

*This is Claytee White and today is October 8, 2003 and I'm in the home of Mrs. Louise Yoxen.*

*How are you today?*

I'm very well thank you.

*First I'm just going to ask you about your early days in Las Vegas, then we will go from there and go back into your past. When did you first come to Las Vegas?*

I arrived in Las Vegas October the 29<sup>th</sup>, 1954, on Bonanza Airlines at that time. It was barely an airport because there was gravel all around. They had one landing strip and we flew on a twin engine C3, I believe. At nighttime, the lights were not nearly as bright as now.

*Which airport?*

It was the same one, McCarran, but there was only one strip there as I remember and the owner/operator was George Crockett and his wife Caty.

*Where were you coming from?*

From Phoenix by way of Alabama by way of Africa. I had been working for a company that built the five air bases over in North Africa during the cold war. The man that I worked for in Africa located me in Alabama and called me and asked me to come to work out here. My permanent home was Florence, Alabama.

*What was your expertise that got you involved with that kind of project?*

I had worked with the Department of Army and the Department of State in the occupation of Berlin after the war. I went to Berlin in June of 1948 when they were setting up the 4-power government. I just filled out an application that I got from the post office for a job. I went over there as a CAF3, which is as low as they could start me.

***So this was clerical work?***

Clerical work. My job over there was to do typing, some shorthand and to keep a running account of the number of flights, the type of airplane and the tonnage of coal and flour and other supplies that were required during the airlift to keep Berlin going in the U.S.A. section.

***Was this part of the Marshall Plan?***

Yes. We facilitated a portion of the Marshall Plan.

***This is so interesting. Tell me about your early life, where you grew up, high school, through high school.***

I was born and reared in Lauderdale County, Florence, Alabama. Attended Coffee High School, graduated with no particular honors. I was not a bad student but not the valedictorian as my twin sisters were who went ahead of me. I assisted the librarian, was a cheerleader, sang in the choir, and served as study hall monitor. I felt liking seeing what was on the other side of the little mountains we had in north Alabama, so I saved up to go to Miami, Fl. I got a job with FW Woolworth the next day. I worked as a clerk, a floor walker, an office assistant and did some modeling on the weekends.

***Modeled for whom?***

The shows were sponsored by The McFadden Deauville Hotel & Shops. The people who had their shops in the hotel would show their clothing at an afternoon tea. We paraded around the swimming pool in our flowing gowns and light furs and presented a break from what was usually a water show. It was afternoon entertainment in Miami in the 1940s. This was in '38 and 40's [1938 and 1940]. In '41 [1941], I was asked to lead the group of girls who were participating in a contest to be Miss Miami, they didn't know the

runway and I ended up winning the Miss Miami contest. I was in the Miss America contest for that year, September 1941 in Atlantic City.

***How did you show in the Miss America contest?***

I was just one of the 40 or 50 girls there and did not win any honors.

***Was that fun?***

That was really fun. The Chamber of Commerce had supplied the parade float, which was a grand affair, a staircase in a garden setting. We were paraded down the boardwalk. It was very similar to what they do this day and age except we were not nearly as talented as they are today.

***What was your talent category?***

Well I had a friend who was a dance teacher and she worked in Alabama. I had to go home to learn how to dance. I did a South American dance routine. My mother made my costume. It showed very well on the stage, but I tell you, that stage and that auditorium was just like a big big big cave. When you look up and see all the lights and balconies; this little country girl.....(laugh) Wow!

***Was that still in Atlantic City?***

Yes same location.

***Do you watch the pageant now?***

Oh yes.

***How do you feel now watching the pageant and seeing the differences?***

I act like a judge. I'm critique the way the contestants present themselves. The talent is more professional now than it was in 1941. Now, it's a goal that you set early in life. The educational prizes they get from scholarships are very good. There were very few

places where a female could get a scholarship. The more we can have this prize, the better. The more they concentrate on giving the women an education, the better off we all are. I must tell you that I was one of the first women that felt put upon by the system. I tried to open a bank account here in Las Vegas and they asked if I had a man also on my account. I said, "I don't think you have to. I'm just going to sign my initials". So I went by A. L. Baker for many years.

***Which year was that?***

That was back in the early 50s [1950s]. When I applied for my notary public for Las Vegas to help my husband in his work, my application was returned "incomplete." I had signed my initials. They said I had to sign my full name to indicate female. I refused. I told them this was the way I signed my name, with my initials. It was really and truly a put down . Little things, but because I had been working all over the world and had been supporting myself, I felt like I was an equal to any of the men that wanted to put their money in a bank.

***I appreciate those sentiments so much. How did you feel back in the 70's, during the women's movement, when the beauty pageant, Miss America, was criticized?***

I felt like they had gone a little far. It was typical of some of the activists. They can't seem to strike a balance of good reasoning and get a foundation for what they believe in instead of going out on a limb and throwing your bras in the air, that's ridiculous.

***I've often thought the same thing but I've often said, "Maybe they had to go over the line like that so that we could come back to a good middle ground".***

That could be, it certainly got the headlines, but they were not good headlines. There were those of us who continued to work in the background and I must say that you had to have someone to get the headline.

*The unfortunate part I always thought was that most women today, that's all they remember of that movement, the burning of the bras. They forget about all of the positive things that came out of that movement.*

That's true.

*Let's go back to after Miami, how did you leave Miami?*

I was living with my sister and her husband and two children. Her husband was a navigator for Pan American Airways. I had gotten a job with Pan American Airways also. Not anything exciting like going overseas as a stewardess. You had to be a nurse then; I was definitely not a nurse. He was transferred to Atlantic City. I moved there with them and I had an exciting two years with The American Red Cross working out at the Naval Air station. It was during the time the injured were coming home from the war. I can't recall exactly but maybe in '43 and '44 [1943 and 1944]. The government had taken over several hotels in Atlantic City for the men to use for R & R [rest and relaxation]. I say hotels; two or three of the better ones were taken over. Working with the Red Cross, I felt a responsibility to go out in the afternoon and evening and walk with the amputees. If the conditions were right, we'd stay for a dance or two. It was most amazing to see.....this one guy I'll never forget, dancing on one leg, no crutches, doing the jitterbug with all of those turns and twists. He was having a ball! Just having a great time.

*He didn't have a false leg?*

No, not yet. The stump was still healing.

***Let's back up. Give me the names of your parents and your siblings.***

My mother's name was Ima Blanch Parrish Baker.

***Did she work outside of the home?***

She was one of the first teachers that graduated from the teachers' college in Florence, Alabama. She taught grades 1 – 8 in a one-room schoolhouse in Tennessee. When the older boys would misbehave, she called her husband, my father. He would go down and chastise the bigger boys.

***She taught as a married woman?***

Single and married, yes.

