

# **Henderson Libraries**

## **Henderson Oral History Project**

**Delwin Potter**

## Delwin Potter

**Interviewer:** Wednesday, November 30, 2005. I'm Shannon Berndt from the Henderson Libraries. We're interviewing Delwin Potter this morning. Good morning.

**Delwin:** Good morning.

**Interviewer:** You're kind of our guinea pig. We're starting with you.

**Delwin:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** Let's start with your parents. Your parents, what were their names?

**Delwin:** My father's name was Delwin Gardner Potter. He was born in Mesquite, Nevada. And his father was also born in Mesquite. And my mother's name was Magda Winn, was her maiden name and she was born in American Fork, Utah. And her family, her dad was in the grocery business. Had a grocery store in St. Thomas and then had a grocery store in what's now presently Glendale. And that's when she met my dad and they had a little restaurant in Mesquite. And then they went to, moved on down to St. Thomas from there. And then Glendale, and then he had a store in Logandale, Nevada. They had one in Boulder City after that. Anyway, my dad worked on the Dam and was an electrician. That's where he learned the electrical trade, was the Dam. Then he went back and tried farming for awhile and then ended up at the plants as an electrician working at first WECCO, Western Electrical Chemical, WECCO, and then it turned into American Potash and then finally Kerr- McGee.

**Interviewer:** OK. Let's go back to St. Thomas. Where's St. Thomas?

**Delwin:** It's, well right now it's not under water but normally it's under Lake Mead. It's below at Logandale and Overton and when they built the Dam the waters came over St. Thomas so everybody was forced to sell their properties to the government and move out.

**Interviewer:** Oh, OK. All right, um. So your father as a young man grew up in Mesquite and when the job came open to work at the Dam he got a job there?

**Delwin:** Prior to that he was a cowboy and would herd sheep even. (laugh) And cows, basically on the Arizona strip and other parts close to Mesquite. Then he did work at Zion helping build the tunnels there. And then as the jobs started coming towards the Dam he moved there and got into the electrical trade and became a journeyman electrician. And in fact installed the first dial telephone system in the State of Nevada at the Dam.

**Interviewer:** Oh. So, it was Magda's family that was in the store business. And did, after your parents were married did they still have a store? Did she work in the store? Did they have a store together?

**Delwin:** No, at that time, at the time that my mother actually met my dad they had a little restaurant in Mesquite. But he, mainly, he had always had, owned stores. Then he went and bought the store in St. Thomas. When that flooded out then he had a store where there were some gyp mines, mining line products and so forth. They called it the Gyp Mine of Glendale. He had a store there. And then he ended up with a store in Logandale and then finally into Boulder City.

**Interviewer:** And that's how they got to Boulder City then?

**Delwin:** Well that's how my grandparents got to Boulder City. My dad got there, dad and mom after they were married, got there because of the Dam, and the construction there.

**Interviewer:** OK. And so you were born in...

**Delwin:** In Boulder City.

**Interviewer:** You were born in Boulder City.

**Delwin:** June 15, 1942, at home, 644 Avenue D, because there was some kind of an epidemic going on and the doctor recommended I don't, that I not go to the hospital. So I was born, they dug a basement for a birthing place.

**Interviewer:** (Laugh) They did?

**Delwin:** I was born at home that summer.

**Interviewer:** So you went to school and everything in Boulder City?

**Delwin:** I went to, no I was, before I started first grade we moved to Overton. Dad had always, farming, ranching was his first love. So at that time the Dam was completed and he had an opportunity to buy a farm in Overton so we moved there and I started first grade in Overton. Went there first through third grades and then we moved to Indian Springs. Well, we lived in Boulder City for a short period, probably six months or so, and then my dad bought the ranch in Indian Springs with Earl Brothers and we moved up there. And after we were there approximately two years, Earl Brothers, Indian Springs started developing and so when Earl Brothers told my dad that alfalfa field down there's going to be a trailer park next week, my dad says "Buy me out. I didn't come up here to raise trailers".

**Interviewer:** (Laugh) Siblings.

**Delwin:** I have, there are seven children. My oldest, the oldest is Pat Scow, and that's Scow's, it was Radio Shack now I guess it's just Scow's on Boulder Highway, and then Doctor Potter, and then my brother, Leon, who has lived, he's lived here for awhile but mainly he's lived in Texas. He builds sewage plants and so, I don't know, he's lived most of his life in Texas. And then next my little sister, Jeanie, who works at Levi, and then my little sister, Laverne, that has retired from the Clark County School District. She spent thirty years as a school teacher in various elementary schools. And then my little brother, Alan, who lives in Overton now.

**Interviewer:** I went to school with Alan.

**Delwin:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay. So you say you arrived in Henderson in 1952 and that was with your parents?

**Delwin:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And what part of town did you move to?

**Delwin:** We bought a brand new home on Basic Road. There were, oh, probably twenty-five stucco homes that were built right next to the, uh, right across the street, Basic Road had half townsite houses and nothing on the other half so they came in and built some stucco homes there and along with tract two, which was up above the reservoir. And so anyway, so we bought a house there and my folks had it until, well, after they passed away then we finally sold it, probably ten years ago.

