

Henderson Libraries

Henderson Oral History Project

**Judith Hamblin,
Part 2**

Judith Hamblin, part II

Interviewer: It's May 18, 2006. We're interviewing Judith Hamblin for the second time. My name is Shannon Berndt and our cameraman is Ed Feldman.

Interviewer: Welcome back.

Judith: Thank you.

Interviewer: We're, um, needed to glean some more information from your mind.

Judith: Oh, dear.

Interviewer: Ed and I were talking, in fact, yesterday about the name of Henderson. How did...

Judith: How did the name of Henderson come about? Well, originally, of course, it was Basic Townsite because they named that as part of the plant. And when they, when the plant was named Basic Magnesium they just simply named it Basic Townsite. And then Charlie Henderson was the State Senator from Las Vegas, I think, and it was named after him.

Interviewer: What impact, how did he...

Judith: He must have had something to do with the plant, getting it into this area. I think as a state legislator, when they talked with the federal government and that type of thing, I think he had some influence there. But that's who it's named after is Charlie Henderson.

Interviewer: Do you know when they started calling it Henderson?

Judith: I believe right after the war. Sometime around '46, '45 or '46, '47...sometime in there. It was before...we were known as Henderson before...um...what was the name of the company that bought the homes? I can't think of the names now, the man's name off the top of my head here. But when he came in and bought all of the homes, and the government literally sold Henderson, he came in and bought all the homes. But it was known as Henderson before that time. And again, I think that was simply the war was over and that type thing and they just moved into the name of the town and I guess Charlie happened to be handy. But, uh, they called it Henderson and then, of course, we weren't incorporated until '54 or '55, somewhere along there.

Interviewer: So you say a gentleman came in and bought the houses. What about the people that were already living there? Were they already...

Judith: We were allowed to pay rent for awhile and then, and then they sold the houses to us individually, to the families. Um, and you were allowed to buy the house. I can remember as a child the office where you used to go and pay the rent because mama would leave the rent with me. She would go off to work. Daddy would be at work. Uh, Roberta and Ron, my brother and sister, were gone and so forth. And she would leave money with me. I would stop and pay the rent on the way to school because, of course, we all went to school before as I said before in the townsite area which is now the Convention Center in that entire block. So, and the only townsite we had was right there off of the school property that is now the Eldorado Club parking garage.

Interviewer: So up and down Water Street it was just solid town site houses.

Judith: Right.

Interviewer: There weren't any businesses?

Judith: The only businesses were on Water Street, were on the South side, South side I guess, of Water Street. And that, and that would have encompassed...we had the school which went from Basic Road to Atlantic down Water Street, and from Water Street to Lead on that side. So that entire block was the school. And then all of the other businesses were in that area right in front of it between there and Pacific, and they had the post office which is where Wells Fargo Bank is now. And, of course, that was the second post office. I think I talked to you the first time about being down at the guard shack. And that was our second...but that was our first post office building per se. And, uh, and then behind that all the way from back side of the post office clear to Pacific Street was an empty block. And we used to just kiddie-kop across the corner of that block from one side to the other and, uh, to go home from anything else that was uptown. We'd just go to the post office, turn it and go down to the corner of Water and Pacific and then walk down six, seven houses down the street to our house on Water. But, uh, everything else was there and then there was a...in the block, the entire block between the post office and...which was, which is what, Atomic Street or whatever it is...the one in front of...between the Rainbow Club and the bank now. I don't know what the name of that is. We never paid attention to names. But that, that street, that entire block there only had one thing on it, and that was the constable's office. Aubrey Pagan's office was in the middle of that entire block. And that was the telephone in town.

Interviewer: That was the only telephone in town.

