

Interview with
Jack and Maxine Cason

Gathered on
Conducted by Stefani Evans and Claytee White
Transcribed by Frances Smith

S: Good afternoon. This is Stefani Evans and Claytee White and we are in the beautiful home of Jack and Maxine Cason. Mr. Cason would you please pronounce and spell your first and last name.

J: Jack Cason. J A C K. C A S O N.

S: And Mrs. Cason

M: Maxine Cason. M A X I N E. C A S O N.

S: Thank you so much. Mr. Cason why don't we begin by you telling us about your childhood, where you were born and grew up, and tell us about your parents.

J: I was born in Ardmore, Oklahoma. My mother and father, do you want their names?

S: Yes.

J: Bernie Cason and Dallas Cason. We were a family of mother and father and two boys. My brother was Pete Cason who has passed away several years ago. We moved here in 1950. My childhood and going to school and graduated from high school was in Ardmore. I played all sports and went to the navy in 1944, rather than be drafted. That was World War II, that's how old I am. After I got out of the navy I had a scholarship to play football at Oklahoma University, which later on I quit school. My mother and father had moved to California. I moved to California because my parents were there, after quitting school. I got hurt playing ball so I moved to California to be with them, but I had met and gone with Maxine and later we decided to get married. I had to make arrangements and help her move to California and we got married in San Bernardino, California. In the meantime I had gotten a job, more on a temporary basis, with the beginning of independent gasoline stations. I was working for a company that had built gasoline stations with only gasoline and oil, no lube, no service. All of

a sudden I really liked what I was doing and was promoted to manager, almost before I started.

S: This is in San Bernardino?

J: Yes. I actually moved to California to get a job and send for Maxine and we would get married, I hoped. I had a job and the guy I was working for he wanted to buy a new car so he sold me his car at a cheap price. I had a new wife, a new car, a new job, and a paycheck. Evidently I was doing a good job. My boss was building a couple of stations in Las Vegas, which was very new. The population was 25,000, as I remember. The type of service station that we built was just gas and oil and we had to serve the cars. There was no self-service in Nevada. I was a manager of this new venture in Las Vegas and it became very successful, very high volume. The company I was working for built two more stations because we were doing so well. Over a short period of time the company I was working for thought that Las Vegas was going to become a ghost town. Immediately I got interested in how I could buy into that company, or buy them out, because it was privately owned, two brothers. I found out that Maxine's mother would loan us some money to buy into that company, buy them out. We bought our first station and I was willing to work 24 hours a day to make it a success. Not long after that, those two brothers that owned those stations, thought Las Vegas was going to be a ghost town so I had an opportunity to buy another one of the stations. In those days, stations like ours were called independent stations. They bought gasoline, I'll put it this way, out the back door of major oil companies. That was the phrase that we used in those days. Brokers would buy it from the major oil companies and sell it to guys like me at a discounted price. I was doing so well in volume that I bought two more leases, not physical properties, but leases. I leased the station and I did all the work and so forth and paid rent.

S: May I ask where these stations were? Where was the first one?

J: The first one was at Ninth and Fremont and the second one was in North Las Vegas on old Highway 91. At that time there was no cross street.

C: How did you finance them?

J: The second one had been built by a broker and they leased it out to guys like me. We did so well that I built the first station on, in those days, North Fifth, Highway 91. In the meantime, Phillips Petroleum Company was wanting to get into this market as a major oil company and bring their products into this market because to them, they were coming from the Salt Lake City division. To them this was a growing market for them. They were looking for a jobber. In those days they called them jobbers. They were sending salesmen to Las Vegas to interview different people that they might be able to sign up as a jobber. Now the difference between a jobber and what we were doing is that a jobber usually owned his own business and just bought product direct from a major oil company and not from a broker. It cut the broker out.

S: Were there other independent stations?

J: No.

S: You were the only one?

J: We were the first one. They surveyed Las Vegas and there was an oil distributor, lube distributor, no gas, selling Quaker State and Pennzoil and oil brands like that. They interviewed everybody here in Las Vegas as to who would be a good representative for them with Phillips 66 products. To borrow a phrase from those distributors, they told the real estate person for Phillips Petroleum Company, "There is only one guy in Las Vegas you need to get and it is Jack Cason. You get him and you've got a winner." I'm quoting, reluctantly, I don't like to talk about it all.