**Interviewer:** Okay, um, what brought them to Henderson?

**Delwin:** Well, let's see, dad had wanted to try his hand at ranching and the ranch in Overton, just um, we had a dairy farm and it was very difficult right after the, uh, you know in the early fifties to make a living farming. And so we sold the ranch, left there and went to Boulder City for a little while, while he and Earl Brothers were buying this ranch in Indian Springs. Then after Earl bought dad out there then we moved to Henderson. Dad went to work at the plants.

**Interviewer:** And your mom, did she stay at home?

**Delwin:** She stayed at home for about, well, not very long. And, uh, a couple of years and then she got started in the real estate business and worked as a real estate salesman and a broker for the rest of her life. She sold an awful lot of townsite homes and a lot of homes here in Henderson for different, various people.

**Interviewer:** And you're married?

**Delwin:** I am. Married Linda Kay Glimp, was her married name, G L I M P, who also was born in Boulder City and lived right across the street from us in Boulder City. But she was three years younger, I don't remember her from that but then, in 1963, I went to the hospital to visit my brother who had just finished medical school and met her there at the hospital.

**Interviewer:** What was she doing at the hospital?

**Delwin:** She was in an x-ray tech...an x-ray program there that was in conjunction with, now, Nevada Southern University that's now UNLV and so she was working and going to school. They held classes and did on-hands work there at the hospital.

**Interviewer:** And you married when?

**Delwin:** November 12, 1965.

**Interviewer:** (Laugh) That was a test.

**Delwin:** I knew that date. I had to think about it. No, we just celebrated our fortieth year anniversary this past, this, earlier this month.

**Interviewer:** Yes, yes. Let's go back to your neighborhood when you moved to Henderson. Do you remember any of your neighbors?

**Delwin:** Oh, yes. Very well. Leona Hinton lived right across the street. And then the Chastains, thought I could remember their first names, but they lived right next door to us. And John Duffin lived right across the street. Dan Walker lived one house down the street.

**Interviewer:** What did Dan Walker do at that time?

**Delwin:** He was a chemist at Chemstar, U.S. Lime, I think it was U.S Lime then, later it became Chemstar. And there was a fella named Frank Everett that lived, was it Frank? Yeah, that lived just up the street from us.

**Interviewer:** Uh, that was Lynn.

**Delwin:** Lynn?

**Interviewer:** Lynn, cause my dad was Frank.

**Delwin:** Okay. I knew that there was...that's why I wasn't sure if I had the right...Lynn Everett lived right up the...an uncle of your dad?

**Interviewer:** He was a cousin of my dad.

**Delwin:** Cousin. Oh, if I stopped and thought about it I could think of some more of the neighbors there. Um, Mathieson who also worked at the plant with my dad.

**Interviewer:** Is that what most everybody did in that neighborhood was work at the plant?

**Delwin:** In those early days almost everybody worked at the plant.

**Interviewer:** Um, and that was after it became Titanium; it wasn't Basic Magnesium anymore, right?

**Delwin:** No, the companies...there was Titanium, there was WECCO, Western Electric Chemical, U.S. Lime, Stauffer, but they had formed their separate companies but, and then shortly after that the city became a city. In 1953 if my memory serves me right.

**Interviewer:** Right. Um, you were just a young lad when Henderson started, before Henderson started in the forties, but, so I don't know if you have any answers to these questions since you weren't around, but since you were in the know you might have the answers to these questions like uh, I had a question about Rose de Lima Hospital. Basic Magnesium built a hospital. Was it Rose de Lima and they just changed the name from Basic Hospital to Rose de Lima?

**Delwin:** They actually built it for the Catholic Church. And so it opened as St. Rose de Lima.

**Interviewer:** So the Basic Hospital was not the Rose de Lima Hospital. But did Basic Magnesium build that?

**Delwin:** They built it and the hospital operated it. It might have been called the Basic....

**Interviewer:** There was a Basic Hospital and it was called Basic Hospital that BMI did build.

**Delwin:** I always remember it as St. Rose de Lima and in the early days here before we had drive-in restaurants or fast-food restaurants that was the best milkshake in town in the cafeteria at St. Rose de Lima. (Chuckle)

**Interviewer:** (Laugh) Let's see. Well, I know you became Justice of the Peace. How did that come about? Did you go to school for that?

**Delwin:** No. I had been gone on a mission for the LDS Church in 1961. Went to Northern California. I returned in 1963 and I had an interest in law and in politics. And I was a student working at, let's see, I worked at American Potash before I went on my mission. When I came home I worked at Pacific Engineering, PEPCON. I was working there and going to school and the Justice of the Peace, George Treem, passed away the night of the primary election and nobody had filed against him. And so you would have to circulate a petition and get ten percent of the registered voters to sign the petition and you could get your name on the ballot. Well, as it turned out, there were seven of us that circulated a petition. Backing up just a little bit, first I went to talk to Genevieve Harper, who was the City Clerk at that time and a long-time family friend. And I asked Genevieve what she thought about it and she said "not only do I like the idea but I'll help you". So I said okay and between her and my mother and a few others the grass roots started the campaign and, and I came out on top of the seven others. And since George passed away, as soon as the results were confirmed I was sworn into office to take over as Justice of the Peace, which was a couple of months sooner than the others. The middle of November I was sworn in and started as Justice of the Peace at that time. I was a twenty-one year old (chuckle).