Judith: Right. That was THE telephone, on a telephone pole just outside of the, of the office. And he even had a line that ran into the office so there were really two telephones in Henderson that were not at the plant, at that point. And then as things grew we had a grocery store on that corner where...uh, eventually the constable's office was taken down and there was a grocery store there. Uh, I believe it was called Prime Meats and then it changed into another kind of store. And it later became Vegas Village, an extension of Vegas Village which was a popular store in Las Vegas. And, uh, and it was kinda a dime store type thing. And then right behind that they eventually built the Royal, which was the first casino downtown. And then across the street from that were the original stores that the government built when they built the downtown. All of the...these two empty lots that you have essentially were the post office and the constable's office. In a matter of two full lots. And then on the other side of that they had Foodland, which was the grocery store and then you kinda came down a hill, cause we all loved to skate down that hill. And you had the Desert Wear, um, uh...and there was a dime...it was kinda a gro...it was kinda a...let's see, we had a small dime store in there and we had Desert Wear, which was the only clothing store in town and shoe store. And then you came down the thing and went around the corner. But, above this, because it was a two-story building, as you got down around the corner then, the next block over was the whole complex where the drugstore was and the theater and further down on the other end of the drugstore was, uh, Prince's Barbershop and then the bowling alley. And all of that part of downtown was originally built by the government. Because that was just the part...I mean that was it. That was part of the town and they had to supply their people with something because we...gas was too short. You couldn't go to Vegas for everything. And, of course, going to Vegas meant that you had to go at least as far as Fifteenth and Fremont before you got

into Vegas where you could buy anything. That was the first drugstore or grocery store and that was Foodland. But they had a store out here called Foodland too and it was the same company. But that was...that encompassed all of downtown, the theater and all.

Interviewer: Now was the bowling alley, too, right with that?

Judith: Yes. The theater was on one part...the fire station was here, and then the theater was on the side... and uh, and down from that came, um, it seems to me like there was a bar in there, if I remember right, and then the drugstore, the back side of the drugstore...Macbeth on that. And then as it extended down the other way, and the post office is over here, as it extended down the other way, then there was a barbershop and the bowling alley and, uh, and they shot pool and so forth in the pool hall. That's the only entertainment the men had after work really. You could go to the movie, you could go home, you could go troop at the one bar or you could shoot pool or, uh...I know my brother set up the bowling pins. And, of course, in those days you did actually set up the pins and so forth. And he did that as a teenager.

Interviewer: Um, the Prince, the Prince's...

Judith: The Prince's had the barbershop and it was just past the original building and it's in there where...in fact that's part of the old building that still stands. It's probably one of the older ones here in town anymore, that and the drugstore area. But Prince's Barbershop was in that same area. Byrne's had their little tiny...it was the invention of the 7-11 I guess, and they had their little tiny "mom and pop" store there. And, of course, there again in those days, you know, parents would give you the money to, to have something at home or they'd send you to the store because we walked everywhere. It took me longer to drive here this morning than it did to walk anyplace in Henderson when I was a kid. That's some...and we're not much further down the road. And I was in a car. The only difference was it was, the car was air-conditioned. That part I appreciated this morning. Uh, but, um, they had those little "mom and pop" things, and, then, of course, the Tastee Tavern. And you could go into Byrne's and, you know, you'd say, "I need a pack of cigarettes for my Aunt May." Well, they knew who I was talkin' about and they knew she was out in the car. She just sent me in with the money, whatever it was. Or I needed a...hers was Lucky Lager Beer...but, you know, I needed a quart of beer for her, and, uh, and you know we didn't pay attention to the "you're not twenty-one" type thing, and so forth, because everybody knew everybody. And when you'd say Aunt May's out in the car, they'd just kinda look out the window and they'd hand me the stuff and I'd take it back out to the car to Aunt May or Uncle Pete or my Mom or Dad, whichever one I was shoppin' for.

Interviewer: Um, the first five or six years that Henderson, after Henderson was incorporated did they allow bars in town now right down in downtown and gambling? Do you remember when that changed and when people...

Judith: That was when the Royal was built. Right after that because that, uh...I don't remem...you may have to correct me on this one. I don't remember exactly when we were incorporated. I do remember that the Royal Club was THE club to go to. Number one, it had an upstairs and you could use that as a banquet room and so we often did for our club organizations when you...like the Future Nurses of America or the Future Teachers of America or whatever it was and we had something formal like an installation of officers we would go and, uh, be upstairs. Uh, which we thought was really neat. Um, but they did have gambling and a bar there. That was a favorite hangout of the teachers.

