; it would be East Fremont.

Like going toward Boulder Highway?

That would be right close where that would be, yes.

Okay, good.

And I was pregnant with John, who's 56 years old. I was fry cook. Do you know in all the years when I was raising kids and whatever, what they wanted for breakfast they could have because I loved that. That was probably my favorite job.

Wow. That's wonderful. Now, tell me how you met your husband.

Well, when I was working at the Spot Cafe, I worked the graveyard shift. And he and two other airmen came in, in uniform to get coffee. And I took one look at that young man and I said, whew, he's mine. And so we started dating. I was never raised in the church, although I always believed in God. Well, my David was raised in the church all his life in Herington, Kansas, where he was from. And so he would come in from Nellis and pick me up where I lived and we walked down to the corner of Third and Bridger to go to the First Methodist. Oldest church in Las Vegas. And we married.

Well, there's just so much to tell from that. We lived out at that B-Bar-B Trailer Park in North Las Vegas, I've told you about. Well, when I got pregnant and worked at that Askew Drive-In and had the baby, he would bring John in so that I could nurse him.

Oh, into the restaurant?

Into the restaurant so I could nurse the baby. Then he would take the baby home. And I worked there for, oh, until after I had the baby and I felt it wasn't really that good to work. When David's military time was finished, he replaced his own vacancy out at Nellis as a civilian. He was in the hydraulic shop. And he just continued as an aircraft mechanic, a hydraulic mechanic in the same shop.

So he got out of military but maintained the same job?

Right. In fact, I was going through and found an application that he had put through for that job. Anyway, so he just worked at Nellis until he retired in 1987. He had been out there all those many

years. We lived like I said at that B. Barbie Trailer Park. We lived in Kelso-Turner, which was government housing.

Where is that one located?

I couldn't tell you where it was located, but I have pictures of it in here that I can show you later. Nobody's ever heard of it now. It was government housing probably of some kind.

It was called Kelso --

Kelso-Turner.

Those are probably the builders.

And we were there. One of the streets we lived on was Marlin. 1311 Marlin, in fact. And then we gave a lot of thought to buying a home. And so we looked and we bought a new home in 1956. It was Twin Lakes, Unit Six, which is on the corner of Washington and Tonopah Drive Bonanza School,- you know, where Mabel Hoggard School is?

Yes.

Well, that used to be Bonanza School. And my children all went to Bonanza School. Our address was 2205 Fair Circle.

Oh, you lived in Bonanza Village.

No. We lived close, but we lived in Twin Lakes.

Oh, I see.

Unit Six was the last tract of homes that they built. In fact, I can't think of the name of the -- Keers, something like that. I can't think of who built it. But that was the last tract. They had built four tracts on the west side of the Tonopah Highway. And then units Five and Six are on the east side of Tonopah Highway.

Were you near the municipal golf course?

Well, it wasn't there then. But, yes, Washington is on the corner of that. The easiest way would be to go; oh, I'm trying to think of this street here. You go down Washington. And I think it's Maenpah and Mezpah are two streets. I think it's Maenpah that you go down and then you'd come to Fair Circle.

How far from Lorenzi Park were you?

Well, it's hard to say in the distance. It was close because it was on the other side and we were on

the --

Did you and your family use Lorenzi Park as a recreational area?

No.

Were there parks in your area?

No, there were not. What we did was -- well, in those days, you know, the kids did a lot of together, played together. The families all lived there. You had a husband and a wife and kids. That's just how it was. We're still friends with all those people in Fair Circle. In fact, most all still alive except for my David, which is interesting.

In Fair Circle there's a beautiful home up on the hill the Coopers lived. And now that house is—it's so sad because it was a beautiful home, of course, and their houses were built around that house. The best-looking house over there now is the one that we lived in, which is 2205 Fair Avenue.

My husband built two extra bedrooms on that house, one for each of our four children. My eldest was born at the old Rose de Lima in Henderson and the other three were born in the old Boulder City hospital with Dr. French being our doctor. He was such a fantastic doctor. When Dr. French died, my son John, who was 16 at the time, and I went to his funeral.

Wow. So why did you go all the way to Boulder City?

Because of the doctor.

Because of the doctor, okay.

Right. I mean we didn't know any doctors. We had gone to Dr. French all those many, many years. And he was just a wonderful; he did everything. He did my two cesareans. I mean he was our family doctor. You just don't have those anymore.