S: These were your competitors that said that?

J: No. They were selling oil and grease, not gasoline. The only gasoline salesman selling companies were major oil companies, Texaco, Chevron. Phillips, a major oil company, was trying to get into the market, as I explained. They were told that if you get a hold of Jack Cason and you have a winner. It is hard for me to talk about all this. Their representative found me pumping gas and he said, "Are you Jack Cason? I'm looking for Jack Cason?" I said, "You found him." He said, "I would like to talk to you about becoming a Phillips 66 jobber." I didn't even know what he was talking about, hardly, a little bit. We made a deal, short cut. They had a financing program where we could borrow money from the oil company, buy the land, build our own station, and pay them back for the loan. Fantastic deal for a guy like me. We signed a contract and I started looking for new locations and I started building full service gas stations representing Phillips 66. I was responsible for bringing a major oil company into this market. They had this financing program, a jobber program. All of a sudden a jobber's name is introduced to the market, which the major oil companies hated. They didn't like that type of program, even though Phillips Petroleum Company is one of the biggest. They had this financing program where they would loan you the money and you locate and buy the land, you build this station on it, and pay them back over 20 years. For a guy like me, I couldn't wait because I really liked to work hard. I proved to them that I could do this. They couldn't loan me money fast enough. I was going out and getting other businesses that belonged to other operators and branding them Phillips 66, as a customer. It enabled us also to go from lube and oil and gasoline into tires and batteries and accessories. It was a full service station, operated by dealers who I would go out and get to operate the station. We owned, sold them the gas, but they ran a dealer business.

S: You went from pumping your own gas at one station to being a jobber for Phillips 66.

J: And the dealers did all the work.

C: Those dealers, did they own any part of this?

J: They owned nothing. I owned it and leased that facility.

S: And the brand name on the station was Phillips 66?

J: Yes.

C: How did Rebel Oil come about?

J: They also came up with, Phillips 66, came up with the idea of an unbranded station. They still had the financing program so I could build Phillips 66 stations or I could build unbranded stations. I had it both ways.

S: When did the first Rebel station happen?

J: The first independent station, I can't tell you the date but it would be substantially into the program, like several years.

S: In a sense you were kind of competing against yourself?

J: Yes.

C: What was the logic behind that, that some of them are Phillips 66 and some are unbranded?

J: Some of the unbranded, competitors, we always called it the cut-rate business, and they would cut the price so that I had it both ways. I became a huge competitor so they didn't mess around with the price as much. They would have an independent station and cut the price on the branded station next door. Low price gets the business. I understood all that by working from the beginning and I am very competitive and so I thought I have it both ways and they can't run me out of business. And very honestly, it is so true, that over the years, I was such a

competitor that the other marketers here, major and unbranded, like Terrible Herbst, they came to town too, later. The mother and dad came to town later. The present Herbst was in college. We became terrible competitors.

C: Did you see it as fair competition? Was the playing field equal?

J: No. There was always price cutting and some were price cutting worse than others. I don't want to get into that. Bad blood.

C: We know that there was some competition there that was not always very friendly.

J: You put it perfectly. Along the way, our name was Saveway Super Service Stations, there were no Rebels. Being that was the beginning of a very competitive college environment where Reno had the Wolf Pack and Las Vegas was Southern Nevada something. I don't know what they called themselves. It had no bearing on the university. I wanted to compete with the Reno's name, they were using the Wolf Pack. I am driving down the highway and I am thinking I have to change that damn name because it is a mouthful, Saveway Super Service Station. Hell, no one can remember that to buy their gas there. I thought Rebel, that's it, because independents tried to get a catchy name, like Terrible. To make a long story short, I came up with this idea to get away from the Saveway Super Service Stations by calling our company Rebel. It was not because of the university. We were Rebels before the university was Rebels and I am proud of that. They probably don't want to admit it but that is the true story. That is how Rebel started, the name. With this financing program with Phillips Petroleum Company, I was off and running, to where we built all those stores. I would go out and buy the corners, the land, I would build the buildings, and I became a builder, and built a service station on it. In those days with Phillips I had two deals going. They loaned me money to build Phillips 66 station with tires, batteries, and accessories and they actually loaned me

money to build a private brand. I think I only built one or two private brand under the financing program because by then I was making money and I didn't borrow the money. I bought land on my own, built on my own, without borrowing, but I borrowed all I could borrow.