Interviewer: Well, it was some time after that, um, that I just was wondering...I had read some articles about people objecting and stuff to the gaming downtown and so close to the neighborhoods.

Judith: And the schools. Well, you see, it was. It was right in front of the school still. Even though Basic had...by the time we had incorporated, Basic had moved up to where it was just torn down over on Van Wagenen. The elementary school was still there and the junior high was still there. It was just the high school kids they moved out because I finished eighth grade there and the Royal Club was part of the scene then. And they're right. It was close to school. I mean, we simply walked out, walked across the street, and then there was a, there was a five and dime store of some kind there. I don't remember what the name of it was, and right next to that was the Royal Club and then right next to that was Prime Meats. And, uh, but yeah, we...that was the first gaming. That was before I was even out of elementary or at least out of the original Townsite school area.

Interviewer: Um, a lot of the streets are named after people. Do you know who some of these people are that they're named after?

Judith: Oh, sure. Lynn Street which runs up by the block off of Water Street, and it runs from the...what's the name of that library? James I. Gibson Library? Ok. Right up by that one and next to Mackile Elementary...and actually it's on the other side of that. It's a little short street. Well, there were five girls on there that were named Lynn and they changed the name of the street to Lynn Street. There was Lynn Blue and Lynn Kruger for two of them and I don't remember who the others were. But there were only about six houses and every house had a Lynn in it and so they just arbitrarily changed the name to Lynn Street. That was one. I like the arbitrary one. And then, of course, in the triangle, where I live now, Church Street is named after Ben Church, who was the first superintendent of schools. And he was the chemistry teacher. When we finally had a Henderson School District, after we were Duck Creek and Railroad Pass and all those other ones and we finally had a Henderson School District, Ben Church was the first prin...uh, first superintendent of schools. And like I said, he was also the chemistry teacher. Uh, so that's named after Ben Church. The next street is Mallory Street, which is the one I live on, and that was named after Jack Mallory who was one of the first of the boys who went into the Korean War and was wounded. I don't think he was killed but I know he was wounded. And, uh, Mallory's lived down the alley from us when we lived up on Water. And then later when we moved down Water Street or on Mallory Street in '61, I obviously knew the name of it. Laswell was named after another guy that went into World War II or, uh, the Korean War. Lowery was named after a man that was, uh...his wife was one of the sixth grade teachers and he was killed in Korea. And, let's see...and Hansen, Hansen was named after one of our police officers. Brown Street was named after Mrs. Brown who was one of the original teachers at Basic High School and she used to live just across the street about where the Sampan is now and that restaurant in there. She lived right across the street from there. And she came to work one day and the steps then were just kinda wooden steps coming down because of the angle and she taught school and graded all of her papers and started to come home and she fell on the steps coming out of school and had a heart attack and died, and so...that was Mrs. Brown. And her son had been murdered about two or three years before that up and left up on Boulder Highway going towards Boulder.

Interviewer: The police officer, Hansen? What did he do...or why was that street named after him?

Judith: Um, I don't remember what happened to him. It seems like he was...it seemed like he died but I don't remember why and it seemed like it was something connected to being on the police

department or he was in a car accident or something. I don't remember. Of course, we should remember...you remember...that the intersection of Lake Mead and Boulder Highway was called Widow's Corner for years and years because we didn't have...all we had was...at first all we had was a two-way stop. And then we finally got a four-way stop. And then we finally got lights and all. I mean, as it progressed, but as the men would go back and forth from work and so forth, somebody got hurt on that corner virtually every day, because so many of the men would walk. They would come from Tent City, or they'd walk in to the plant from Victory Village and Carver Park and so forth in that area and they would walk up through there. And if you had a car, um, you'd stop and pick up your friends sometimes, or whatever, but, of course, rules and regulations in driving just didn't always jive and there were accidents on that corner all the time. And it seems to me like he was killed on that corner but I...Mr. Hansen was...but I don't remember exactly what the circumstances were. And, let's see, then there's an O'Dell Street. Um, and of course the ones down in Pittman were named after the prominent people that lived in the Pittman area. Mrs. Corn ran the trailer court for so long. And Price, old man Price, had a trailer court and apartments and a bar and a few other things down there. Barrett Street.