**Interviewer:** (Laugh) And what year was that? 19..?

**Delwin:** 1963.

**Interviewer:** '63.

**Delwin:** And I served for twelve years 'til, roughly 12 years, 1975.

**Interviewer:** And your office was located...

**Delwin:** Initially it was in the old Townsite Apartments right behind the Community Church. They had adapted one of the apartments into a courtroom and it had been very functional for several years. Then shortly after I was elected the town was growing and things were happening so the County said why don't you buy a building and we'll rent it from you 'cause we're not in a position at this point to determine what we're going to do out there. So I bought a building at 155 Basic Road which served as the Court for, oh, ten years, and just as I was departing the office, we moved the office to the old school that's now City Hall. It was there on the corner of, uh, Atlantic and Lead, or Atlantic and Water. Right in town. But that was the old school house, that was the original, the original school.

**Interviewer:** So what kind of things did the Justice of the Peace do?

**Delwin:** Well, the Justice of the Peace is a County office. After, uh, I guess at that time they did have a Municipal Judge also. And the Municipal Judge took care of anything happening within the city limits, any misdemeanors within the city. The jurisdiction of the Justice of the Peace was countywide

and the Henderson township encompassed more than just the, uh, the city. And so any citations that were written outside the city but were still within the township such as Fish and Game. Highway Patrol were not within the city. They would write their citations into the Henderson Justice Court. And then also when we had jurisdiction in felony cases, so if there was a felony happened. Initially, the County did not do that because they felt like the only JP's that were capable of handling it were the ones in Las Vegas, which at that time most of them were attorneys. There was only one downtown in those days but it was very lucrative because of the wedding business. So attorneys would run for the office and do a lot of weddings and take care of court business in the time they weren't doing weddings. And sometimes they would invite me in to sit for them in cases, small claims, traffic citations, things they didn't want to hear because they could make more money doing weddings during that time.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Delwin:** Also had jurisdiction on civil cases up to, I think at that time it was three hundred dollars.

**Interviewer:** Civil cases being?

**Delwin:** Where money was in dispute. Not a crime but there was a money dispute.

**Interviewer:** Okay. Okay, um, let's go back a little bit. Um, if you came to Henderson in 1952, you were, how old were you? Ten?

**Delwin:** Would've been ten.

**Interviewer:** So then you finished out your school days here?

**Delwin:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** You went to the junior high school?

**Delwin:** Well, the elementary school at that time I guess was Basic Elementary. And it was where City Hall sits today. And then for junior high also they had put an addition on there and that's where the junior high was right in there, on the same property, but just a little closer to, uh, Atlantic Street.

**Interviewer:** So the first elementary school was right there in that complex where the...

**Delwin:** Initially that was the elementary school, the junior high school, and the high school.

**Interviewer:** All in that same area?

**Delwin:** The football field was where City Hall sits today and they have that parking garage and the high school was... and there was a gymnasium that was just down... there was a dike there that was probably fifteen foot lower than, well, higher, lower fifteen degree, or fifteen foot difference in elevation. And that difference, the gymnasium was at the bottom of it. There were steps but I don't remember ever using the steps. We always (chuckle) used the dirt between. And, uh, the gym in the early days, that was THE gathering place. I know the LDS Church used it for church services for quite

awhile. Anytime there was any other function going on or any city function they used the football field or the gymnasium.

**Interviewer:** And there was a nice stage in the gymnasium. So, well, when I went to elementary school, Basic Elementary was up where McCaw is now.

**Delwin:** Correct. At that time they had not built Basic Elementary yet. It was shortly after that that they did.

**Interviewer:** So you stayed in that whole complex all your school years?

**Delwin:** Well, no, as we moved to Henderson, they were building a new Basic High School right behind our home on Basic Road, where Lyal Burkholder School is. Now it's in the process of being torn down to build a new school on that site. But that was the old Basic, well, at that time, the new Basic High School. And my brother, Leon, was the first student body president at the new high school in 1952 or '53. So then we just walked a little bit of desert under the power lines to the Basic High School and I guess I lived closer to the Basic High School than most anybody else. (Laugh)

**Interviewer:** (Laugh) Yes, you did. Um, what was it like, um, what were, were there things for kids to do? For teens to do?

**Delwin:** Well, we kept busy. Uh, not necessarily were there things to do but we invented things to do and...

**Interviewer:** Right, an example of, what did you do?

**Delwin:** Well, we did a lot of, in those early years, a lot of bike riding, a lot of exploring the desert. Um, everybody knew each other so you'd go to other people's houses and play or find things to do. There were, there weren't a lot of... They were in the process of developing the first recreation there at Basic and Lead, the old youth center as it became known. And so they had, I remember, well, Sophie. I thought I had her last name but she was quite a famous actress.