C: What were some of those first locations when you were building your own?

J: I picked the location, I built the building, and they gave me the money.

M: First service station ever on the Strip.

J: Yes.

S: You had the first service station on the Strip?

J: No it wasn't the first station. There was a Texaco in front of the old Hotel Frontier. That was the first one honey.

S: Where was yours?

J: Ours was in front of the old Stardust, kind of over to the side, not in front of but next door. Phillips 66 next door to the Stardust. Needless to say, Phillips loaned me the money to buy the land and build that station.

C: How much did the land cost?

J: I am not sure I should tell you. It was thousands of dollars.

C: How much would it be worth today?

M: There is a McDonald's on it there today. It was the most valuable property, per square foot of frontage on the Strip for commercial use, not for hotel use.

S: There seems to be so little frontage for commercial use.

M: There was some vacant frontage.

J: All this is vacant land around there.

C: Are we still in the mid '50s?

J: In the '60s. I bought to Industrial, about 1900 feet.

S: From the Strip all the way to Industrial?

J: Yes, to get the property and then I sold off the back part to pay Phillips off.

S: The front part had your station on it and that is where McDonald's is now?

J: Yes.

S: When did you sell that station to McDonald's?

J: I don't know the date.

M: It was in the early '80s.

J: They offered so much money, but today it would be a joke, but I don't look back. When you start with nothing, it is from one piece to the other, and building.

S: How many stations did you get up with in total?

J: We ended up with a total of 50 at one time and that included Needles and Mesquite. It is hard for me to remember it.

S: You pretty much stayed in this area?

J: Beatty, Tonopah, Searchlight, Kingman. Not all of those were necessarily stations, they were distributors of our products.

S: Did it matter that, for example, that Needles is in California and Kingman is in Arizona? Did that matter at all for your business? Did you have to get different licenses to operate in these different states?

J: There was only one, that would be Arizona, and naturally we had to be licensed there. Nothing in California.

C: Can we have Maxine jump in for a few minutes?

J: Sure.

C: Maxine, can you tell us about your early life, where you grew up and how the two of you met?

M: We went to high school together in a small town in Oklahoma called Ardmore. He went off to the navy and came back and I was all grown up. We planned on getting married and he didn't have a job because he had been going to school. He went to California to get a job so we could get married. We became engaged in September and he went and got a job and in November we were married. I had to go out there because he couldn't get off work. I had to fly to California to marry him. We got married in a mission, Asistencia Mission, in Redlands, California, which is right outside of San Bernardino. I didn't know my maid of honor. She was the girlfriend of his brother.

Three months later, in March of 1950, he got transferred up here because the Jones brothers had opened up the first multi pump islands in Las Vegas. They were popular in California, but there weren't any multi pump islands here. They came up here and built that and moved him up there to manage it and I was the book keeper. Then their wives decided they wanted their husbands back in California and out of Las Vegas so we went into the service station business, but it wasn't like it cost a whole lot of money because we took over the lease and all we bought from them was the gas in the ground and the tires, batteries and stuff on the shelf.

S: What did your family think about you moving to California to get married and then moving here?

M: My mother visited often, but she would have to go to Dallas to fly out here or she would have to take the train out here. She preferred the train. He believed in using other people's

money for expansion and he was new in town and we both worked really hard and first thing you know he had gone to the bank and hocked the first station to start building the second station, which was across the street from Cashman Field, now. That was his second one. We had started a family. By the way, I want to mention that everybody thinks that Las Vegas is not a family town but our daughter went to Clark High School. She was a cheer leader and she was outstanding teenager of America and her name is in that book and our son was quarterback at Clark and then went to UNLV and played football for UNLV.

S: He took after his dad.

M: Yes. When that happened and they were out of the household, I said, "Oh mom, what are you going to do now?" I went to real estate school and got my real estate license and became a commercial real estate broker. I had my own company and had 17 agents and we started buying and selling properties. In the summer time I had a lot of Nellis Air Force retirees and male school teachers, because they were off and out of school. Jack and I use to spend our weekends going out and looking at corners for him to locate. He was smart enough to always stay in the path of progress. In other words, he bought property on corners that had no streets yet. He one time bought a motel down in North Las Vegas and I said, "What are you going to do with that old motel?" He said, "I am going to tear it down and build a service station on it." And he did. Zoning was a big problem then. Everything that he bought was zoned R1.