Interviewer: Is that where...where his...Price Street is, is that where his businesses were located, right there...

Judith: Right in that area, yeah. And then Coogan Drive is down there and that's named after old Doctor Coogan who was one of the first doctors here in town. Doctor Coogan, Doctor Miner and Doctor Harold Miller stayed. Harold stayed and the rest of them...they stayed for a long time but they eventually died. And Harold Miller was much younger than the other guys. Doctor Coogan was old when he came here, and so streets like that were named for people.

Interviewer: What about Burkholder?

Judith: Oh, that's after Lyal Burkholder obviously. And Marion, I'm sure. And, but Burkholder was named after...

Interviewer: And Lyal Burkholder...

Judith: Lyal Burkholder was the next superintendent after Ben Church.

Interviewer: Oh, he was.

Judith: And he went then...he was the one that was the superintendent at the time that we went into the Clark County School District. And he became...he was over the Henderson Schools. They didn't have the divisions like they do now. But then again, we weren't dealing with nearly as many people as we are now in the school system. But Lyal Burkholder was also a chemistry teacher. Of course, Marion did, Marion did all of the music.

Interviewer: And all the kids in Henderson...

Judith: Everybody, everybody had their y's squared.

Interviewer: And Van Wagenen...

Judith: Oh, that was...Van Wagenen Street was after old Van and he's the one who ran the movie theater.

Interviewer: Oh.

Judith: Yeah, he had the movie theater. Van. A really sweet guy...really, really a nice, nice man. And, and all the kids knew him. And, of course, as, as you grow up and were old enough to work in the theater and so forth, you know, that was really quite a privilege to work with Van. Yeah, he was really a nice guy. And Van Wagenen was named after him.

Interviewer: The other street names in old part of Henderson, do you know how they named them, how they went about...there's a section of trees and like Atomic and...

Judith: Well, Atomic Street didn't come along...actually because they divided that...because they divided that block and made a short street through there because it was easier for them, I think. But Atomic and so forth came through about then. But, um, the um...what was I going to say? Repeat the question. Where was I?

Interviewer: How did they, how did they...

Judith: Oh. Okay. From Water Street to Boulder Highway and from Victory Road to Ocean Street are all named after States. And from Water Street to Basic Road and from Victory Road to Pacific, or from Pacific, no, to Basic Road actually...from Victory Road to Basic Road, all those were named after metals. And then when they started building the new houses, like when they built...because, of course, Victory Road was simply a road, and it was more a cow path than a road to be honest with you, because the main street was Lake Mead, which, of course, was before that Frontier Boulevard. Let's see. Before that it was BMI Road. Yeah, so I have to go back and think which, how many times we've named it. And now it's...

Interviewer: St. Rose Parkway.

Judith: (Chuckle) Whatever. It's all the same street. A lot of things happen in this county and in this state, and certainly in Henderson, that you never move but you get things changed a thousand times and you're still in the same place. So, you know, you call it Industrial Days; you call it Heritage Days; you call it Henderson Days, you know, whatever it is. Time seems to change things but you're...it's the same stuff. They just, you know, starch the shirt, put it in the box and wrap it up again. That's all there is to it. But, uh, the roads, Victory Road was the end and then they built the houses that faced East, that faced East. No, well, East and West. You're right. They had them on both sides. But really they built them on both sides. And when they built that strip right between Water, between Water Street and Basic Road, down that way, when they started building those and so forth, and they had those Ways down there like Almonite and so forth, they added to the metal thing. And, uh, and, of course, on the other side of Water Street, from Water to Boulder Highway, originally Victory Road was the end and you just followed these little cul-de-sacs, and then they added the houses in there. Like I said, that was where my playground used to be. Because they had the slides and teeter-totters and swings and so forth there that they eventually moved up where the Episcopal Church is now. But, uh, they didn't have, they didn't have more Ways there. I mean that's a narrower strip, and, of course, as we grew and progressed, then of course, the Lake Mead side of it became more commercialized all the

time. And then they'd take out the houses and add on things like, uh, the supper club and various places down there, the dental offices and the Henderson planning and that type of thing.