**Interviewer:** Sophie Tucker?

**Delwin:** Sophie Tucker. From, uh, she was invited there. They had a fella that later became Johnny Carson's, uh, ran his show for him, his production. Stan Irwin, who was at the Sahara Hotel, who was in charge of entertainment. And Stan Irwin had quite an interest in Henderson so he would invite these entertainers out and raise money to build the youth center. And between that and BMI, uh, finally the youth center was developed and then most everybody spent a lot of time at the youth center.

**Interviewer:** There was, uh, there wasn't a pool there then at that time was there?

**Delwin:** The pool came later but it wasn't too much later. They, uh, before that we went to the lake and when we had to take a Red Cross course in swimming they'd bus you to the lake to do that. So, then when the pool came along then...

**Interviewer:** Well, yeah, but when you were a teenager did people, did the kids have cars and you drag up and down Water Street?



**Delwin:** Well, when I became, probably before sixteen, when I started driving. But, initially, when we got here I was probably eleven at the time and I started selling newspapers at the post office. And I sold newspapers there until I was probably almost sixteen. And then I got a car and went to work at the Hancock Service Station. It used to be at the corner of Pacific and Water. And then, of course, yes, we did engage in a few races and finally they built a drag strip down where the car dealership is. Used to be Ben Steplan. I guess now it's Henderson Hyundai. But initially it was Dick Stewart Dodge. But behind there was a drag strip that went out toward the old sewage plant. And in those days a very modern drag strip and they had some of the world's fastest dragsters come there. The rest of the time it'd set there and we could sneak down there and we didn't have to use the city streets so much anymore.

**Interviewer:** Pittman. When you moved to town was Pittman a thriving place or was it kinda, the population dwindling then?

**Delwin:** Well, Pittman was always a wide spot in the road even though initially it was called, I believe, Anderson's Camp and it was more of a... Henderson was nothing in those early days and I don't remember. I remember going through Pittman and there were, at that time there was more on the highway than there was in Henderson because the townsite homes, they were built so they faced away from the highway and the only thing that was on the highway was the Catholic Church. And so the highway was pretty much open, but when you got into Pittman there were a lot of bars on each side of the highway. There were service stations, uh, a few residences. Anyway, at that time, Pittman by driving Boulder Highway looked more lively than Henderson did. But then if you got off the highway and went to the downtown section of Henderson, they had wooden sidewalks and there was quite a downtown section where you could go shopping, a couple of grocery stores and, uh...

**Interviewer:** Actually in Pittman?

**Delwin:** No, this was, that was in Henderson. In Pittman there was a grocery store in there also. The last time, I think it was always Dick's, but then when it burnt down and they finally closed it, it was called Dick's, Dick's Ranch Market, yeah, Dick's Ranch Market. Of course, the Swanky Club was there and that was a big gathering point for a lot of people because the smorgasbord, that was unheard of.

**Interviewer:** Well, the Swanky Club, you know that was a building that was brought from somewhere. Um, let's see. I don't know if I have it in my notes. But it was brought from somewhere and it was called, before it was called the Swanky Club, oh, I don't have it in my notes. Um, but did you know, did you, have you ever heard of Jericho Heights?

**Delwin:** I have and I'm trying to place where, it was up closer to Railroad Pass, wasn't it?

**Interviewer:** Well, the information that I read, it said that Pittman before Pittman became Pittman, it was called Jericho Heights. And then it was called Midway.

**Delwin:** I remember it being called Midway and Anderson Camp but I don't remember the other names. It could have been, and Mallory's, the Swanky Club, Mallory's later took it over, every time I went I remember it being the Swanky Club. It might have been, might very well have been something prior to that but...

**Interviewer:** Probably before, before you were old enough to pay attention.

**Delwin:** To remember, yeah.

**Interviewer:** Um, well, they also had a newspaper called "The Pittman Key" because of Senator Pittman and um, Governor Pittman.

**Delwin:** It was Key and Vail Pittman.

**Interviewer:** Right.

**Delwin:** And so they may have had a newspaper. I don't remember the newspaper. The first newspaper I remember is Morry Zenoff coming and moving the "Boulder City News" to Henderson.

**Interviewer:** To Henderson. Yeah, um, I would love to be able to find someone who knows anything about the "Pittman Key" and the newspaper. That's what it was called because they were descendants of Francis Scott Key.

**Delwin:** Huh.

**Interviewer:** And it was owned by, published by George and Penny McElroy.

**Delwin:** I don't remember any McElroys living here at that time.

**Interviewer:** Um, do you know about Jim Thorpe?

**Delwin:** Oh I've, I've heard many stories about Jim Thorpe.

**Interviewer:** There was, I heard that there was a Thorpe plant in Pittman.

**Delwin:** Plant?

**Interviewer:** A Thorpe plant.

**Delwin:** There was a Quonset hut that still is there that now is a...Arnold Cole sold automobiles out of it for years and now they're selling trailers out there. And that was what was his bar but I don't remember a plant. It was a bar.