S: And that is residential?

M: Yes. So we had to go through zoning and they all liked him. He had a reputation. You could shake his hand and it was a good deal. He still has that reputation too. There are some properties that are very interesting, like the corner of Decatur and Charleston. There were 10

acres there and he had to buy all of it to get the corner and then he would sell off that and have his corner free and clear.

S: Which of the corners at that intersection?

M: The Southeast corner.

[Colloquy not transcribed.]

M: He did several properties that way. The fun part was that competition started coming in and major oil companies had their own real estate people and they would come in and they would call my company to find them something and I would say, "I don't think so."

S: Apparently, this major distributor had his own real estate company too.

M: One time we bought two corners to keep the competition out because it got to that they would follow him around all over town and wherever he would build a station they would build on the next corner. He got to where he bought two corners and then sold the other corner to a fast food or something like that to keep the competition out.

S: What intersections did you do that?

M: Tropicana and Rainbow. We had stations across the street from each other there. I got out of the real estate business when Re/Max and all those people started coming in. The agents would be independent contractors and they would just pay for their desk. It got to where it wasn't much fun anymore so I just got out and started going on cruises. But he wouldn't go with me because he wanted to work.

C: How long were you in the real estate business?

M: I would say 12 years at least.

C: Were you ready for her to get out of the business because of the way she could help you?

J: I was always supportive of her. Whatever she wanted to do was fine with me.

M: We would go out every weekend and scout and he would say to me, "Find out who owns that corner." I would call and find out who owned it. He'd say, "Offer them \$75,000 for it." I would say, "Honey, that corner is worth \$200,000." He'd say, "We'll see what they will take for it. Offer them \$75,000 and see what they come back with." They never would take it, but he always got the corner.

C: So you would negotiate?

M: Yes, back and forth, back and forth.

S: So how do you decide? Say there are four corners available. How do you decide which is the one you want?

M: Going home side.

J: Usually if it is good enough, you take whatever you can get, because they are not all four for sale. You take the one that you can get.

M: And what you can get zoning for.

J: You bargain for it.

M: I'll give you another example of a deal. Wayne Newton went bankrupt and the corner of Sunset and Pecos was Wayne Newton's, it is right across the street from his big home. There were five acres in there and you had to go to Reno and bid because it was in bankruptcy. Everybody found out he wanted the corner so they went up there and bid the property up.

There is a lot of horse property around there, and he had a hard time to get it zoned. He went to all the people that lived there and had lived there for a long, long time and told them what he would do. Zoning wanted him to buffer the corner and he build an office complex on the corner around this service station and that satisfied the property owners there because they

were buffered. They never knew a service station was on the corner. He won the bid in Reno and ended up with the property but then zoning was the big problem.

S: When you say buffer, what does that mean?

M: Build something in between their properties and the commercial corner because you had to get the corner zoned commercial. So he build single story offices. There are three buildings.

C: That is at Sunset and Pecos. There is an Arco station there.

M: No, it is a Rebel station on the southeast corner

C: There is another service station on the northwest corner.

M: That came 10 years later.

C: Isn't the service station on the corner now?

M: Yes. Here is Pecos and here is Sunset and this is the corner. He wanted this corner for a service station, but he had to buffer with office buildings. [Colloquy not transcribed.] I thought it was brilliant. Getting the zoning was the hard part.

S: What would be the minimum acreage that you would need to build a full service station on?

J: It's pretty hard to build on anything less than a half of an acre for a full-service with lube bays and all that kind of stuff.

M: About 250 by 250 is what it used to be. You buy a corner and the city would come along and take 100 feet off of the frontage. We ended up with a problem there one time because we didn't end up with enough corner to build a station. There wasn't enough square footage.

S: You are going along, you are building, and your business is growing and then comes the oil embargo. How did that affect your business in the 70s?