Yes. So tell me what it was like living in Fair Circle. You've already told me how the neighbors knew each other. Describe the neighborhood to me.

It was a very friendly neighborhood. We had, of course, like I said the school where you could watch the children go to school. In those days you could be five by December 31st and still be in kindergarten. That school was only up to fourth grade. So the other children if they were older in our neighborhood went to Highland School. Highland School is probably not even there anymore.

Probably the name changed.

Yeah. It was on Highland Avenue. But by the time my children were old enough, they did change it to -- it was all sixth grade could go there.

Sixth grade center.

Right. Well, no. From kindergarten through sixth grade.

Oh, I see.

And then they went to junior high, which was Gibson. And Western High School was the high school. That was the only high school on this side of town. There were four high schools when my children went to school. There was a Catholic high school, Rancho, Las Vegas and Western.

The kids went out and played. And the old saying you didn't have to come in until the streetlights came on, well, that is exactly how it was in our neighborhood. My son Donald and two friends road their bikes out on the Strip and took pictures of different hotels. You could never allow that today with the traffic and everything. But they went out there and took pictures of the hotels on the Strip, which, of course, there was lots of space between them. When we bought this house there was nothing but desert far behind us. So it's just so different when you try and remember how things were. We just didn't worry like I guess we do now. You just expected that everything was going to go fine and it did.

Yeah. It was a small town.

Well, the best time for Las Vegas was in the 50s and 60s when we had about 50,000 people.

Now, why do you say it was the best time?

Because we never locked a door. I worked first at the Desert Inn in 1961 as a front office cashier. I drove my car, parked it, got out, never locked it. We lived in Fair Avenue then. Never locked our doors. You know, you just believed that nothing was going to happen.

Tell me about the Desert Inn.

The Desert Inn was one of the greatest hotels to ever be. In fact, Helen Barbe, she and I were cashiers together. We are still long-time friends and we talk often on the phone and whatever. She's a little older than I am. But she's a super, beautiful lady.

Those were the days when you could go -- the shows were in the lounges. We worked in the front office. If you weren't busy, you could walk down and watch the shows. Keely Smith and Louis Prima were in the lounge. It would cost you a drink to go in and watch the show. It was a

super place to work.

Who else do you remember entertaining there?

Off the top of my head I couldn't remember anybody.

Okay. Tell me about who owned the hotel.

If you told me I'd remember.

Were those owners part of the family?

Absolutely. The great thing -- this is until the corporations bought -- you had one -- I don't want to use the wrong word.

Go ahead. You can use mob or you can use family.

All right. There was one mob person owned one casino all over. Everything was just one person that owned it. Everything was practically free.

You are talking about one person owning each hotel-casino.

Yes. Everything was practically free. They just wanted you to come in. The meals were cheap. The food was cheap. This was also downtown on Fremont Street. Everything was cheap. All they wanted you to do is come in and gamble. I probably told it a hundred times. When we had one crook running one casino, Las Vegas was doing beautiful. When they brought in four corporate perks to run all the casinos where every department had to make a profit -- that is what has happened to this city. And that credit card that these corporations had -- they used the credit card. That's why they had to close down ones and why they're going broke because they didn't know cash works a lot better than credit cards. And that's exactly how I feel about it.

So tell me what it was like prior to this. So in 1961 tell me about going to work, tell me how you were treated, what they did for you at holidays and those kinds of things.

I could not tell you what the wages were, but they were very fair. They felt like you were important. I've never worked anyplace where I was not made to feel important to that place. And you worked harder a lot of times, but you also learned. When we worked the NCR 2000 machine and the cashier's procedure of how you did the money, we had to do the work. You also had to do your machine. You had to know how to work. They don't do that anymore.

So what did that machine do?

Well, you'd have to go put the paperwork in it, do your posting on it, and then the thing would come

out and you'd give the customer a copy of their bill.

Is it like a cash register?

Yes. In fact, that could be the company that made that. They had that up until maybe only 20 years ago. Of course, I haven't worked for a lot of years. But the next place I worked was the Sands.

Before you leave the DI -- you can talk about the Sands at the same time. You were treated like you were important.

Yes.

Tell me some of the extra things they did for the employees to make them feel important.