Interviewer: Um, do you know where the Eldorado Valley is?

Judith: Um-hmm.

Interviewer: Is that connected to Henderson?

Judith: Yeah. Yeah. Well, yeah. Eldorado Valley is the valley that is between Black Mountain and the next range of mountains over there that goes down by, by, into the dry lake area. Okay, between Boulder City. This side and this side and then Boulder Pass is here and then you have this range of mountains; I don't know what the name of it is, but Eldorado Valley is that scoop in between that and where the Black Mountain Range is.

Interviewer: Okay. Cause I was just reading a lot of newspaper articles about the Eldorado Valley and how it affected Henderson.

Judith: Well, um, it affected Henderson in that originally that's when they started building the houses up in that direction. You know, as we expanded, after they built the, like Burton Street and Republic and there's a whole new set of houses up that way. And then people would go off and they'd kinda build their own little thing out there towards the Valley. They wanted to be further away from town and all. But it's also, it was also part of the flood control. Because the rain would come in off of both of those valleys or off both sets of mountains and would drain that way and so we had a large flood problem in the summertime. And they went out there and built a dike across it for a long time to divert it so that it wouldn't, it would go closer to Black Mountain and not come through Henderson and through all of the houses this way. So Eldorado was important in that. And then, of course, when they, when they made the road after you go over, after you go over the pass and you turn right and go down on Searchlight Road and so forth, originally they were going to bring it and come out and go through Eldorado and come across the lake, but they didn't want to have to build across the lake that far. Because it came, the dry lake, because it came up further than that, and the shorter route across the lake itself and the soil differences and all was to go through the pass and then turn and go down that way to Searchlight.

Interviewer: Okay. Thank you. Do you remember the drag strip?

Judith: Oh yeah. (Chuckle) Yeah. Which one? (Laugh)

Interviewer: Well, I don't know. There was more than one?

Judith: It depends on which group you were with and what time period we're talking about. Um, the drag strip used to be what is now, from about Warm Springs Road out towards the lakes, you know, that way, Lake Las Vegas. Uh, we had, we had a drag strip that was down in the desert down behind Carver Park.

Interviewer: I think that's the one I mean.

Judith: We had one that was over behind...well, of course, we used some of the streets too. (Laugh) Basic Road from Victory, from Victory Road up to um, about Pacific was well known, particularly before they built the houses on that other side. Yeah, before they built Polk new houses. Now, like when my brother was a teenager and so forth. Now he didn't have a car but those that had cars always took their friends with them and stuff. But that was, that was quite a drag strip area too. And, yeah, I suppose next comes "lovers lane". (laugh)

Interviewer: (Laugh) Where was that? I don't know that one.

Judith: Oh we had a lot of those too. You'd go up Boulder Highway and turn off and, uh, up above where the Christian area is up there and so forth. That was a good one. Uh, out to the mesa. Uh, where Votech is now or up on the mesa. Um, down BMI Road, BMI Road. Of course, there were a lot of places where the plant had, would take slag and, or chemicals, I don't know what they took. But things from the plant and they would just kinda dump them out in the desert. So, of course, those tracks would make nice little turnoffs and, uh, and as you would go that way on the road, there was always a nice little place where you could go in, turn around and park and look over the lights of Vegas and have fun. (chuckle) You can take that any way you want to.

Interviewer: (Laugh) Do you remember...and I might have asked you this last time. I don't remember. About the fallout shelters that, that they built and...

Judith: Um-hmm.

Interviewer: Didn't a woman win a national award, or national recognition or something? It was on Blackmore? They built the prototype of her and her house or something.

Judith: Well, they might have. I don't remember exactly who that was. It might, it might have been that lady who lived at the very top of Blackmore. You know Blackmore goes this way and there's a top of it.

Interviewer: But you do remember...

Judith: I remember, I remember other people like Marlan Walker and Dale Riddle and those guys that had 'em.

Interviewer: And they built them?

Judith: Right. They built them in their backyard between...and their backyards faced the church parking lot. Republic was this way and the LDS Church was right here and their, their backyards all faced that way. And I know that those guys all built them. There were about eight or nine of them on that one very short block.