J: If I recall we were lucky to be associated with a major oil company. It was their big problem more than our big problem because we were buying from them. The embargo, as I recall, didn't hurt marketers like us, as I recall. Hmmm. No, I'm wrong.

M: It was very hard to get product so you closed a couple of your low volume stations so you could fill the tanks for extra volume. He closed a couple of his stations and used the tanks in the ground for storage. That was the way he could keep the other stations because he was open 24 hours and he started shutting down at midnight, but they started lining up by six o'clock in the morning when he opened.

J: Those embargo days, there would be fights on the driveway where the pumps were from customers fighting for the next pump. For a while I hired security on a couple of the locations because I thought they might burn the damn thing down. That is how vicious that was.

C: Those tanks you were storing gasoline in, how big are these tanks?

J: Normally, for each product we like them to be 10,000 gallons at least.

C: When I take my car and fill it up does it really matter if I am getting premium?

J: Yes, because each product (premium, regular, mid-grade) has its own tank.

C: And there is different gas in each tank?

J: Absolutely.

S: What do you put in your car?

J: Premium. It depends, usually, on the type of motor you have. The manual would say you should burn 93 octane, or whatever. Some of the major oil companies now are advertising top tier gasoline, which means that they have an additive in their gas that is better than others. No one has a low tier gasoline.

M: Tell them about when Phillips went out of this market. Tell them about the terminal.

J: I am not sure that is part of the interview. We own two terminals now in this market. It is like a 250,000 gallon tank out by Nellis Air Force Base where all the gasoline comes in through rail pipeline, except for a few that is trucked in, very few. All the major oil companies, independents, their fuel comes in through a pipeline from the Los Angeles Long Beach area. It is all piped in. I am not sure I should get into all of this. Anyway, it is all piped into a terminal out by Nellis Air Force Base. Phillips came along later and build another terminal, which eventually I bought. They were moved out of the market. It is too competitive and they couldn't make money or whatever. I bought that terminal. Since then we have built another terminal which is storage for ethanol and you hear and read a lot about ethanol, from corn. So we have that terminal. We have that and one bulk plant where we store bulk fuel and oil in a terminal that we have. We are probably the largest in the town. I don't want to say that.

M: In the meantime, while he is doing all this, he sponsored a lot of kids, Little League, and he was coaching Pop Warner. He was sponsoring girls' basketball leagues. Our two granddaughters went to Trinity High School and about a month after they started the basketball season their coach quit and because he actually had played basketball at OU that is when you played all sports, one of the granddaughters said, "Well, my granddad will come in and help us so we don't have to forfeit the games." He went in thinking he was going to help until they got another coach. This is at Trinity High School. He went in and the girls didn't know how to bounce a ball, hardly. After three years of coaching, because they wouldn't let him go, they never found another coach, he took this team to state and won.

S: A distinguished Nevada.

M: That is Kenny Guinn, he was governor.

C: May we scan this picture?

M: Yes. He was inducted into the UNLV sports hall of fame, here is that book, in 2004 because of his contribution to UNLV's sports program. He was a busy man but he was also very involved, mostly with kids and sports.

S: May we borrow this as well and scan it?

M: Yes.

S: We would like to put this into the book. I was actually wondering about your athletic background. It seems to me that athletic competitors make great business competitors.

J: It is kind of instilled in them. I don't know what the criteria is.

S: There must be something in that competitive spirit that makes you dive for that ball when somebody else will give up and makes you want to buy out the gas station when the brothers' wives decided they wanted their husbands in California.

J: I don't know. I can't explain that. I know that I lived and breathed sports when I was a kid. I played all sports.

M: Not soccer. They didn't have soccer back then.

J: Basketball, football were the main ones back then. I did play some baseball. I really concentrated on playing football and basketball.

S: What were your positions?

J: Running back and I also played defensive back. I was bigger than I am now.

M: Oh yes, by about a 100 lbs.

C: Where in the city have you lived over the years? What communities?

M: When we first moved up here we lived on 21st Street, in an apartment that was new, but it was a living room, a kitchen, and a bathroom, and you pulled the bed down out of the wall. It was \$125 a month and we couldn't hardly pay that with a \$35 car payment. We were kids. He

was 22 and I was 20. Then somebody he played softball with said, "Oh \$125 that is too much money. You ought to move out to Victory Village where I am in Henderson." We moved to Victory Village in Henderson and then we decided we needed a house. Then we moved down on Ardmore Street, which is behind The Showboat. It was a brand new home, brand new subdivision, which was fairly new in Las Vegas. They weren't building sub-divisions back then.