We did not pay for our meals. Well, like I said anything that you wanted to they were willing to help you with. And for salary we got vacation time. We were not union then, but you still got vacation time the same. And the salary obviously was fair. We felt like we made a good wage or we wouldn't have been able to afford it.

What were the tips like?

I did not make tips as a cashier. We did not get tips.

Did the waitresses get decent tips?

Yes. Just to back up on this a little, before I worked there in 1956 -- in fact, I'll take just a minute. I want to show you something. You may have already seen this.

So you brought out a picture. Tell me about that picture.

This picture was given to me by my son Stephen who worked at Allen Photography.

And describe the picture for me. It's downtown.

This picture is downtown Las Vegas. You'll see at the end the railroad station and there's a big park here. And as you look down Fremont, you see these different casinos that are no longer there.

So we're looking down Fremont Street with the Golden Nugget on our left.

And the Boulder Club and The Mint on the right. The Mint was where I worked as a change girl.

That was in 1954?

No. That was in 1956 when I was old enough. You had to be 21.

And the Bingo Club is on the left.

Yes. See, all these are no longer there when they enlarged the Golden Nugget. But anyway, and, yes, I made dang good tips when I worked change even to the point of one man asking me -- he

wanted to play a dime machine and somebody else was playing it. And so the machine he was playing, he hit a hundred-dollar jackpot. And he gave me that hundred dollars. So, yeah, they were very good tippers in those days.

Great. When you were working at the DI and the Sands, you mentioned a few minutes ago that sometimes they would help you do things. Would they help people buy houses?

No. I don't know because I never would have had that need. I don't know. Well, an easier explanation would be when I worked at the Sands. And, of course, you realize the Desert Inn has now been imploded, my beautiful Desert Inn.

Yes. And the Sands.

And the Sands. And I worked at the Sands. Well, in 1968 when I was at my number three son Donald's ballgame, he hit a beautiful three base hit. And in standing up I fell and hit my head. And I was off work for three months at the Sands hotel. And my job was kept open for me. And I had insurance in those days. When I worked at the Sands is also when we voted union. I worked in the credit office, which was behind the front desk in those days. And Carl Cohen, who was the owner of the Sands hotel, came and talked to the ladies in the credit office and said he was sorry, but we couldn't vote because our job was such a different job than what the cashiers had. Well, anyway, the vote of the union came in and we still got all the benefits even though we were not allowed to vote.

What kinds of benefits did you get from the union that you had not had before?

We got more money. We got time and a half for holidays. And we got regular pay increases each time, which we did not get that before. So just the basic things that you would get. And we had insurance through the Teamsters that we got.

So you were part of the Teamsters?

Yes.

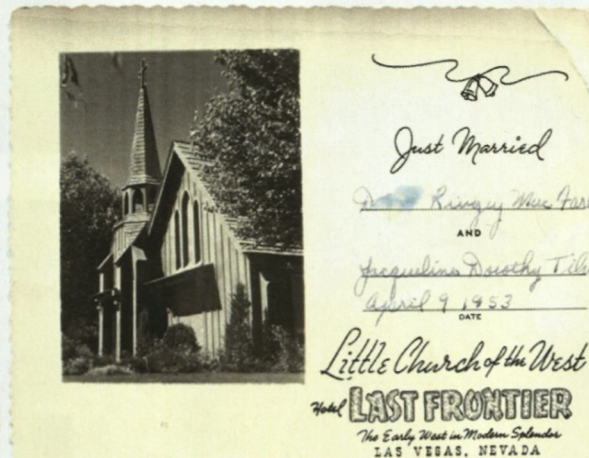
And some of the people were part of the Culinary?

That would be the ones that worked in the kitchen and maids -- I don't know if maids. Are they with that also?

Yes.

Yes.

So how did the bosses feel about the union?



April 9, 1963, Wedding day photos: Last Frontier Hotel and Little Church of the West.



Last Frontier photos



Jackie on the job using the NCR posting machine in the background; latest equipment being used by

casino operations .

They never treated us any different. We were treated the same as we always had been.

What were the differences between the Desert Inn and the Sands?

As far as how we were treated and everything, none. Except, you know, the Sands is where we got to see the big stars and it was a lot of fun.

Do you remember any of the stars that you saw at the Sands?