***A lot of women had to give up teaching when they became married.***

Their first children were twins. They were living in Tennessee where my father was a telegrapher with the railroad. Between the two of them, they were doing pretty good. But with the twins, they both felt they needed to get closer to home in Florence where there were other family members that could help them with the babies; grandma and grandpa Parrish.

***What are the twins' names?***

Ernestine, after my father who's name was Ernest and Imagene after my mother. So the two of them had their name sakes.

***You are the third child?***

No, I'm the fourth. My father's name was Ernest McKinley Baker and the McKinley came from the president I believe. His family background was farming. His father and grandfather farmed in the Tennessee Valley outside of Nashville. He went away to a

trade school and learned to be a barber. He had to go to Texas to find this school. He worked as a barber for many, many years. Eventually he bought almost a complete block of east Florence, which was down by the railroad tracks and the knitting mills. There was a lot of cotton grown in the area. They had about a half of a dozen knitting mills in the town. He had a restaurant/cafe and he had a cleaning establishment. He had a beauty shop and a barber shop and he owned one of those bath and shower facility. People who rode the train in those days, the black smoke from the engines would make them filthy dirty so when they came into town they always looked for a place to have a bath and clean clothes. All of the facilities were there for these travelers to renew themselves before they called as salesmen in the area, which was the tri-cities; Florence, Sheffield, and Tusculmbia (the home of Helen Keller). Sheffield was a port on the Tennessee River for the water traffic.

***Tell me what life was like growing up in a place like that with your father being so successful.***

Well actually when the stock market crash came in New York City, we were as poor as everybody else in the south. There were food lines. We were not in one because we had a garden. We grew our own vegetables and canned our food for the winter months. We had a couple of fruit trees and we canned our fruit and we were very frugal with all of our things. Clothing was passed down from one child to another. Newspaper and cardboard were inserted into your shoes so you didn't walk on the ground. This was very common in that area during the Great Depression. My father was very resourceful and intelligent. He passed an engineering mail order course, got a job as an engineer/pilot on the Mississippi River doing the Mark Twain soundings for the U. S. government. He had to

leave home to do this job. My mother, the wonderful mother that she was, stayed in Florence keeping body and soul together. She helped to feed us with income from the sewing that she could do for the neighbors and helped the children get through their school work. There were seven of us. Seven children, the twins [one died in 1988 of a brain aneurysm] were first and then two years later, my brother, Ralph Jackson, who also picked up a historical name, Jackson. My birth came two years after that. My full name is Anna Louise Baker. My sister, Carol, came next. She was named by the kindergarten teacher, who was a dear friend of the family and because her birthday came so close to Christmas, they decided to name her Carol. Then came my sister Genevieve. Now there was a song out about that time, *Sweet Genevieve*. She was named for that. She was sweet. She died January 2001. Then came my baby brother, Richard Thomas, who wanted to be called R. T., but we wouldn't do it. We called him Dick. (laugh) And he hated it. He is still alive. My baby sister, Genevieve, died two years ago at 70. My older brother, Jack (1917-1978), died at 61 of colon cancer. He had authorized the use of his body for experimental drug research for cancer. He traveled to the University of Birmingham Hospital quite often for treatment until the end. They would send an ambulance for him and take him down. He was on the cutting edge of some of the medical breakthroughs in colon cancer. From his body, they were able to use his eyes. So we think of that, that someone else is seeing the world through his eyes. Jack loved music. He married a professional teacher/musician who was trained at Julliard and taught music at the teachers college, which is now the University of North Alabama. Some of the original buildings are still standing. Jack and Lorene worked at the Grand Hall in NYC, what do you call it? The Metropolitan Opera House, is that it?

***Carnegie Hall?***

Carnegie Hall, yes. They spent many fun time hours there at Carnegie Hall. They were in the background doing the necessary work for the productions. His wife, Lorene, was a wonderful accompanist. She performed *The Fantastics* all by herself on several occasions, for music scholarships and other things. My brother, Jack, went along to turn the pages of the music. (laugh)

***After living in Atlantic City with you sister and her husband, is that the point that you go to Europe for a while?***

No. I went back home to Alabama. You get home sick, you know. New York is fine. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there, but home is even better. I worked there in the construction phase of a chemical plant that was originally invented and fostered by an Italian group during the war, they brought it over to Muscle Shoals, Alabama, and set up the same plant there. It was highly toxic. I have no idea about some of the things. All I knew was how many Cats we had on the job, that's Caterpillar type construction things. A lot of this was built in prime forest land. It had some moisture there. We lost 2 or 3 Cats some days, sinking into the mud, trying to establish a foundation for this plant to go up.

***This plant was built by the military?***

No, it was, actually I believe it was constructed by two companies from Birmingham and Montgomery, Alabama. They called themselves The Southern Contractors, which was the name strictly for this contract. They were specialists in their field. How the chemical portion of the job went, I don't know. I was more into the initial building and

construction of it. It was an Italian recipe, so to speak. It is still in existence, whether it's still operating or not, I'm not sure. What it produces, I don't know. 10

My father worked with The Tennessee Valley Authority. He was in of water purification. The area drew their water from the Tennessee River and sent it through a similar operation that we use here in Las Vegas with the water from Lake Mead. He got his engineering degree like I said through mail order. He was fortunate to have the Tennessee Valley Authority there because that's what brought the area out of the doldrums of the depression.

***Your father went to work for the Tennessee Valley Authority, were his private investments ever regained?***

No. He was depressed some days. He would say, "I work, and work and work and seems like I can't get ahead from one month to the next." But as we children grew up and became, more or less, not a burden to him, I think he felt a little easier in his life. He retired when he was 62. He had diverticulitis. It was an extreme case. His brother had it. Maybe it was that fried food down South. (laugh) Spicy and fried. He died when he was 65 or 66. He died of an aneurism that burst in the lower aorta. They can fix that now, but at that time, they couldn't. They opened him up, and closed him up. They didn't know how to do anymore, but he had several years after that. The twins grew up and were married at 20. My older brother was married I think he was about 28 when he and Lorene were married. My marriage occurred in 1954. I was 34 and my husband was 34.

***This was your first marriage?***

Yes. I'd had quite a life up until then doing my thing from New York to Berlin to Africa.

***Tell me about Berlin and Africa.***

Berlin was divided into zones, it was governed by the different occupying forces, the British, the French and the Americans. Oh, Russia also. This was the cold war, that's why I was even there. I worked with the allied Kommando, which was the quadrupartite government in the occupation of Berlin. The U. S. took turns chairing the meetings that went on. I was with the financial and economic departments. The way I got to Berlin was by going down to the United States Post Office and asking for an application to go to work. It's a form 57. It was a four page application. I gave them everything that had ever happened to me, from the diapers on up. I sent it to Washington, D.C. It wasn't long, maybe six weeks before I got a telegram in the mail that they had a job for me in Berlin. That's not what I had asked for. I wanted Panama or San Francisco or Hawaii. Those were really exciting areas. Berlin was just the pits. They had had a war.