Interviewer: What were they like? Did they go underground?

Judith: They were underground. They went out and dug big holes in their backyard and would go down and build a cave out of it, kind of, and some of them finished it off and would use it as "fruit rooms". And they would keep their two-year supply or their canned goods or something out there because the ground, of course, was cooler than the house many a time, particularly in the...back in the

days of just the swamp coolers. But they would keep storage down there and food supplies and that type of thing. And their wheat, their two-year supply of wheat. And their canning goods and that type of thing. There were a lot of people throughout the valley that had them. Now we didn't but they did. My dad always thought it was kind of stupid but, he said "if it was gonna getcha it was gonna getcha". That was his theory.

Interviewer: Do you remember when they did the above ground testing at the test site?

Judith: Oh yes. We would stand at the top of the hill at the school and watch them. We would...when they went out there and they built...cause they wanted to see what would happen, how far away and that type of thing, and they built a whole, a whole town out there. I don't know if you're aware of that, but they built an entire town out at Mercury or "The Flats" as we call it and that encompasses all of it. Um, but they built an entire town and they put mannequins in it and they put furniture in the houses, and they put dishes, I mean they...it was like somebody...like a whole town could just go out there and move in. I mean they had everything. They had clothes, they had dolls, they had cars, they had everything that it would take for a house. And they had them set for...all the way from ground zero out so far and they wanted to see the effects of the blast as to how far it would go and so forth. Well, when they set that particular bomb off, and "destroyed" that project and all, later they brought all of the, all of the mannequins and what was left and that type of thing, twisted cars...I remember that. Twisted up cars and swing sets and teeter totters, things that normally would have been in a town if it had been hit by a bomb. The dishes and what was left in cabinets and mannequins with their clothes on and that type of thing and they brought it and lined it all up on either side of Fremont Street all the way from Main Street down to Fifth Street and we all got to go in and see it. Now how much, how much radiation we got I have not a clue. I've often wondered why more people didn't die from that night. (Laugh) You know, as we know more about it now and so forth. But I can remember as a kid, yeah, you walked up and down Fremont Street and looked at all the stuff they had destroyed in the thing because, of course, the men that worked out there, um, would come home and tell 'em, you know. Come home and tell their families, "well, we're building houses", so built a house today and it's got all of this in it and, you know, on some of them they'd use aluminum siding on the houses, some were stucco and some were...I don't think that they built brick ones per se, but they were testing all kinds of things. And I often wondered as I got older and began to, to realize the import of, of what the Government did and said it was safe and then we turned up with all the problems of the downwinders in St. George and all, I often wonder just how many people were affected, myself included. You know, because we wandered up and down that thing all the time. And I remember they used to have Geiger counters and they'd show you, well, this one has more than this one radiation. And yet we were told by the Government that we were safe and we believed 'em. Which was really stupid. But we did. But I do remember walking up and down the street and looking at all the stuff that had been torn up by the Atom Bombs. But we used to get up and, um, go out because if you stood in our...in, again because we didn't have a lot of tall trees, but if you went out and stood in the alley you had a direct shot and you could watch the whole thing. Early in the morning, sometimes you'd get up at four or five o'clock in the morning, and, uh, run out in the alley in your pajamas and watch the thing, come back in, get ready for school. And, I mean, that was a fact of life then. It really was. Um, uh, if they set, if the wind was blowing in the morning, and it didn't go off, you went ahead and went to school and so forth, and, uh, sometimes, I don't know if the teachers got news on the radio, or in fact the wire, but I know they did. They'd say, well when we go out to recess you'll be able to see the bomb. So we'd run up on the hill and we'd be playing and so forth and the first thing was always the big flash of light. And so then you'd all turn and look and you'd wait for the mushroom cloud to come up and you'd wait for the waves to come in and for the ground to shake and when all that was over and you'd watch for a couple of minutes and