Oh, yes. I'm trying to think. Dean Martin and the group.

The Rat Pack.

The Rat Pack, yes. They were there. When you'd see them they were always making jokes and whatever. It was really great. And that is another occasion when we were able to go and see the shows without having to worry about our time or whatever.

Did you ever get to go into the Copa Room?

Oh, yes.

Tell me what that was like.

It was a very beautiful, beautiful place. Well, in fact, it's been also where we've taken family. It was very beautiful place. It was just very well decorated. Then, all of them where. It would be hard to pick one over the other as they were just very beautiful. Very friendly.

Tell me about how the people dressed. How did you dress when you would go there?

Dressed-dressed, the same way you dressed when you went to church. I still have to put my face on when I go to church. But I'd be overdressed if I dressed like I used to.

When I came from Klamath Falls after I graduated from high school, I flew in. And the high temperature in Klamath Falls is probably 90. And I got off the plane June the 3rd, 1952. In those days the airplane parked out on the runway and you walked down the stairs and then across the area into this small building. And when they opened the door -- and here I'm in high heels and dress and hat and gloves --

Silk stockings.

Silk stockings. High heels. And when they opened that door, I thought I was in hell, oh, the heat because it had been a lot of years since I -- it was hot. And we did not have humidity in those days. So that was when I first remember coming back to Las Vegas. But you get used to the heat and I don't mind at all now. But it was very warm.

Tell me about the showgirls at the Desert Inn and the Sands.

They were absolutely gorgeous girls. The costumes and everything were so beautiful. We did not see much of those gals because obviously they were in the shows and whatever, which when I worked at the Sands I worked during the day. So you wouldn't see them anyway. But they were really gorgeous, gorgeous ladies, kind of like the Dallas Cowgirls.

Did you ever think about becoming a showgirl?

No. Actually I was happy when I was the night auditor. I was very happy with that kind of work.

Tell me what a night auditor does.

A night auditor has to balance when all the work is finished -- of course, you're working during the time. But then at the end of the shift you must balance all of the accounts, balance the money, make sure everything is as it's supposed to be. You have to sign the slip that you've counted the money and you are responsible for what is done. You're the one that's in charge of that shift.

Tell me about your church life. You've talked about First Church earlier. Tell me about First Church.

Like I said we're members of First Church from 1952 until it closed on June the 30th, 2003. We started going to that before we were ever married although we were not married in that church. We were married at that Little Chapel of the West. But all of my children were baptized in that church. My grandchildren were baptized in that church, most of them. We were very, very active. I was the superintendent of Sunday school there in the church and taught Sunday school for 30 years of being at that church. It was like a home. And I still have friends. When they gave me my 75th birthday, my friends from First Church were here and friends from our neighborhood on Fair Avenue were here. So it was just a really wonderful, wonderful church. The historical marker is on it now.

And when we closed the church -- I didn't know this until recently -- we had been there since 1905 on that corner. But they never had the historical marker on it. And the Katz family bought the church. They put a restaurant there after we closed. They are the ones who had -- that was a restaurant there after they closed the church.

So in 2003 it became a restaurant?

After that, yes.

So which corner is it?

It's 231 South Third.

So Third and Bridger?

Uh-huh. Right across the street from where the courthouse was.

Ah. So what is the restaurant now?

I don't know what they called it. But it was like for just breakfast and lunch. It did not stay open. And that may have been because of the courthouse closing. I don't know. But I understand there is another restaurant now. But I have not been down there to see. So I don't know. But I was told that there is.

So where did the church go when it left there?

It merged with Sunrise Mountain and it is now Heritage United Methodist Church, which they changed the name when it merged with Sunrise Mountain Methodist Church.

So you're out going towards Sunrise Mountain?

Yes. It's on Bonanza and whatever the side street. The other street would be in there, yes. Sunrise Mountain has been there many, many years. It cannot have a school because it's in the flight pattern from Nellis.

So how did you feel when your church closed after all those years?

Sick.

You must have.

Sick. I remember the day that I got out of my car, because I drove then. And it was on June the 30th, 2003. And I got out of my car and walked across that parking lot into the church and I was just sick that that was the last day that my church would be there. And I was driving up to Sunrise Mountain, which was ten miles from my house. And I probably maybe would still be going to that church if I didn't wreck my car and I don't drive anymore. It was very difficult.