***What did your parents think of this?***

Well they supported me in that, but I know they were concerned. So we made a pact. I saved enough money for a return trip home and I kept it in my bible. I was never without money to get home on my own. When I was in Berlin, we were "the occupying forces" which was not a compliment.

***You must think about this now with Iraq.***

Oh, yes. I had a German housekeeper. I was in an upstairs apartment and my friend was in the lower apartment. For extra money, she would take care of my clothing for me, so I'd have fresh clothing for work. We were not allowed to purchase things on the local market because it was so destitute. The local people needed it. We bought our things

from the PX, on the military base. They had quite a few things. I lived on Innstrasse, which was about 2 or 3 blocks from the Air Force headquarters in Berlin. That's where I worked. It was a very beautiful area. The floors of the buildings were warped from foundation settlement from bombings. Quite a bit of the area had been cleared and were used for vegetable gardens and things like that to support their own economy, which was encouraged. There was a professor who lived in the basement of my house, a German professor. These were good quarters, don't misunderstand me. He was an older professor. His job was to keep the heat in the building and take care of the place. I very seldom saw him, but one night he had a heart attack. He came stumbling and stumbling upstairs to my apartment, no one was in the lower apartment, and he could hardly move. It scared me to death because I had not seen him before this. I told him to wait and I went to the window, looked out and there was the street guard. I called him over and threw the keys to the front door down to him. I couldn't understand the professor. I spoke no German. I only understood a few words. The guard came in and used the telephone. I assumed they took him to the hospital. It scared me to such an extent that I put a gun in my robe pocket after that.

***How did you get a gun?***

A friend of mine purchased it on the open market. It was a Walther 25, which would just probably make a loud noise and rip the skin off of your palm and maybe startle whoever you were trying to shoot. (laugh) I still have it. It gave me a little comfort. If ever there had been an invasion by the Russians, I was supposed to wear these particular clothing with walking boots. Dress like a peasant and walk east and go down toward the Mediterranean. This gun was to be my protection.

***How did you get the housing?***

That was allocated by the military and assigned by rank and pay scale. We had no choice. Eventually you knew how to operate the red tape. Within a certain pay scale, they kept the secretaries and lower pay scale in one section, the generals and the others in another section.

***What was your actual work?***

It would consist of typing the minutes of the meeting. I did not do it verbatim. I did the subject and the decisions with as much information as was required as to who was speaking and what they spoke on.

***You were right there as history was being made?***

Oh yes, yes. The Marshall Plan was discussed quite often. Fortunately it was a good plan. Took some time to get it in force, maybe four or five years and it was still underway when I left. I was there for about two years before I returned to the U. S. Our contract was for 1 1/2 or 2 years, I've forgotten. During that time, it went from a military operation to a Department of State operation. General Clay was the General in charge at that point. [Charles] Lindberg came over during the time I was there. He came to see General Clay as a courteous visit. I don't think he was politically liked at that time. No one has come right out and said why.

***Tell me what life was like in that setting at that time, your recreation, just life in general.***

Our offices and everything including most of the entertainment were at the Hyatt House, which was a facility for the Luft Waft (Air Force). There we used their office building and their medical theater was the nightclub, so to speak, for the military of a certain rank.

We had a little orchestra and we danced on the operating floor. The lights over head were perfect for a nightclub. The seating was elevated like a stadium. That's where the tables were set. We had class four supplies, which was the alcohol. (laugh) You paid with your military chits. They made the money for us there, the occupation money. It was made of paper and used as currency. We did not use U.S. currency. I don't know how much we paid. This area was also turned into a movie theater at times. At night it was the nightclub. I spent a number of hours dancing there. The jitterbug was real big. They had a large dining area with a stage that we also used for larger parties.

***Did they furnish your food, or did you cook for yourself in your apartment?***

As a single secretarial type, I had no entry into their grocery store. I bought a few things from the PX. I ate at the dining hall, which was similar to a cafeteria. I loved to get breakfast there. That was always my best meal. Lunch was just a pick up and for dinner maybe once a week, I'd go out with the other girls to the dining hall and have a good, well-rounded meal. Sometimes one of the billets, the military name for your sleeping quarters, would give a party. They'd invite probably anyone they saw at lunch that day, bring your own bottle, and anything else you could add to the table, which was always fun. After a while it got to be rather nice and you could plan ahead. Just getting together with people you knew and relaxing like you do today.

***Did you also have functions where you were with the British, the French or the Russians?***

During our work time, socially, very little. The French stayed together with their friends because of language and being relaxed and secure in that atmosphere, the British were the same way.

***How were the Germans treated?***

I have no memories of any of their feelings in that regard. I did not read nor speak the language, which I feel is so important for our people over in Iraq and Afghanistan. We have very few people that are there to help with the translations. With occupying forces, you just have to have their complete support or else you have to know what they are saying behind your back. My one German friend was a housekeeper for someone down the street from me. She had been dating a French soldier and then he went home and she was pregnant. When she had her baby, I kind of picked up a couple things from the PX for her. She never did find the father again. I corresponded with her a couple of times.

***Did you stay in touch with any of your American coworker who were there at the time?***

Yes, I still speak to one who is in Anchorage, Alaska, and has eight children. She was in that terrible earthquake there and was head of the catholic group that helped set up all of the stations to feed and help those who were unable to go back to their own homes. Josephine, who worked in the same office with me for Major General James P. Hodges, we were two of three of his secretaries. Josephine could sing. She sang Italian songs that were so beautiful. She used to sing at the functions at the Hyatt House on Friday and Saturday nights. She lives in Green Valley, Arizona. Let's see, Betty Quigley, Betty was sort of like I was; looking for excitement in the world. She stayed single, never married, still alive. Fred Cunliffe and his wife Ginger in Houston; I used to baby-sit their two boys who now live in Guam and San Francisco. Fred went to Africa and to Frankfurt. I mix up the two jobs because when I was in Africa, they sent me back Frankfurt to set up a purchasing office to buy material for the airbases.

***So you started out in Berlin, then at one point you were sent to Africa?***

No, at one point I came home. After two years in Berlin, I came home. Then I went back over to Casablanca to Frankfurt and back to Casablanca then home. I applied for a job with Atlas Contractors through Josephine. We were to build the five air bases in North Africa. Cunliffe and Josephine came over to North Africa also. There seemed to be a group that loved this overseas work. In order to travel and see the world, you had to have a job. None of us were born with a spoon, gold or silver. (laugh) We would go from one overseas job to another. I felt like I needed to come home after a couple of years. You got involved in sort of a clique and you are no longer United States of America. You feel you have a rapport with these people that you are working with. Like in Casablanca, you felt like you were protecting the continent of Africa and also France. The French had sent down their former Prince to be the Foreign Relations Manager because they were the protector of that portion of North Africa. They were involved. When I was there, I traveled to the different air bases. Two of them were not finished. We got to travel occasionally. We worked 6 days a week, 10 hours a day.