S: Do you remember what it was called?

M: No, but it would be a matter of record on Ardmore Street. We paid \$9,000 for it, borrowed the money for it from family, again.

S: As a World War II vet didn't you get the GI bill?

M: He wouldn't do it. He didn't want to be obligated. He still hasn't to this day, used his entitlement. From down there, I was expecting, and we moved to South Eighth Street in between Oakey and Charleston, that area. Really nice. [Colloquy not transcribed.] This was a pretty nice home for two kids to be buying and living in. I got it from my mother. I have always lived in as much as we could afford in my home.

S: And you have been in this house since?

M: This home looked exactly as the one on the corner. It was a one story when we bought it. Shall I tell them how much we paid for it originally?

J: Sure.

M: \$36,500, but it only went from that wall to that wall, just about. We wanted it because of the yard. We are on a half-acre and we had horses back there. It doesn't look like it looks now. I fuss about the water bill and he says, "Just pay the water bill and be glad you can pay it because it has taken us all this time to get it that way."

C: It is beautiful. Do you have picnics out there when family comes?

M: Sure. The Maffey's children, they have 21 grandchildren, and they have their Easter egg hunt in our backyard.

S: That's perfect and how fun for you.

M: I stay in and take pictures of them and I watch the babies. They are watching them but I am watching them too.

S: Do you have pictures of the house when you first bought it?

M: Yes, but I don't know where they are. It looked almost exactly like the one on the corner.

S: Who built these houses?

M: I don't know.

S: You bought this house from a previous owner?

M: Yes.

J: He was a car dealer, Oldham, used cars.

M: When we walked in with another realtor, this woman said, "You guys aren't going to buy this house. This house is only a two bedroom and you've got two children." I said, "We'll see." We lived in it for a year and then I started remodeling.

S: When did you put the second floor on and how did you even think to do that and make it look like it has always been that way?

M: I had a picture. We didn't use to have TV and I use to draw house plans of my dream home.

S: Do you still have some of those sketches?

M: I wouldn't know where to find them.

S: It looks like it was built and meant to be this way.

M: Thank you. I am fixing to start all over again on the other end.

C: What are you getting ready to do to it now?

M: Enlarge the bathroom and we need more closet space. It doesn't have enough closet space.

J: The problem is that I am not moving.

C: I understand that. This is a wonderful area.

J: It really is.

S: And that backyard, you can't get that now.

M: When service people come to do plumbing jobs or something like that, they say, "I didn't know anybody had a yard like that."

C: What did you do for entertainment when you first came? At first you couldn't afford anything.

J: Right.

C: But later on, what kind of entertaining did you do or what kind of shows did you go out to see?

J: You could go to entertainment here on the Strip, very cheap. We didn't play Bingo and we didn't gamble but we would go out and see the shows. We would go to the El Rancho Hotel, which I remember vaguely because the entertainment there was so great. Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett and all the famous people, singers. We have actually gone out many, many times for a beer and a Coke and we would sit there. [Colloquy not transcribed.] We went to many shows like that, just the two of us and saw the best entertainment ever. We saw all your famous singers for a beer and a Coke.

S: How did you dress?

J: I would have a suit coat on. In those days you had to wear a coat.

M: You dressed up to go out. You usually had cocktail-ish stuff on.

S: What happened if you showed up without a coat?

M: They would loan you a coat.

J: All the hotels and restaurants, fancy, they would have a coat for you, country clubs.

C: Are you glad you came to Las Vegas?

M: Las Vegas has been so good to us. When people say it is not a family town, we raised our family here and they are still here, and wouldn't think about moving. We have six grandchildren, three from a daughter and three from a son. They are all here.

C: What do you see as the future in your industry?