It had to be.

Tell me about some of the fun things that a young couple like you and your husband would do when you first got married. You were living downtown. So what kind of recreation did you enjoy?

To be honest with you probably go to a movie or something. I don't really remember when we moved into the neighborhood. Then we played a lot of cards, pinochle and things, played a lot of

games. Like we do right now, you have people over to eat or go to their house to eat. We didn't really do too much. We went up to Mount Charleston. I have pictures of it, in fact. This is my number-three son skiing up at Mount Charleston. He did his --

And how long ago was this?

He's 53 now and he was about 14 when he did this. Let's see if I got it on the back. No. I've just got what it is.

Oh, that's great. That's great.

So, yes, we did go to Mount Charleston a lot. We also went out to the lake.

Can I just keep them apart because there are other pictures that you're going to show me?

Oh, sure.

Did the children ever participate in any of the Helldorado parades?

Yes. I also have pictures of that, which you can get. In fact, my son John -- Western Warrior Band. Here we're all dressed up for the Helldorado.

Wonderful. And you have the dates on the pictures. So this is in the 50s and you're dressed up for Helldorado. This is wonderful.

Helldorado started in 1931 I believe, didn't they say, or '34? It's early.

I think it's '34.

Yeah, you could be right. Oh, I had this. So they were very active in the Boy Scouts, which I had set that out that they had started from First Church. And my husband were the ones who --

Your husband helped to lead the troop?

Yes, he led the Boy Scouts. Also they played baseball, the boys. In fact, in the old days -- how long have you been in Las Vegas? Well, you're too young anyway.

That's what you think.

You're way too young.

Thank you. But I've only been here since 1991.

Okay. On the corner, which is now Rancho and Charleston, Bank of Nevada was there, the round bank. That was our first bank. And that was in 1956 when we opened an account at that bank. Well, we are now with Wells Fargo. And it was Bank of Nevada, First Interstate, First National and Wells Fargo. But we're still --

At the same location.

No. They're the ones that keep moving and changing their name. But right next to that was a big piece of vacant land with trees all around it. And that belonged to Charlie Perry, a good Catholic gentleman, that my children, good Methodist, played baseball all those years with the Catholic Youth Organization. That property is where they practiced. Well, Donald, my youngest, was six I think when they first started. The kids got trophies.

So they were in a little league?

Uh-huh. In the Catholic Youth Organization. In those days there were three county parks. In fact, that's where I told you I fell at one of the parks and hit my head. And that was at Paradise Park where I fell and hit my head.

So Paradise Park was located where?

It's in the county "my grandma's accident, 1968 ballpark." That's the ballpark. But look around the ballpark and see how there's absolutely nothing around it.

Oh, yes. All desert in the background.

In all the parks. And we had to drive clear across -- we lived then in Fair Avenue and we drove all the way across town -- well, actually where -- as you can see in this other one, which is Mountain View Park which is another place that they played, you can see it's just nothing but desert everywhere you look. And this is like going back about 45 years.

These are wonderful pictures.

Well, you can see how the color fades.

Yes. But still the color is there. You told me about a cafe called the Askew Drive-In and you told me about the Spot Cafe. Tell me the other eating establishments that you remember from the 50s and 60s in the downtown area.

Oh, my goodness. There were lots of them, but we did not eat out much. Of course, all the places downtown they had all kinds of food, and the food was very inexpensive.

What about the Green Shack?

I do not remember eating there, but I do know where it is. But, no, I do not remember eating there.

Okay. You have a photograph here on the table of the bomb.

Yes.

Tell me about the atomic testing and how your family reacted to that.

Okay. That is my husband's car that's parked out there. And we lived over on B-Bar-B Trailer Park. And these pictures: well, that is the trailer house we lived in. It was 16 feet long and belonged to my aunt and uncle that we paid \$50 a month rent on. But we stood and watched the bombs. I mean stood out there and watch the clouds. That was 1953 and '54.

What did people tell you about the bomb at that time? Did the government --

That it was nothing to worry about. Nothing to worry about. But it certainly was.

Yes. And I'm putting the photographs over here that I want to scan one of these days.

That's great.

What other photographs do you have here on the table that would depict some of the early events in Las Vegas history?

I was going to tell you, by the way, that's what those machines looked like. And I wrote on the back of it. How about that?