***Did you get paid for all of that time?***

You were on a contract that was made up prior to going over. There was no union, no hourly wage that I'm familiar with. You were paid a set amount, and you knew this when you went over. I assume that everything was factored in, but they furnished us with billets [rooms] and meals. They had a long row of rooms in a warehouse type building; the center section being showers and laundry facilities and a breeze-way in between each section.

***Is this something like an army barracks that I'm picturing?***

Yes, there were two girls to each room. You had your single cot, one dressing table, mirror and two sections of closet. In Casablanca, Africa, it was very humid so they put a light bulb in every closet to keep the humidity out of your clothing. The local Arab women did the room work. They would have their lunch in the broom closet. They had a little pot, a fire about the size of a mixing bowl and they would make their mint tea with sugar. It was like syrup. One of them made me some when I was home sick with a bad cold and having a horrible time. She brought me a cup of this mint tea and I managed to sip a little. When she left the room, I had to pour it out. (laugh) They had this fire pot in the broom closet and that's where they fixed their meals.

*Casablanca I only know from the movie with the nightclubs and all of that. Was it as romantic as I picture it?*

You look for the romance but it was not there but new adventures were. They would have horrible dust storms that would roil up in the Sahara Desert. It was red dust. You could see it coming like a wall. Everybody would try and secure the place. One morning I'll never forget: I got in at 5 o'clock at night and the dust was already blowing. The attendant at the first gate from the sidewalk had already blocked the gate. I had a horrible time trying to get him to come down to let me in. He came down with a shovel. He had to shovel the sand away from the gate so I could get into the stairway that led to the vestibule of the hotel. They had rented a full hotel. The sand was up so high it had drifted into as high as the first step. You're talking about a foot of sand that's falling out of the sky, all over your bed. You'd take the top cover off and hope that you didn't leave some of it on the sheets. They had a bidet and a commode. We had no use for the bidet we thought, so we put ice in the bidet and put the beer on that. (big laugh)

***Did you ever have any secretarial training?***

Yes, I went to Miami Southern College in Miami, Fl.

***This is when you moved there after high school?***

Yes, it was just a business college, short hand and typing and spelling, etc.

***What kind of training did some of the other ladies have that you met in both Berlin and Africa?***

They were of my ilk. They had maybe one or two years of college, but they did the same job that I was doing, some of them, not as high a job. I went over as a CAF-3 and returned as a 7. I felt that was pretty good advancement. I was pretty good with keeping my mouth shut and in the occupation that was important. When I worked for General James P. Hodges, I got an eyes only clearance, which was to go to the secure room and pick up a secure package to return to the General. In the occupation they evidently kept a lot of things secret. Working there you sometimes got information that had become public from one side or the other. Usually the French and the British and the Americans were on the same side. The Russians were trying to get everything they could and doing a pretty good job of it.

***After your overseas careers, what brought you back?***

I had spent another 2 years in Africa and you get home sick. In the State Department, they require you to come home for 2 weeks after 2 years, so that you're not too involved and leave the United States and become a citizen somewhere else. So I came home by way of Switzerland and had a nice visit. I got on a U.S. Troop ship, the S. S. United States of America, a brand new ship. It used to take the troops to Europe during the war. It was a long slender passenger ship. I think it took us about 5 or 5 1/2 days to get across.

That was a record at that time. I got seasick a lot and didn't eat too much. But I did eat green salad. I was absolutely starved for green salads. In Germany and in Africa there were not too many fresh vegetables available. You are absolutely hungry for greens. I'd have a green salad for breakfast.

***Where did the ship dock?***

In New York, and they were on strike. (laugh)

***What year was this?***

This was 1953. It was the fall of the year and all of the longshoremen were on strike. I had my footlocker full of my belongings plus a suitcase or two. They put everything that came up from the storage hull on the deck of the ship and you managed from there.

***This is our second session. I'm with Mrs. Yoxen this morning. It's October 15, 2003.***

***Before we get started with your life in Las Vegas, we had almost gotten to that point, I need to clarify a point from our last session. You mentioned you went to work for Pan American Airways, then moved to Atlantic City to work with the Red Cross. Could you please explain how that happened and how long you were with the airlines and when you started with the Red Cross?***

I really and truly wanted to be with my sister, her husband and their two children. They were so wonderful to live with and treated me so well. They always let me work. My brother in law was transferred to fly out of Atlantic City. They asked me to come with them. I agreed. Once I got into town, I found a job with the American Red Cross. It was at the Naval Air Station there outside of Pleasantville, NJ, a suburb of Atlantic City. My sister wanted company too. She had never been in that area and needed some support. I was happy to give it to her. I knew I could whip the world at that age. (laugh)

***We were talking about your arrival to New York at the end of the last tape. The longshoremen were on strike. Could you please explain that scenario to us again?***

The ship used to be a troop carrier but was now a passenger ship. It was my first time to cross the ocean on a ship. I was looking forward to it. I ended up being seasick, but I still enjoyed my trip. To see the Statue of Liberty in the New York harbor gave me such a thrill, know I was home again; looking forward to seeing my sister and her family again. When we docked, there was a strike by the longshoremen. All of the luggage was brought up from the hold and put on the deck of the ship. You had to manage to get it ashore from there.

***How much luggage did you have?***

I had a footlocker. A wardrobe suitcase and I believe a smaller bag. It was difficult but I found my brother-in-law. Between the two of us, we managed to get everything through customs.

***What was customs like at that time?***

You were in a huge, huge warehouse. We lined up and opened our luggage. There was no question about not showing your luggage. Since I had been over for two years, they were interested in what I had. They went through my luggage carefully, closed it up again and passed on through. Had to show my passport of course, that was stamped and they made note of my travels. I think they were still checking if you were bringing food or diseases from farm animals.

***Did you go home at that point or stay in the northeast?***

I stayed in New York for a couple of weeks, then went to Alabama. My mother and father were there. It was really great to breathe a sigh of relief and just relax. Then of

course I had to get another job. I was never flush with money. I went to work for....I can't remember. I think I laid around awhile. Another sister of mine and her husband who were stationed down in Montgomery, Alabama, had invited me to come down and spend a couple of weeks with them and play golf. When we got off the course that afternoon, a call had come from Las Vegas for me. A previous boss of mine in Casablanca. He wanted me to come work for him. We would be building similar operations in Las Vegas that we had built over near Casablanca. With that, he said you have 24 hours to give me an answer. I said, "Okay, I'll take the job". I got on a bus from Montgomery, went back to Florence, packed my footlocker again and a couple of carry-on bags and my golf clubs. (laugh) Took a bus to Memphis where I got the plane. I shipped my big bags and footlocker to Las Vegas, failing to put that it was Nevada. It went to Arizona, no New Mexico. Most of my clothing and golf clubs were in another state! I was here two weeks with just my carry-on bag. I went to work everyday to Morrison-Knudsen Twaits, they were building a naval ordinance storage area, north of Nellis Air Force Base. They called it the Lake Mead Naval Ordinance Storage Area. It consisted of billets for the military. They had the Navy, the Marines and others out there. They were guard units. Essentially, they were building storage units and living facilities for the Marines and Navy.