J: I would say that eventually the products will change to some degree with the advent of electric cars and there are different new brands of fuel coming out periodically. We won't know the quality of or the ingredients of gasoline as it is today. In five years there is no telling what it will be. They will come up with new types of additives, which to use our present example, is ethanol. Everyone has made so many jokes out of ethanol in your gasoline, that it will ruin your car. The funny part about it, god, I hate to say this, all gasoline in this market has ethanol. I don't care what they say because it goes through our terminal, not all of it, but some. All the fuel comes through one pipeline, no matter what brand. Now what they do is block it. Chevron gas goes through and then they block it, and then Shell goes through it and then the next guy and they put a block there. They segregate it that way. However, if one company gets short, guess where it comes from? Somebody else. We have the second largest terminal in this market. There is one that has been there forever. Calnev terminal. We are right next door. Phillips Petroleum Company built that 50 years ago and we bought it eventually. I had a gun to their head and I finally ended up with it. We also have an ethanol terminal. Ethanol is going into all gasolines and they talk about high tier and low tier, and high octane,

so many times it is all the same. I shouldn't have said that. You can scratch it if you want to. A lot of the oil companies they want you to think their product is the best, which is natural. But you can buy your gasoline at Rebel and get as good a gasoline as there is and I don't own them anymore, I sold them.

C: Do you own any pieces of the business anymore?

J: We don't own any of the retail Rebel, the convenience stores. We own everything else.

M: He has the gaming.

S: You have a gaming license?

J: Yes. We sold the stores and we kept everything else.

M: The slots and the gaming.

S: When did you start putting the slots in your stations?

J: I don't know the date, but it was a long time ago. Ever since they allowed it is when we started putting them in.

S: I remember moving here and thinking that was the oddest thing I had ever seen. Yet, there are always people sitting there, always.

J: It is amazing. I don't understand it. I just don't understand it.

M: They use change that they got.

C: In the supermarket I don't even see it anymore. It is there and somebody mentioned it a few days ago, but I don't see it anymore.

S: The oddest place I ever saw it was at Marie Callender's. The one at Sahara, at Eight Street. They had 4-5 slots right in the very front.

J: It is amazing, but that has what has built the town.

S: You were there for practically all of it.

M: They were building the Desert Inn. It wasn't even finished. You asked about entertainment. We've seen The Rat Pack, but we had to pay a little bit more than going into the lounge. Louie Prima, we used to love him and we would go out often and have a drink and watch Louie Prima on stage and Keely Smith. A lot of the lounge people then went onto the big stage.

S: Did Phillips ever regret their decision to sell to you and did they ever try to get back into this market?

J: Not that I know of.

S: They never tried to buy it back from you?

J: No.

M: He only dealt in their product. He didn't buy the facility or the land or anything. In other words, he flew their shield, until they went out of the market. It really is a nice story for him. One of my granddaughters has contacted somebody to write a book because he is not going to. I said that what you ought to do is get a camera and film him just talking and then you can edit it and take some stuff out.

S: This would be a great beginning for that book. What we will do is send it to a transcriber. She'll type it up and we will mail you a draft and you can make the corrections that you would like to make. [Colloquy not transcribed.]

J: I have to be honest. I struggled with this. I called you back and cancelled because I am just comfortable being myself and not talking about success or failure. I look back and it has been a very tough situation, very challenging.

M: It has been challenging. He loved it.

J: I really loved it. I was so reluctant and I thought the other day I am going to call her and then I thought no I can't call her back again.

M: I made a commitment and I am going to keep it.

J: It is not a very substantial story. If you could put it in the proper perspective and words it would be real good. I will admit that. The hard work, the gamble, buying land and building, you never know if you are going to be right. You take a huge chance. Where Caesar's Palace is, I could have had that for a gas station, if you can believe that. I got a guy with Phillips Petroleum Company, on top of the Dunes, overlooking that vacant piece of property there and I had him, shall I say pretty loaded, and he was going to go back to his main office and sell them on it. He called me and said, "Jack, damn you, you almost got me fired." I had him saying yes to buying that corner. Every time I drive by it I think Steve Wynn you are lucky because I almost had that corner for a service station.

S: Did he end up getting sober or did somebody tell him no?

J: He ended up almost getting fired.

S: His bosses told him no?

J: Yes.

M: Another interesting corner is at Rancho and Sahara, the big tall bank building there. He owned that corner. You didn't build on it because of zoning I think.

J: We ran into a lot of zoning and other problems. When you start from nothing, gambling on the tables is nothing, to what I was doing. I have backed off several deals that have very different type buildings on them now.