So this is the NCR 2000 machine.

And I've got it on the back. Tells you all about it.

And the person standing here leaning against --

That's me.

That's you. This is a wonderful photograph. Great. I'm going to put that one over here.

Now, is this at the Sands, the Desert Inn, or where is this?

That was Manpower --

Tell me about working for Manpower.

That was really a great thing. In fact, I have -- which is kind of interesting. It was University of Nevada that made that for us. And as you can see, I started in 1966 and that is 1972. You had to have it renewed every two years.

What is this?

That's the license for me to teach.

To teach the machine?

Yes.

Okay. How to use the machine.

Right.

Tell me what Manpower is.

All right. Manpower was a program. I don't even know if it's still around. But what Manpower was and is -- as the hotels were opening, they needed help. You know, obviously you have to learn to do what you're doing. So that's why they had the classes. The very first class I had had 20 people in it. It gradually got down there were only eight people in it. And that's when they discontinued doing it. But many, many of those people that worked there -- in fact, a dear friend Betty Brave was in my first class and we worked together. And her funeral was about two months ago. So when you see things like that, it's pretty amazing.

Oh, there's my son marching in the inaugural parade, I mean in Helldorado. See where I said John? That's him walking with the trumpet. And that's my baby that's now 56 years old.

Wow. That's great. That is a great picture.

This is what my house looked before. I've got on the back what that is. That's this house with desert all behind us when we bought this house.

Why did you decide to move out of Fair Circle?

Well, we wanted a bigger place. David wanted to plant a garden. He had chickens. And that was all garden back there when he was alive.

What kinds of things did you grow in the garden here in Las Vegas?

Oh, tomatoes, corn, peppers, whatever.

That was from the El Cortez downtown on Fremont Street.

So I've just picked up a picture of the El Cortez. It looks like it's from one of the photographs that the hotels actually take.

You can see it is obviously pretty old because it's not that way anymore.

Well, have you seen it recently since they've refurbished it?

I have not even been downtown since they did the canopy because I think that was the dumbest thing they ever did.

Tell me about the Fremont Street that you remember.

Well, Fremont Street was -- traffic could go on it. The railroad station was down at the end and there was a big park right in front of the railroad station. The Fremont hotel, which was -- in fact,

there for a while they had us looking in binoculars to see if -- this is in the 50s -- seeing if there were any planes coming in. I think I only did that one time. I worked at the Mint, it was fun. It was just a beautiful place. And I'm going back to the 50s and 60s.

Well, I've just run across a picture of the Flamingo in 1952.

Yes. My husband took that.

Isn't that a wonderful photograph?

I took those out of his album. That's how I found my Askew Drive-In picture.

And tell me about that one.

Okay. This is the Desert Inn. And that was also like I said taken -- he took that in 1952.

And this last one, where is that filling station located?

He just doesn't tell us where. It's in Las Vegas. He doesn't say where in Las Vegas.

And do you remember this filling station?

No. My husband took those pictures possibly before I even met him because he had been here about a year before I met him.

Do you have any other pictures of buildings and scenery?

Where did I put those that I had? They're bigger than these. I showed you those I think that I took out of town, didn't I? I mean that the kids took. Oh, that's something that you probably --

This is the Horseshoe. This is inside the --

That's the money.

This is the inside -- oh.

Look what my father-in-law wrote here. "Here we are with a million dollars in actual cash."

So this is the million dollars that the Horseshoe had on display at one time?

Yes. And I have lots and lots of pictures of this.

And look at the old slot machines.

Yeah. This is a better picture of it.

Oh, this is great. Now, who is that standing there?

That is my mother and father-in-law, Louella and Roy Wolfe.

And would you spell their names for me?

Yes. Actually I never had a drier. Clothes lines, you know. And when she died in 1982 that's when

I got her drier. And I'm still using it.

Great. That's wonderful. Nothing like a clothes drier.

I still hang my sheets and stuff out on the line.

That's great to be able to do that.

You were about to show me some other photographs.

These are the pictures that my son Donald took. This is the Dunes.

Oh, wonderful.

He's now 53 and this was taken when he was about -- he told me he was about 13. So it would be about 40 years ago.

So it is 2000 -- what is it, ten now?

Yeah.

So we're talking about in 1970?

Yeah. And this is the International.