***Guard units for the dam?***

No, for the job we were building. It was not known at that time what the facility would be used for.

***What year was this?***

October, 1953. My boss was employed by Morrison-Knudsen as the project manager. Twaits was out of California, I believe. The two had similar construction backgrounds and clearances. One had personnel that were good with, say, wood construction, then Marson, Knudsen had something to do with the storage facilities over in Africa. They were familiar with that construction. The Core of Engineers were representatives for the federal government.

***Where exactly was the construction, and is it still there?***

It is still there and operating, still secret, to some degree. On some occasion I have seen some mention of what is being stored there. I'm sure there are a lot of small bits of ammo. They have another facility similar to that by Walker Lake, the mid section of the state, maybe south of Fallon. When you fly over it, an experienced eye can see how the ammunition is stored and protected. I'm sure it's a very common type of construction now throughout the United States.

***Did you actually work at the site or here in the city?***

I lived over on Wengert St. in Las Vegas. I had a garage that had been converted to a room, studio room. It had a hot plate and a refrigerator, walk-in closet, nice bathroom, twin beds and a sitting area with a radio, all furnished, linen also. I was really fortunate to find this room.

***How did you find it?***

My boss' wife found it. I was living with them. I'm sure she wanted to get rid of me.

(laugh)

Her home happened to be the home of the girlfriend of the gang related man that started the Flamingo Hotel. Bugsy Siegel's girlfriend. I believe her name was Virginia.

**Virginia Hill?**

Perhaps Hill, but it was Virginia I know. Her bedroom was decorated in red cabbage roses on the wall, ceiling and in the closets! [Benjamin “Bugsy” Siegel’s girlfriend was Virginia Hill.]

***How much of the property did she have?***

She was no longer living there. The company had rented it for my boss and his wife. They couldn’t stand the roses and I could understand that! (laugh) That was, I believe, 708 S 7<sup>th</sup> St. The neighborhood was nice. Binion, who owned one of the clubs downtown, lived two doors down from us. [Bennie Binion owned the Horseshoe Hotel & Casino.]

***In ’53 [1953], tell me some of the local people you met and what Las Vegas looked like.***

When I came to town, there was a mayor by the name of Baker [Charles D. Baker was mayor from 1951 – 1959]. My maiden name was Baker. When my boss wanted a reservation on the strip, I would call up and say, “This is Miss Baker and I’m calling for a reservation.” I always got good responses and good seats. That was fun, but after awhile they caught onto me.

***Did you go to any of those shows or dinners on the strip?***

Occasionally they would invite me to go along with them. I couldn’t afford them with the amount of money I was getting. My room was very nice and I enjoyed it and didn’t want to give it up for that. I did go to the shows as a date. At that time the men who took you out were gentlemen and you felt like you were the queen of the evening.

***How did you dress?***

I dressed in something that I would wear to church, my best. It was not a rough crowd. They were all well behaved. The music was gentle. The décor was more muted than it is now.

***What are some of the places that you went?***

I went to the Sahara. At that time, they had bar shows. You didn't have to go to a dinner show to see the performers.

***Was this similar to a lounge show?***

These were what they would call lounge shows. There was no fee to go in. You had a couple of drinks. Sometimes you would stand, sometimes you would be seated. The Mary Kay Trio and her brother Norman were performing at the Old Frontier. I saw Elvis Presley in his first appearance in Las Vegas at the Frontier Hotel. He was dressed in a blue suit and he had on his blue suede shoes. We were front row. Before the main show would go on stage they usually had an orchestra. You would be invited to go onstage and ballroom dance, not put on a show yourself. The Desert Inn had a sky room on the second floor of the main casino.

***Why did they call it a sky room?***

Because it was an open view all the way around. Most of the buildings, maybe all of the buildings were low ranch type construction, like the El Rancho Vegas. The outside of their building looked very bad. It was just clapboard and a flat roof almost. The cottages, that they had built later, were better. They were rented to the, say entertainers that came or the people that could afford a motel room. They were strictly roadside motels in the beginning. The Flamingo was the forerunner of the big buildings.

*It's in the 50's, [1950s] the gaming industry is beginning to increase, to grow. Do you still know a lot of people, do you still get to know your neighbors?*

I met them and spoke to them, but we weren't close. Later, The Wynn's lived across the street. I invited my neighbor to play golf, she said she didn't play golf, that's his pastime.

*Are you talking about Elaine Wynn?*

Yes. Then there was one neighbor who was indicted by a grand jury that sent him to prison and I can't tell you his name, but he had that Leaning Tower of Pizza out on the south end of the Strip. He was a neighbor. Never saw him, never spoke to him. He turned out to be a loan shark.

*Tell me about the grand jury.*

The grand jury lasted for about 18 months. We met whenever the federal attorneys felt like we should. It was usually on a Thursday, which was my golf day. I remember that one. That was fun though. One of the cases was this guy who had sold silver all over the West. Said he had it in storage in Salt Lake [Salt Lake City]. Of course there was nothing. Then another case, somebody was shipping pornographic movies from Philadelphia out to Las Vegas through the mail. They got caught. It seemed like weeks we had to look at the pornographic movies. I'm talking about a grocery cart full of these little tapes.

*Why did you have to look at so many of them?*

They said that was the rule. Every one of them had to be identified and witnessed and declared pornographic and signed.

*How were you assigned to the grand jury?*

My named was pulled from the voter list. Another case we heard was probably the most boring. Some one stole a Caterpillar tractor off of a job. They caught the guy and they were trying to present enough evidence to send him up. That tractor was owed by Joe Blystone. Probably should have recused myself because I knew Joe from previous jobs. He'd worked jobs with my husband who had a building construction company.

***Tell me what Las Vegas looked like when you first arrived in '53 [1953].***

Well I can only recall one street light. That was a traffic signal light, on the corner of E Charleston and 5<sup>th</sup> St. That was the main intersection. There was a drive-in restaurant on the southwest corner that served the best food in town. You met all of your friends and made more friends there. They had waitresses on roller-skates when I first came. They served at the car, or you could go in and eat. Downtown was of course the main casino and gambling area. The Horseshoe, Lady Luck, Golden Nugget. Buck Blaine was a neighbor just a block down the road. He and his wife were delightful. Buck Blaine came out to work on the construction of Hoover Dam and stayed here. I assume he gambled at the Golden Nugget and became involved in the business of it when the dam was completed. He stayed until it went to Steve Wynn. The furnishing in the casino was so entirely different that what you see now. It was the old highly polished mahogany, gorgeous teakwood and beautiful chandeliers and mirrors, carvings and artwork. I enjoyed that even though now I think of it as being so full of smoke it almost made me ill. It also had a brass rail at the bar with a spittoon sitting there. There were certainly more real cowboys then participating in the nightlife than you see now. At least you could identify them. Mike Hines was an attorney. He came out from Notre Dame, I think he played football back there. He and my husband were friends.