**Interviewer:** It was a bar?

**Delwin:** Uh-huh.

**Interviewer:** And he owned that bar?

**Delwin:** Yes, oh yes.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And he lived in Pittman?

**Delwin:** I, my understanding was that he lived right there next to the bar or very close to it.

**Interviewer:** Okay. 'Cause I, they just said there was a Jim Thorpe plant and I thought well, I never heard of the plant and what did they make there if it was a plant.

**Delwin:** Oh, I think they made alcohol...

**Interviewer:** (Laugh). They made drinks there! Okay. Um, so when you moved to town and you went to the grocery store...there was a grocery store in Henderson, right?

**Delwin:** Oh yes. Foodland and Prime Meats.

**Interviewer:** Prime Meats. Okay. Uh, let's see. Well, do you have any questions? Any recollections I haven't asked you about?

**Delwin:** Uh...

**Interviewer:** What about Industrial Days?

**Delwin:** Oh, Industrial Days was always exciting for us. The carnival would come to town and, of course, after I was JP then we would...my dad and usually my brother, and myself would always ride in the parade. On horseback. And I always was, Kiwanis. In the early days Kiwanis sponsored the beauty pageant so when I was a member of Kiwanis, which met at the Swanky Club, we would call it the Chlorine Alley Kiwanis Club, because chlorine used to come from the plants right through that area. And so as a result of them sponsoring the beauty pageants, I always was involved in the beauty pageants. That was the only reason I was...(chuckle).

**Interviewer:** (Laugh) And so they had the beauty pageant. They would have, um, what other activities would they have?

**Delwin:** The beauty pageant, a parade, and initially they did have some arts and crafts and homemade items like jams and jellies and flowers and things like that. And as the town supposedly got more sophisticated, uh, they didn't involve themselves in that anymore. And, uh, I'm trying to think of what else...of course, the carnival and I'm sure there were other things. I don't remember just what...they didn't have a mayor's breakfast in those early days but...

**Interviewer:** Didn't they have a dance?

**Delwin:** Yeah, I believe they did. Always had a dance.

**Interviewer:** Was it sponsored by the...was it called the Policemen's Ball?

**Delwin:** It was initially and then later I think the Eagles, Eagles, I believe it was the Eagles or the Elks took up the sponsoring of it. For some reason the police and their sales of tickets, people would think that that wasn't fair for policemen to be twisting people's arms (chuckle) to buy tickets...

**Interviewer:** (Laugh) A little torture.

**Delwin:** ...so they got out of it and turned it over to one of the fraternal organizations. 'Cause I remember it was the Eagles.

**Interviewer:** Was that the...was Industrial Days the biggest event of, for Henderson during the year?

**Delwin:** Well, for Henderson, definitely.

**Interviewer:** Helldorado was a big time. Did a lot of Henderson people go and participate in Hellderado?

**Delwin:** Quite a few. Helldorado, they were fairly close to each other, both held in the month of May in those days. So there were a lot of people initially. Now after Helldorado started getting big and then no longer did they hold it, less and less interest was in it. But in the early days both cities participated quite a bit with each other in events.

**Interviewer:** Did Henderson ever have a rodeo?

**Delwin:** (Sigh) They had some unofficial rodeo. And I know my dad, unofficially they'd have horse races and he would be involved. (Laugh) Making sure, that was down by our corrals which is now right along the B and E Auto Auction, run right alongside Warm Springs and Warm Springs had run through there then. He had a race track there and that's where they would race the horses and usually the rodeos were held at the Saddle Club's arena. And for awhile it was down next to the sewage plant and then they moved it down on Sunset, just off Sunset. It wasn't really, well I guess it was somewhat, you know, at the last, well some of the later years. Initially they did not have a rodeo but then later on they did and it did finally become sanctioned by the Chamber of Commerce as one of the Henderson Industrial Days activities.

**Interviewer:** Okay. I think that's all that I really have. Um, after you were not holding the job of Justice of the Peace what did you do?

**Delwin:** Well then I went to work in the law offices of Peter Flangus and worked for him for many years and then went to work for Judge Bongiovanni at the court house. Actually worked for Clark County but directly for Judge Bongiovanni. And then when he was no longer in office I went back to, well I worked for Peter Flangus for a few years and then went back, or went to being the Auto Auction from there where I am presently employed.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And you have, you've made your home in Henderson since 1952?

**Delwin:** Yes. Lived on Basic Road, 235 West Basic Road until I was, well until I got married. Then we had our home on National, 521 National. And then in 1988 we bought our home at 121 East Highland and we've lived there since.

**Interviewer:** And you have children?

**Delwin:** Two children, a boy and a girl. Boy was born in 19, 1968 and he is a lawyer here in town now and basically does family law but a general practitioner. And my daughter was born in 1971 in, I want to say April...

**Interviewer:** (Laugh)

**Delwin:** ...I haven't missed yet. Can't start now. She married a young man who'd come down here to go to UNLV's hotel administration college and when the Olympics were headed for Salt Lake City for the 2002 Olympics this...they moved northward for job opportunities and then he didn't stay in the hotel business but they missed selling the case for Utah.