That's about the same year probably?

These are all taken the same time, yes.

And what is this right here with the waterfalls in front of it?

You know, it's one of the hotels, but I don't know.

Is it Caesars Palace?

That's what it says, Caesars Palace.

Oh, really? Okay, great.

It says right there on the building.

Yeah, that's right. So that's a very nice picture of Caesars Palace.

And this I think must be -- I'm trying to think of the -- isn't that funny I can see it in my head and can't say it? Something palace.

Palace Station?

No.

Downtown?

No. It was out on the Strip. And it's not there anymore I don't think or else it's been redone. Isn't that funny I can't think of the name of what it was?



Askew Drive-In



Plume of smoke from Nevada Test Site as locals drive out to watch.



From Jackie's scrapbook of memorable casinos and hotels: (Clockwise, top left) Flamingo, Desert Inn, Caesars, International.....

Royal Nevada?

Yeah. I think that might be what it was. I'm not sure though.

Was it near the Stardust?

Yeah.

So probably the Royal Nevada. Wonderful.

And this is that Askew Drive-In that I was telling you about.

Oh, this is the Askew Drive-In. And you've got it on the back.

My hubby already had that on there.

Oh, that is wonderful.

See, the picture I've been spending all this time looking for had the Askew with my husband's car sitting in front of it. But when I went back through his album, then I saw that one and I said, oh, okay, then I can quit looking for that one.

So now, the Askew Drive-In --

Charlie Askew was the one who owned that. And that was at 2222 East Fremont Street.

Could you get served in your car?

Apparently because it says drive-in. But I worked inside and I was a cook. But it was a drive-in. So I'm sure they served the food to you.

Okay, wonderful. So any other pictures of buildings or restaurants or anything like that?

Well, these are from the Frontier.

What is the one right here that you just moved?

Well, those are from the Frontier hotel, the old Frontier.

Oh, this is the old Frontier. This is a boarding house.

Yeah. Doesn't it say from the old Frontier?

Mother Logan's Boarding House at the Last Frontier.

Yeah. That's what all of these are. They're probably not there anymore because the Last Frontier -- these were taken in 1952. The Last Frontier had the old train, you know, like old towns and things, wagons with the names on them.

Yes. Okay, wonderful.

And that's a beauty shop also at that place.

At the Last Frontier.

Right.

So there was a part of the Last Frontier that looked like an old town?

Right.

And these are pictures from that portion of it.

Right.

Wonderful. This is fabulous. I really appreciate this so much. Any other memories of Las Vegas that you'd like to share?

Well, I think I've just tried to do my best thinking here. You know how hard it is.

Well, you've done great. This is wonderful.

Well, it's wonderful for you to come. I said I just really was not knowing what I was going to tell you or what you were going to ask me. I'm delighted. I have been told by my children you need to write a book about the family like my uncle did. His book is in the libraries, but we can't check it out.

What is the name of it?

Well, Lee Tilman interview. And he starts telling when they were in an orphanage when my grandmother. She worked; she was divorced apparently young. But stories tell about when they were in the orphanage. The only reason I know that is my sis was telling me at the funeral they had the book sitting out there and she read the first couple of chapters and it told when they were in the orphanage and the things that they had done through the years. And they say there is a book in UNLV library, Boulder City library. He has the book. And whether the kids each have one, I don't know. It wasn't where anybody could just get it and read it. And Lee Tilman is the author.

So it was probably an oral interview.

I don't know to tell you the truth. It could be.

But the name Lee Tilman would be on it, T-I-L-L-M-A-N?

One L.

T-I-L-M-A-N.

Yes.

I'm very glad I asked.

And why that has been changed -- you know, you hear stories. Whether they're true or not, we don't know. But we were told that during the Civil War there were two brothers with two Ls. And the one that changed his name to one L was against slavery. And he took the one L out of his name and he left the area where they were. And the other brother was in favor of slavery and he kept the two Ls. Now, whether it's a true story, you know, you don't know. It's those things that you hear. If it's true or not -- but we do have the one. There aren't too many one "l" Tilmans.

Right. So if this book is in the library, I will be able to find it.

That's what they said, yes.

How thick is this book?

I have not the foggiest.

Well, I will find the book for you and I will see what it's like.

Well, that would be wonderful.