***Tell me how you met your husband.***

I was working on the ordinance storage job. He had a contract out there for some of the buildings. Someone told him he out to check me out and he did. He invited me to go fishing on Lake Mead. We had a nice day, caught our limit of bass. He had a 14 foot open fishing boat with a motor that had a pull line to start it. You sat in the back and he sat up front where the steering was. He sat up front like the captain he liked to be and I sat in the back doing the work, (laugh), but I always caught more fish. (laugh)

***You said something about a limit. Was there a limit to the amount?***

I think something like 14 Large Mouth Bass. Some of the times we didn't keep them, we'd release the small ones especially. There were no Stripers. The fish and game people put the Stripers in there and they have just decimated the Large Mouth Bass fishing. You can hardly find them anymore. I'm surprised they still have a Bass tournament out here. I read they're having another one in the fall.

***Do you still to fish?***

No, I've sort of given it up. We used to see the Big Horn sheep down along the river, in the canyons. Lots and lots of Bass in the canyons, and Blue Gill. Trout was not our choice of fish. We did go over to Cottonwood Cove and fish for trout below the fish hatchery. I think there is another one over there where the water intake straws are.

***Was your husband a golfer also?***

He didn't golf very much until after he had retired in 1986, then he became active. He loved golf and he loved to beat me.

***How did you get introduced to golf and where?***

In Berlin. There were three secretaries assigned to the office I worked in. That was what they said he should have according to his rank. We all had different jobs to do, but there came a time, toward the end of the occupation, where the business had been taken care of. He said, "One of you get lost." I got lost out at the golf course. I took lessons from a German pro. I can't remember the name of the golf course, but it ran along the U.S. and the Russian borderlines. They were side by side at that point. You could hear the Russians singing some days along the number 5 hole, par 5, and stand real still and you could hear them singing. The most gorgeous voices, and they loved to sing. That was a plus to add to the golf.

***How long did you date your husband before you got married?***

From February 14, 1954 to August 14, 1954, six months.

***How long were you married to him?***

49 years.

***This is almost love at first sight.***

Friends at first sight, and love came because we had a lot in common. I was familiar with construction, which he was in. I enjoyed being in that atmosphere doing something constructive. He was an engineer and business administration graduate. I always said I wanted to marry some one who was smarter than I was and taller than I was. I definitely found one.

***How many children do you have?***

We have two children. A boy, John Jr., and a daughter, Karen. John Jr. still lives here in town and has a broker's license and is doing very well with that. My daughter lives in West Linn, Oregon. She enjoys a very full life. She has two boys. The oldest one is

married. The other one will graduate from high school this year, if he keeps his nose down. My son and his wife Jackie have one child, a five year old daughter. I am blessed.

***Did you get married here in Las Vegas?***

We got married in Reno. At that time he was working for Paul Faulstich who had a masonry business in Reno. He'd come down here and had as good a job for Safeway Grocery Company. I don't know who the general contractor was, but John had the masonry part. John was in Reno recuperating from a recurrence of a fever from his assignment with the Navy in the islands during the war. He was at the Faulstich home recuperating. He said, "Why don't you go down there and run that job for me?" He decided he would. John was getting bored with being laid up and came down to Las Vegas. The job was there next to the theater on E Charleston, The Huntridge. There was a Safeway there later on. Oran Gragson took it over and made it a furniture store. That's where I got involved with politics, when Oran Gragson ran for mayor the first time. His wife Bonnie taught me how to do the things that needed to be done behind the scenes like address envelopes and work the telephones.

***With that knowledge of politics, did you use it again? Did you or your husband ever become involved in politics?***

My husband was in the Chamber of Commerce. He would lobby for the bills he liked, especially aviation. He served on the Aviation Committee for the Chamber.

***Did you continue to work after you got married?***

For a short time. My husband didn't want me to work for him. He didn't think that was a good association. I must agree with him, because he was the boss in the office. I like to be the boss at home, but not let him know it. (laugh) I worked for him for a couple of

years until the children were born. Then I would answer the phone at the house if no one was in the office. The key was to let it ring three times and then pick it up. Then you would be able to field the call. That went on for a couple of years until he became bigger and better at his work. He took on a general contractor's license. Masonry, of course, was the base. We found that if you were the masonry contractor, your pay was always held until the very end, 10 % was always held until the very end. You ended up helping to finance the job for the general contractor by the 10% withholding. Masonry was always a major part of the building.

***Explain masonry to me.***

Bricks, blocks, stone, concrete walls, etc. You pour the concrete footing for the foundation, put in the supporting tie rods and what not. You put in the block or the brick of the concrete tilt up, anything that had to do with the building blocks. Not that he couldn't do the other, it's just he enjoyed the permanency of construction. He never liked to built homes. He built several large industrial buildings, which were concrete tilt ups. I recall one that got caught in a wind storm. They had had a run in with a masonry wall that was something like 30 yards or more. He had supported as best they could with 2x4's and blocks to reinforce it, but the architect failed to put in any support. A wind storm came and ruined it. It was sort of like a waving flag, but not as much. They did everything they could to save it, but that was one of the jobs that really waved a red flag about knowing what was designed and if it could withstand the winds in the construction process and how to reinforce.

***Are there any buildings here where your husband was contractor that we would recognize today?***

Indian Springs Prison, another in Carson City, Nellis housing and barracks, and others. Yes, he was written up in a couple of the masonry magazines for this. When you look at it, you don't think too much about it, but now when you drive around the Las Vegas Country Club, that fence was built in the shortest length of time in history. The construction materials and the men were put on wheels and platforms. They worked in teams. One team poured the foundation and inserted the steel rods. Another built from the ground to about four feet. Another team built from four feet to the top. It was an assembly line. The owner had said, "You will be fined for every day you run over the contracted time". It was about a \$1,000 a day. It had challenged his spirit so he designed a way to built long running fences. Also we built the original Silver Bowl. It's known now as Sam Boyd Stadium and has been enlarged. At the time, we didn't have enough money from the county to put in the end pieces.

*Those early years, your arrival in '53, can you tell me what race relations were like at that time? Especially coming from a southern town, can you compare? Were there any similarities?*

The thing I noticed, the blacks that came over, came from a particular section of the country, the South usually. Arkansas, Mississippi and Louisiana; those three places were common. They also came out here to work on the dam. They stayed around because it was good living here. I assume they could find good jobs. I don't think I saw many of them had front service jobs at the hotels or motels. The entertainers that came here stayed at the Moulin Rouge. [The Moulin Rouge opened in 1955. Many black entertainers stayed in small rooming houses on the Westside until the late 1950s.] That

became a spot for all people that wanted to listen to the blues and the good music of the South. It was a beautiful place.