**Interviewer:** Uh, thinking about your daughter moving away and I know my kids have moved away, times, there were some rough times in Henderson over the years, even after BMI closed down they thought Henderson would dry up and blow away. Why do you think people stayed?

**Delwin:** Well, those that still had jobs, of course, had a reason to stay but there were times, and, I'd say, Titanium Metals, there were rumors all the time that Titanium Metals was closing. And then, just before the city incorporated, Titanium put grass in front of their administration office. And for some reason, once they put that grass there, everybody knew Titanium was here to stay. It was just the fact that they had not, you know, done anything up to that point. Once they put the grass in, people just accepted it that it was going to stay and people came here for jobs and the city started to grow and people were working in Las Vegas and living here. And out of my, in comparing it with other people growing up in other places, out of my graduating class at Basic High School in 1960, there were about a hundred and eighty students. An awful lot of those students still are in the Las Vegas Valley to this day working because the job opportunities were here for them to find employment. Other areas, as soon as they get out of high school they lose their youth. They go elsewhere so they can make a living where here it's been very good in that regard for them to be able to find jobs and stay here. And we just had our forty-fifth class reunion in October and we had at least half of the students attend that and most of them, or an awful lot of them, but it was the local ones that didn't show (laugh) that came back. They showed up the next day at the high school, well now Wildbrook Colver Junior High. They had a get-together there because, of course, it's going to be torn down in January and a new school put there. I thought it was the old high school we had all gone to and so that's the reason we had our class reunion in conjunction with that because they were coming for that as well. And, uh, a good time was had by all.

**Interviewer:** Um, you were, um, a teenager at a time when there was a lot of segregation and, and, and actually Carver Park. How, um, were, do you feel that kind of issue was in Henderson. How was that? Um, um, blocks segregated against? Was there, did you notice things like that?

**Delwin:** Well, looking back on it, I do. At the time, you see they went to school with us. There were only a couple of families. There was the Willoughby family and, uh, I can't think of...we used to jokingly call him the mayor of Carver Park. But most of the black families lived in Carver Park. And then, of course, as soon as they got jobs at the plant, then things started, you know, progressing for them. Then they would move to the West side. A lot of them, not all of them. Some of them stayed here in Henderson. But Bolden, who later became Assistant Chief in the Sheriff's Department, uh, he went to school here. A lot of them moved. There were several others that did move to the Las Vegas area. But there were some that stayed here as well. We went through school with them and we knew they lived in Carver Park but there were also some white families who lived in Carver Park. So the segregation lines weren't drawn so tight that, you know, that, that we didn't go to school with them. That we didn't associate with them in other ways. You know, looking back I can see that perhaps there was some feelings of segregation but not as in the Deep South where they, uh, tarred and feathered them and ran, tried to run them out of town. I'm sure most of them felt, uh...Sledge family, that was the other I was lookin' for. And we used to jokingly refer to Willie Sledge as the mayor of Carver Park. (Chuckle)

Because he was always at City Council meetings and always was outspoken about, and liked to voice his opinions and Willie was welcome everywhere. He was not thought of as being, uh, not being welcome. And as well with his kids and let's see, the Willoughby family also had a lot of kids and they stayed right here. In fact, still live here.

**Interviewer:** Um, Victory Village and Carver Park at that time were still fully operational. Or you know, they had apartments were full and everything.

**Delwin:** They were. Uh, Victory Village, of course, and again, I don't know if it was designed that way, but a lot of Hispanics lived in Victory Village and a lot of blacks lived in Carver Park. Like I say, there were a lot of white people in there too. For a while we lived in Carver Park when our home was being finished on Basic Road. And we had more white neighbors than we did black neighbors. And, uh, never had a problem with any of them. We all got along and, like I say, a lot of them worked at the plant and so if we didn't see them at school. Or well, that first year out of high school I worked at the, what's Kerr-McGee now, I worked there. And then we were, one of my, as it developed, one of my later to-be best friends was Woodrow Wilson who later was the first Assemblyman, the first State Senator and first black County Commissioner. And he was in charge of the warehouse there. And, uh, of course, he and my dad had worked together for several years before that and just my, just really got along with him. And we became fast friends and there were several others that, that I met that I still see them occasionally and still count them as friends.

**Interviewer:** Did Carver Park and well Victory Village too, they have their own little recreation area, little, kinda like a little, your social aspects of those people that lived in those areas?

**Delwin:** Carver Park had a large building. It later became the Carver Park Market. At that time, it was kind of a center for the people who lived there and I, I, at the time I was there it was the Carver Park Market, so I don't know what kind of activities, I don't know if they held recreational activities or just what inside that building. But I do, kids that lived in Victory Village that I've talked to told me the one in Victory Village and it later, I know Phil Hubel had a TV shop there, right there. It seems like there was a restaurant in there as well and it was also a gathering place. People from Victory Village would use it for various meetings and things. So they did provide some forms of recreation and things and a place for them to gather. I know there was a laundromat in the one in Victory Village as well. I'm trying to remember...I remember somebody who operated but I don't remember what their name was now. Later Lou Black took it over, uh, but I don't remember who the initial operator of that laundromat was.