S: It is kind of interesting. What might have been, does matter.

J: I don't like to think about that because I could have own the town. I just didn't have the money.

S: But you didn't want to be back there with that one station, struggling, either?

J: That is for sure.

M: Sometimes it wasn't financing. He could get the financing and it was all in place but you couldn't get the zoning.

S: That bank building on Rancho and Sahara, did you actually buy that? And have to sell it?

J: Yes.

M: We bought the vacant land and then they built. I said the only way this is going to pencil out is if you build something and put a nice restaurant on top, with a view and everything. We didn't have the money.

J: I don't want you to think that we are all that sophisticated.

M: We were two kids from Oklahoma that came out here and I had a hard-working husband. He is 89 and I am 87. We have been married, it will be 67 years in November. His family knew my family back there. It was a very small town, Ardmore is. He was a big man on campus.

C: Were you a cheerleader?

M: No, I was a drum majorette in the band.

S: Did you twirl a baton?

M: Yes. Then my dad went into the navy and we lived on a navy base in Viejo, California and we lived on Mare Island in California, which is a navy base and I took a school bus, blue goose we called it because it was a navy bus, over into Viejo, California to go to high school. I was an Okie and they didn't like me, especially when I beat them out as a majorette.

S: Where were you stationed in World War II?

J: I went to boot camp in San Diego, caught the battleship Maryland over to Hawaii, on my way to Midway. The battleship Maryland that I was on was headed to the big battle and so we embarked in Hawaii, Pearl Harbor. Everybody got off and then they put you in barracks. I was in a group of 300 sailors and there was one barrack. We all marched out. They said, "The first 13 I call out, fall out and get in that bus". Guess what, I am number 13. I get into the bus and they take us to a fire station over in Moanalua Ridge in the Hawaii islands. They said, "The rest of you are going to embark on the battleship Maryland". There again, I was lucky. I go to a fire station. I didn't know anything about that. I could drive a truck, though.

M: He became chief and I have his badge, of the naval fire station.

J: I ended up staying there until the war was over and they sent everybody home.

C: What happened to the ship Maryland?

J: It went on but it wasn't sunk. I am kind of lucky, a lucky guy. And still lived until 90.

M: When I lived on the navy base, the big white hospital ships would come in to Mare Island, because it was a ship building place also. You would see the big red cross on the big white ships. They would come into the bay and everybody would be so sad. All the sailors would go into the lower streets of Viejo and get drunk. My little brother use to deliver newspapers on all of the ships that were in the harbor.

C: Tell us about UNLV and your involvement with UNLV.

J: I will tell you briefly. Every year they induct different business people into the UNLV Sports Hall of Fame award. I was awarded that because of my involvement with the university athletics, football, basketball, scholarship.

M: Bill "Wildcat" Morris, was our closest friend and we went everywhere. He even went to Tokyo with the team, along with Bill Morris.

J: There is no telling how many athletes I gave jobs to.

M: And housing?

C: Housing meant what?

M: We bought a Spanish Oaks condo for our son and he would have as many as five players living with him over there, baseball players, football players, not basketball players, they were too big for the beds and too big to sleep on the floor.

J: I did work with some of Tarkanian basketball players.

M: He coached Danny Tarkanian in Pop Warner.

J: Those were great days, of being able to have fun with kids, give them jobs, and also coach the younger ones. I coached up to 15 years old in Pop Warner. We won the championship in Pop Warner. We won the championship in Little League baseball. We won the championship with Trinity High School Girls' Basketball. It was really a lot of fun. Damn those girls. You want to know something different, coach girls.

M: At half times he couldn't go in with them while they put on new makeup.

C: Thank you. This is wonderful.

M: We are very happy and we are very blessed. We couldn't have been more thankful for the opportunities and the life style our children have being in Las Vegas with us. Our son and daughter are running the company now and he still goes into work every morning.

J: My daughter graduated from UNLV. My granddaughter graduated from UNLV. My son was drafted by the Cowboys and played football for UNLV. He was drafted as a free agent. He was tough enough, but he was too small to make it. He made his name at UNLV, but the Cowboys really wanted him but he was too small. We have been involved with UNLV. Tarkanian, what I have done for him! It has been fun and we survived. That is the main thing.