***Did you go into the Moulin Rouge when it was open?***

No, I was probably at home with the babies.

***Do you remember any blacks in the construction industry at the time?***

Oh yes, the ones that we had stayed with us for years. They were the nicest people to me because they recognized my southern accent. They knew we had some rapport other than the boss's wife. Also, I used to deliver checks on payday. I know the women found jobs working in the hotels in the linen department. [Black women also worked as maids.]

They were trained and were good, pleasant. I recall everyone was pleasant when I was here. It was not fast paced. There was gentility that you don't see anymore. I see crowds, like an adult Disneyland. The bells and whistles are sometimes annoying. I recall only the clatter of the coins in the container rather than the bells. The Thunderbird Hotel was a big hang out for my group. The shows there were always good. They had a couple of shows from New York, and we had a couple of entertainers come over from Africa, groups. They were good, but they didn't stay in the hotel as I recall. Remember the parking lot on the north end of the Desert Inn? I recall seeing some trailers out there, several. I believe that's where they stayed. Actually I think they got the idea from Hollywood. This is what the stars stayed in down there. They had privacy. I recalled Sammy Davis as being one of the leaders. He wanted to stay in the hotel. If that's what he wanted by golly I guess the Big Seven could get him there.

***The Big Seven?***

Frank Sinatra and his entourage. [She is probably referring to the Rat Pack composed of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr., and sometimes others.]

*You told me earlier about the grand jury that had indicted a person who was probably connected to one of the families?*

My neighbor?

*Yes.*

Actually I think his connection would be that he was loaning money to different people up and down the Strip. Mostly to dealers or those employees that wanted to gamble. He would loan them money until they got their paychecks. Of course, it never caught up because the interest he was charging them was illegal at the time. I believe that was a federal offense.

*You were an active person who went to shows, went to dinner in some of the casinos.*

*Did you realize that some of the casinos were owned by people who we probably we refer to now, as mob connected or family connected?*

The mafia?

*Yes. At that time, was that word used?*

You read it in the newspapers and you heard it in conversation, but never in the business portion of the casino on the Strip. I met Moe Dalitz and he was just as much a gentleman as I have ever met in my life. I've heard some horrible stories about activities, but I'm not aware of details. What I read was strictly somebody else's ideas of what he had done. I never heard in all the time I was on the grand jury of anyone that was connected with the mob, other than the group that came out from Boston I believe. They were setting up a scam at the Tropicana. It had to do with them stealing chips. They were actually

stealing from the casino. I can't remember the exact details. I know it happened every now and then at different hotels.

***Tell me about the other recreational activities that you engaged in. I know you went fishing and you golfed, and you enjoyed the night life. What about Mt. Charleston and the other areas here in the city?***

We would go up to Mt. Charleston and play in the snow. They had some little cottages up there that some of the people from down here owned. That would be their summer home. They were just little one-room cottages. They had out houses I believe. I think one of the older public buildings burned. They may have remodeled it. It was higher up than the cottages. Do you know where the fire station is on the right hand side? The cottages were on the left hand side. They had about 8 or 10 of them kind of in a row on the other side of the dried riverbed. The kids liked to get the top of a garbage can and slide down the snow banks. When they were done, we'd go into the restaurant there and eat. That was the top of the mountain. We used to go over to Death Valley. They also had a golf course there. There was a trailer park down at the ranch house, not up at the railroad hotel, Scotty's Castle I guess. They had a date farm there. We'd buy big bags of dates. Then we learned how to cut them up and roll them in some sort of cereal grain so they wouldn't stick together and eat them like candy. You'd play golf and the date trees would hang over the golf course. When they fell, we'd pick them up, dust them off and eat them.

***At what point did you decide to have the summer home in Oregon?***

When my husband and I retired. We were playing golf at Eugene, Oregon, with his cousin.

*This was later?*

Yes, much later. That was in the 1991. He had used his plane in the business for many years and had flown quite a bit in the West. He knew the West quite a bit having hunted and fished most of the area. He felt like he'd like to get out of the heat. It was hard on him. Where he went, I went.

*Did you ever learn to fly?*

I took AOPA [Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association] pinch hitter course, which was interesting. I had about 4 or 5 hours at the wheel on the right hand side, not in the pilot's seat. This was strictly to learn how to use the radio and to put the plane down as easy as possible. I also took the adult education aviation class at night over at the Las Vegas High School. I did the ground school. When I took my test, I got a 66, which was 4 points under passing. I was really upset. (laugh) That was to be my Christmas present to my husband.

*Did he accept contracting jobs outside of Nevada?*

Yes. Edward's Air Force Base, we built quite a few of the buildings there. We did that for a couple of years. It was not productive to try and run it in another state and also at home. The personal overseeing of a job was important to him. That was one of the reasons we bought the airplane. Besides wanting to learn how to fly, it would enable him to go elsewhere to manage the jobs. One time I got to go with him out to Echo Bay. It is in the upper arm of the Lake Mead area. We landed on the highway. Well first we buzzed the construction job there to let them know we were coming. We made a big circle and saw that the road was empty and that the construction pick-up was there to block the traffic, if any. We landed on the road and pushed the plane off to one side.

Cleared the highway, and went down and paid off the men. We were set up so they could stay the week and go home on the weekends. We had sort of military style cots all in one long room with a place to eat and stuff like that. The men would fish in the evening after work. It was evidently a rush job. They wanted to get it over before the season started at Echo Bay. I think that building was used as a grocery store and multi purpose store. There was hardly anyone living in the area. It was just another place to launch your boat to fish, so they put in this convenience store. There was a motel there too, which we built.

***Being in a business of your own all these years, we know sometimes when we read about the casino industry there are fluctuations, business fluctuations, did you find that also in the construction industry?***

Yes, it did fluctuate with the times. We sort of kept our accounts in order and had enough cash flow to tide you over. When you were busy, you were up to your elbows with work. When you weren't busy, you were up to elbows looking for work. It was never a down time. We did not take any vacations to speak of. We had two or three days here and there. After we got the airplane, then it was easier to get to a vacation spot and away from the telephone and the constant worry of the job.

***In the '50's [1950s], during the Cold War, we started testing bombs at the Las Vegas Test Site. Did you see any evidence of that? Did you ever witness any of those?***

My husband witnessed it close at one time. He did work out there for them. He built a few houses out there, the ones that they blew up. They were stocked with food, clothing and mannequins. It was a real operating home with the exception of human beings. They did have animals there in and about the house. It was done to see what the damage would

do, depending how far you were from the center of the explosion. They even checked the grass, the Bermuda grass, the Rye grass, the corn, the hay, whatever was growing around here. It was all tested.