**Interviewer:** Gaming. When did gaming come to Henderson?

**Delwin:** Well, initially there was, of course, no gaming here. There was nothing to really support it. But then along came a...there was some gaming in the Pittman area. So when I say, at that time though Pittman was a separate and distinct...had their own post office. Pittman was not referred to in the same breath with Henderson. Pittman was thought to be, well, depending on whether you lived in Pittman or you lived in Henderson. Henderson thought it was below them. The Pittman folks thought Henderson wasn't good enough for them. So there was kind of a dichotomy of opinion there. But there was some gaming carried on in Pittman. But the first real gaming was when the Royal Club was built. That is now the Eldorado. It was the Royal, then the Wagon Wheel, then the Eldorado as I remember. But I know a few of my friends and I were very excited that here was a 24-hour restaurant in town. So the one thing the new...when someone would come in and leave the door open, were you born at the Royal where the doors never close? (chuckle) And that was the first live games and where Henderson

actually came...and gaming actually came right into Henderson itself. And then later after Prime Meats was gone then that became the Rainbow.

**Interviewer:** And it's always been the Rainbow?

**Delwin:** Yes, as I remember. I'm sure it's always been the Rainbow.

**Interviewer:** Was there another club down there?

**Delwin:** Only those two that I remember. Oh, well there was one, later where the post office...well, now it's called Emerald Isle but ah....

**Interviewer:** Mayor, Mayor Byrne opened a casino.

**Delwin:** Well, he had a little grocery store.

**Interviewer:** All right.

**Delwin:** On...Army Street. But it was not a casino.

**Interviewer:** Well, it was later in his career. And I always thought it was the Royal that he opened up. But I didn't picture it as the Eldorado was separate from the Royal.

**Delwin:** Well, see, it was initially the Royal. Then it changed name to the Wagon Wheel. And I, he may have had an interest in the Wagon Wheel. He could have had an interest in the Royal that I'm not aware of. But it wasn't touted as being his casino. He, uh...you would always find him in his grocery store, his little store there, and, uh, like I say in the later years he may have...I was too young or...well I guess at time I was too young to go in the casinos. Like I say we would go in the Royal quite often for breakfast. That was a big thing, a forty-nine cent breakfast for us kids. We could...

**Interviewer:** And across the street was Foodland?

**Delwin:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And then that grocery store was down on the corner from Foodland...

**Delwin:** Well, Foodland was where the parking garage...

**Interviewer:** Parking garage.

**Delwin:** ...is now. And Van Valey also had a shoe store in there. I know some, several other commercial shops in there.

**Interviewer:** And where was this neighborhood store?

**Delwin:** It was just around the corner right next to, uh, Burton family, the mother and daughter. Well, initially it was mother and then her daughter when...she graduated a year behind me and she went in with her mother in the beauty shop. And then that building that's still there where there's a smoke

shop and a barber shop. There's a building very similar to that and that's where the beauty shop and Byrne's Market was.

**Interviewer:** Oh, okay.

**Delwin:** And, uh...

**Interviewer:** Across from the theater.

**Delwin:** Right, across from the theater.

**Interviewer:** All right. Um, I guess that's all I have.

**Delwin:** Okay.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much. We might have you back if I...

**Delwin:** Well, I'm sure if I...

**Interviewer:** This is our first, our first try.

**Delwin:** I'm already remembering things that may or may not be of interest so I won't...

**Interviewer:** Well, just...

**Delwin:** When you said the theater I just...

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Delwin:** I remember we used to, Saturday afternoon was go to the theater and see Roy Rogers and Hopalong Cassidy and, uh, Gene Autry. There was always a good Western on Saturday and then, once in awhile during the week, my brother, Leon. See, he was in the high school at that time here. I guess he was in the senior year and a couple of his friends...one of them was Norm Kraft. He was about six foot four, very tall for that period of time. And they were ushers in the theater and I forget what the movie was. It was an evening show. It wasn't one of the Saturday afternoon matinees, but it was very scary and Norm Kraft come down, put his hand on my shoulder. And I just looked up there and he looked awfully big. (chuckle) Scared the heck out of me at that time. And then this Grant Swanson and Jimmy Swanson, they also worked there. They were quite the scrappers and so quite often you'd see them take off their hats at the window where you bought the tickets out front and their aprons and they'd go out in the street and have a real brawl. And, like I say, they were very tough and they were, usually did quite well in the fights. But they were quite the scrappers in the early days. Between there and there was a pool hall. And a lot of kids hung out at the pool hall. In fact the pool hall is, was where the Emerald Isle is now.