And if it's something that I could make a copy of for you, I'll make a copy.

Oh, that would be -- oh, my goodness. My sister and I talk about this so much. That would be absolutely wonderful.

Oh, good. And let me tell you what's going to happen with the interview that I've done today.

Okay. I hope you're going to go through and take out some of the stuff I've talked about that's unnecessary.

We're going to transcribe it. And then we're going to show you a copy of it. It's just a rough draft. And you will be able to take out little things and add little things that you want to add. You might remember a story and we might be able to put it in the appendix of the book. So as you're reading and after today after stirring up all these memories, you'll remember other things.

Well, I know what you're saying is true because when I fell and hit my head at the ballpark, we sued the county. That was in 1968. We sued the county because when I fell -- that was at that Paradise ballpark. There was no protection on the bleacher. And right behind it were light switches. And when I fell my son had hit a beautiful three-base hit. And when I stood up to cheer and sat down, I fell and whacked my head. I have a nice big hole in my head right here. I fell and was in the hospital for 24 days, was in a coma for eight days, had surgery on my head twice. The doctor told my

husband and the children that they didn't think I was going to make it. With a lot of praying, I did make it. When I first woke up, my husband was standing there and he said, Do you know who I am? And I said, You're Black Bart. And he laughed and he says, No, I'm Dave. Well, you know how your mind kind of goes. Well anyway, I was off work for three months from the Sands hotel. When I went back -- and I even read, *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*, to see if that's where Black Bart was.

Okay, yes.

Go back to work. And in the credit office right there on the wall is Diner's Club, Black Bart.

Oh, wow. Oh, that's something.

Now, where is Sam's hotel?

The Sands hotel.

Sands, okay.

Because it's been imploded.

No, no, no. I thought you said Sam's. I just wanted to make sure I had that already.

No. Sands. See, I worked the Sahara also. The last few years I worked the Sahara.

Let me ask you about the Sahara in just a second.

So why did the family sue the ballpark?

Yes. Let's get to that. The bleachers did not have any protection behind them. And now every single park they do have the protection behind the bleachers. So who knows that the Lord didn't intend for that to happen so that we could have that happen. We sued the county. And such a big lawsuit. My hospital bill, everything, was \$8500. We sued the county for \$12,000. The lawyer got 4,000. We got 8,000. And from back that many years the hospital bill today would be that in one day.

Oh, yes. Oh, without a doubt.

I didn't have memory. My vocabulary was terrible. But totally amazing how the mind can really heal itself.

That's correct.

It really is just totally amazing. I was able to go back to work after three months and do the work. So it really is amazing.

So the last job you had was at the Sahara?

The Sahara hotel, yes. I was the night auditor there from 1970 to 1977. The only reason that I quit that job was I worked ten at night to six in the morning. They changed my hours midnight to eight. I had a husband to get off to work and I had children to get off to school. So I quit. I even was going through stuff and found my resignation letter telling them why I was quitting. But, yes. And I haven't worked outside the home since then.

I sell Vanda Beauty Counselor Cosmetics. But in the old days we had a wonderful, wonderful bunch of 43 girls selling Vanda cosmetics.

What is the name of the cosmetics?

It used to be Beauty Counselor. Now it's Vanda Beauty Counselor. The company has been around since 1938. Alberta Powell, who was the organist at our church, also was the distributor here for Vanda here. We were the Daisy Beauty Sales in Las Vegas.

Oh, that's great.

Well, I won the gold and diamond bracelet, which was really quite a thing, from \$24,000 in sales. But when Alberta died -- you know how something can happen and you just -- and now we have just three of us that are selling Vanda. I'm still using it and selling it.

Well, wonderful. That's great.

Just don't have the kind of business that you have in the old days.

And you have lots of competition now. You have Mary Kay and Avon.

You know, it was an interesting thing that I heard on the news that Mary Kay is very active in China. And 200,000 women in China sell Mary Kay. But the amount of money they make, maybe \$30 in a month, to me that wouldn't be worth the work. But they say that it gives them the opportunity to become more independent, which women as a rule are not. So I suppose that would be logical.

Yeah. I think China's a lot farther along than that now.

Oh, I'm sure. I'm sure.

Yes. Well, thank you so much. This has been wonderful. Any last comments?

No, darling. I appreciate you for doing this.

Okay, great.

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