***Did you husband ever see any of those structures after the tests?***

Yes.

***What did he say about them?***

He said they were demolished. Some of them stood, some did not. I've seen pictures of them in the newspapers. The one explosion that I saw, I looked across the valley to the test site and saw the mushroom cloud come up over the whole valley. It was just awesome. After we saw the mushroom, we felt the waves. The water in the pool was sloshing out of it. Not as much as you would have thought. Most of the movement was felt in the hotels downtown. The chandeliers swayed and they said it felt like a small earthquake. Another time we were flying to Reno. They had an underground explosion in a valley, protected on all sides by hills. I could see this wave of dust come down the hillside and then come up in a cloud. The explosion went off and all the rocks rolled downhill and the dust came up, another little mushroom. We felt the wave of the blast on the airplane. We were flying at about 7,000 or 8,000 feet. We'd fly right along the edge of the testing ground. We didn't go into it. Another time we were flying off to Reno and he saw this huge airplane below us in the Great Basin. I think it had four engines. It was like a huge, huge owl and it was following the contour of the earth. Whether it was on automatic control I don't know. It was an awesome sight for us to look down and see this huge thing flying below us.

*Do you remember when Howard Hughes moved into Las Vegas? What kind of impact did he have on the city?*

He bought up the Desert Inn and Last Frontier [Hughes purchased The Desert Inn, Silver Slipper, Sands, Castaways, and Last Frontier] across the street. I don't think he liked the sign that was out there, I only know by word of mouth. [There is a story that Hughes did not like the sign in front of the Silver Slipper Casino.] He was a recluse and probably in ill health. He also bought the Red Rock and park area, the homes that were out there, the ranch was owned by Amos and Andy, of radio time. One of them owned it. Then it was sold to Mrs. Krupp from Germany. We remodeled the home at one time and we had several picnics out there during the job. It was interesting; a big farm house. One of the little sheds out back under a huge fig tree, 4 or 5 feet in diameter; it had to be ancient. In this little house were boxes of receipts of when that was the Spanish Trail, receipts of people who had bought things and maybe charged it. It was a big box. I told Vergie Hooper, Jack Hooper's wife (he was the security guard for Howard Hughes), about it. I'm sure they took care of it and turned it over to somebody. At that time there was a pond of water out there surrounded by a red clay embankment. That embankment was full of fire ants. The whole thing had ants around it. Now it's a park. I wonder about the ants.

*Since you moved here as an adult, how do you think other parts of the country see Las Vegas?*

Sin City.

*Even today?*

Even today; even more so because they advertise it. The commercials on television are just pornographic. I hesitate to think what the children and teenagers get from something like that. Not only their advertisement, but the whole exposure of sex on the television.

***Is this a new advertising campaign[“What Happens in Vegas, Stays in Vegas” is the campaign that I was referring to] that you are referring to?***

No, over the years it has deteriorated. Stage shows have deteriorated. The Hollywood scene has deteriorated and has led the way. I'm 84 years old and I must tell you that some of the things I have seen have not been for the betterment of the family. There is a lot lacking in the culture.

***Do you think that is one of the reasons your daughter left?***

Yes. One, and she liked the rain that she's experiencing in Portland in the fall and wintertime.

***What do you think is going to be the future of the city?***

To become better I think. More conservatives, from my mind's eye, even though we have this red light district over on Industrial Road. The Little Darlings are in your face every time you turn off of the freeway to come down to Charleston, all the way down the freeway. It is so obvious when you come into town or go through town. I don't care for prostitution or topless dancing. It is strictly an allure for the men. They enjoy it and they follow it. The consideration and respect that they have for the female is deteriorating to the point that there is no respect. I think a lot of the violence in the home is from what they see in public. Respect is a pretty good basis for a good marriage.

*I know that some of this is county and some of it is city. We have a mayor now that is kind of a different kind of mayor. Do you think he is a good mayor for this city? What is your opinion of the local government in the city?*

I think a mayor is primarily a public relations advertiser. He certainly does a good job of that. Mayor Oran Gragson did too. He was very good even though he had a problem with stuttering. You hardly recognized it after you met him and shook his hand, always smiling, and he had such an honest rule that he lasted forever. I've forgotten how many years he was mayor. Oscar Goodman is typical of the type of mayor we should have. He knows everybody. He's good with the fun things that he says. There is no animosity toward anyone that I know of. Hopefully those underneath will straighten up and fly right and stop all of this that I read in the newspapers. I don't know how much is true, but we are certainly controlled by what we read and see. I see a lot in the newspaper that I don't care for. This is one reason we like Oregon. Of course they have their problems too, but where we are is like Las Vegas was back in the 1950's. They are just coming into being a good resort area and known year round. They are known for skiing, fishing, white water rafting. They are doing everything they can to make it a good area and good entertainment. They have a casino there close by too, on an Indian reservation. They say it doesn't compare to Las Vegas.

*I really appreciate all of the information. This has been wonderful. Are there any closing remarks you'd like to make? Maybe the change over the times, your impressions, anything you'd like to add before we finish?*

I know now we are an international city. We are known in the deepest part of Africa and in the brightest part of Singapore and Shanghai. Around the world, Las Vegas is known

as the place to go to enjoy the nightlife. It's a 24 hour town and I don't know of any other 24 hour towns, do you? We are unique in that. We have no down time here. We are constantly on stage, so we have to produce. I hope we can produce it in a more conservative way perhaps without 'in your face' features that are not shocking. Sometimes shocking sells, but other times it drives away. I don't know what's going to be best. Hopefully there are smarter people than I am out there. The bottom line is what counts. It won't succeed unless they come. So far we're doing pretty good with the bottom line. Another thing that I wonder about is when these businesses here decide to branch out in Missouri and Louisiana and they pay 8 and 10 percent taxes to those people, why don't they want to pay 8 and 10 percent here, which is where they got their money. The people who are working here help them make the money. I know that several of them have real good attitudes about education and supporting those in the lower echelon through charitable works. They all give, I would assume, according to their percentage at the end of the year when they fill out their income tax, just like the rest of us. There is a certain amount of write off there, and I hope that they'll write it off. But they will give it to the charities here to help educate those people to get off of their charity role. No more free hand outs. Sort of like when the Pilgrims came over. You work, you get to eat. If you don't work, you get the crumbs. I think the education department needs to get rid of some of the administration problems. Also they need to cut down on the time a teacher has to spend reporting to the administration. It reminds me of the nurses. We had wonderful nurses at one time. Now we have nurses that make reports and then they have assistants who tend to the patients. Let's just find a way to get away from that. Between the nurses and the teachers, they are not getting the full respect,

financial or otherwise. They are not there to be babysitters. Most teachers know what needs to be taught. They could have some outline but not to the point that they are stymied when answering questions, common questions.

**This ends the interview. Thank You.**