**Interviewer:** Um. There was also a Rexall Drug around there, too, on the corner.

**Delwin:** Rexall Drug is, later became the Drugstore Tavern.



**Interviewer:** Oh, that's right.

**Delwin:** And that's where the Rexall Drug was. Joe McBeth had that. And then the post office was over where the bank is now. And the bank was down, faced right on Pacific. And Harve Perry had a men's store that was down there. And so if you needed a suit or any, anything, well not all men's clothing...most people bought, suits they were bought there for sure. Other casual clothes you could get at J.C. Penney's or places in town like Sears but if anyone in Henderson needed a suit that's where you went, Harve Perry's. And a lot of other men's clothing as well.

**Interviewer:** One thing I just thought of was the Cold War. When the threat of nuclear bombs, was that a furor, was that an uproar here in town?

**Delwin:** Well, of course, that...Earl Brothers, who was my dad's partner in the Indian Springs ranch, he had developed Boulder City. He developed Paige, Arizona when they built the Dam there. So he was a developer. He knew, of course everybody knew they were going to use that bombing range up there as testing grounds for the A-bomb. So he bought the ranch having surveyed things and knowing that's where the next town was going to be. And so he needed somebody to farm it until he was ready to develop it and that's why he took my dad in as a partner to farm it. And then at the time I was there, there was the air base and our ranch. There were thirteen kids in the first to eighth grade in a one-room school on the air base. So, like I say, that was why Earl Brothers bought that property, was knowing there was a town site was going to come in. So they knew they were going to be testing the bomb out there but the jobs that this was making available, people thought it was great. They had no qualms about inviting them in and letting them set bombs off right there in our neighborhood because the jobs it was creating did more that off-set any damage that it could do.

**Interviewer:** A lot of people from Henderson work at the test site?

**Delwin:** An awful lot of people worked up there.

**Interviewer:** Did they drive back and forth or ride the bus or...

**Delwin:** Some of them drove every day. Some of them rode buses, depending on what kind of jobs they had. If they were tradesmen, electricians, plumbers, they used a lot of those up there. For some reason the tradesmen got to drive. The ones that worked actually for the government, they provided transportation for them. They had buses and then in later years they actually flew, a lot of them, up and back. And, uh, there's a lot of people worked there over the years.

**Interviewer:** Did you ever see an above ground test?

**Delwin:** When we were living in Indian Springs, we would have to go out and drive the cattle off from where they were going to set the bombs off. So we would drive all the cattle away and then, of course, we'd hear the airplane coming in the night before. Indian Springs was so small. Like I say, all that was there was our ranch and the air base so we would hear the airplane come in and say, OK, tomorrow there's going to be a bomb. They'd go running out some of the announcements but, of course, you knew anyway.

**Interviewer:** In school did you have to practice?

**Delwin:** There's a Life magazine cover somewhere. I used to have it but I lost it and haven't been able to find another one, where all thirteen of the students from the grade school around Vegas were laying in front of the school with their hands, laying down flat with their hands on their, head on their hands, and you can see the cloud coming up above us. That was done strictly for the picture because otherwise we just stayed in the classroom and we didn't even get under...initially I, once we did get under our desks but when that didn't do anything then we just stayed right up and worked. The teacher, Mr. Dolman, would keep us working. He wouldn't let us. (chuckle)

**Interviewer:** Well, I can remember practicing under, I mean, yeah, practicing going under the desk for drills and stuff. But they built some fall-out shelters around town in people's homes. Like there was, was it, I don't remember, Blackmore National, there was a home built there. I mean a shelter, a bomb shelter. Did they build many of them around? Were people worried about being attacked or fallout or...

**Delwin:** Well, it wasn't the fallout. It was worried that they were going to be attacked by the Russians of course. And so a lot of people built bomb shelters. My, later to become my brother-in-law, his father had back-hoes and dump trucks. Burdette Rebber lived on Pacific. He built a big bomb shelter under his house on Pacific. And most of the other bomb shelters that were built around were either dug by hand or Burdette Rebber dug them out. I know when, there were a lot of them in various areas of town that were built for that purpose. Also there were places under the plant where you were supposed to be able to go to get away from the bomb if one was dropped. Of course when you talk about being, when Doctor Hazeltine built his home on the golf course his was not, I mean it was, the secondary reason was for the bomb shelter and the main reason was he was quite a target, uh pistol shooter, and so he built a basement also so he could have a range to shoot his pistol down there. And Burdette Rebber dug that and, of course Doug and I did most of the work for him. And I remember we uncovered the, we thought it was the biggest rock that had ever been invented while we were digging that site up there. Of course the golf course was coming in and I think your dad was the initial groundskeeper up there and so...

**Interviewer:** But there weren't very many homes around the golf course. It was quite a while. The golf course was in quite awhile before the houses were built around there?

**Delwin:** Sigh...That's what I was trying to remember. I know Hazeltine's was built. Oh, I know there were a few there when he was there but there weren't many. The golf course was in and then people started...most of the people were still kinda skeptical and didn't think the golf course was going to make a go of it and so they didn't build a house up there. Eventually they did start building homes and, of course...

**Interviewer:** Didn't your brother have a home up there too?

**Delwin:** He did. He did.

**Interviewer:** All right. Any other memories that come to mind?

**Delwin:** I guess I better quit.

**Interviewer:** All right. Well, thank you very much. This is very interesting.