you went back and played your ballgame. Played dodge ball or baseball or whatever we were doin' and, uh, I can remember back in...again I would go back to Kansas where my parents are from and they would talk about all the exciting things that they did and I would say, "Oh, well I watched bombs" during...I watched bombs at recess. And somehow, you know, milkin' a cow just didn't seem quite the same. And they always thought I led such an interesting life, I suppose. But, uh, and I'm sure it was. It was a lot more interesting than milking cows or digging ditch weeds or something. But, yeah, they thought they had something really neat and unique back there with their strip mines and open strip mining that they would do in that area and so forth and that was really clever. We can make one of those holes in nothing flat. (Laugh) So, yeah, it was something that we kinda lorded, those of us that were from the area and stuff, we kinda lorded it over the relatives and friends from back East all the time that we got to watch the bombs. I remember one time that we went up to, uh, close to Angel Peak, uh, up at Charleston because, of course that where they, that's where they put most of the reporters and so forth was in that area because that way they could look down and see it. And they could see the crater go in and that type of thing depending on where the bomb was for that particular bomb. Yeah, oh yeah, bombs were a major part of our life for a long, long time and, uh, but of course as you got older and they didn't come quite as frequently and so forth, it didn't bother you. Of course, in those days you remember the lights that you hung up there and you had three of them that would hang down on the chain. I mean that was a popular decorating item then and so forth. Well, you might be sitting in the chair and all of a sudden the lights would start going like this and you'd go, "Oh, they must have set a bomb off" and go back to doin' whatever you'd been doin'. It became very passe. The rest of the world was worried about it but...(laugh)...enough that they finally stopped it but, no, it didn't bother us. And we never thought it was an earthquake. Now if you lived in California and that happens, you know, the lights begin to move or swing in there or something, you immediately begin to think it's an earthquake nearby and so forth. We never thought that. And, I don't know, maybe I got used to it but, but you just didn't worry about it anymore. It wasn't any fun running out in the backyard with your pajamas on to see what was going on.

Interviewer: Well, those are all the questions that I had come up with and I thought if you had anything else that you...

Camerman: Well, one thing I was wondering about was the constable...

Judith: Uh-huh...Aubrey Pagan?

Camerman: Yes. Back in the '40's and before the War and after the War, what kind of police force, fire department, what kind of services like that were available in Henderson, and who provided them?

Judith: Well, as long as the government owned and Basic Magnesium ran the plant, that was our main source for everything. I mean they owned the grocery store and they owned the police department and everything else. They provided all of those services. After the War, I want to say that man's name is McCullough but I'm not sure, all I remember he was out of, he was out of Chicago. But anyhow, after we were allowed to buy the homes and so forth, um, most of our services came through, because we were still a part of the county until we became incorporated, so we were under the county sheriff, whoever he might have been at the time. Whichever one they elected. Cliff Young was one for a long time. Um, and so until we became a city, then, of course, we incorporated and then we started with the Henderson Police Department and the Fire Department as well. But, of course, we've always had until just in the last few years, we've always had a lot of donut hole. You know what that is...here in Henderson, that was county land. And the county land is...is where plants are. And it was owned and

incorporated by the county. And so any time there was a major fire or someone was hurt they had to send a county fire truck. Now Henderson for years and years and years, Henderson would go to the gates. If it was life-threatening, they could go in. But if it wasn't, they went to the gates and waited until the county got there. Well, the closest county was in Whitney or East Las Vegas, down on Missouri Street, was the closest county fire department at that time. And so by the time they came up Boulder Highway and up the, the Annex there, Water Street, and turned and went down to the plant, whichever plant it was. You know, whether it be Potash, Stauffer, or WECCO, or whichever one it was, um, they went in, the Henderson Police would simply wait for the fire...would simply wait until they got in there. Again, if it was a life-threatening thing, they were allowed to go in to spare life and property. But if it wasn't anything really major then they always just waited for them at the gate. And then at the...if they wanted assistance, and of course, as things got better and they had that communications between the two on the radios and so forth, they would say, you know, we really need to go in and help whatever...and, uh, or they would call for them for help. Or they'd say, you know, go ahead, we're stuck in traffic or we can't get through the wash because it's raining, or whatever...can't get over the highway, go on and go in. But that was, that was where we, we elected the constable. But he was elected for the county and Aubrey Pagan worked for the county for a long, long time.

Interviewer: What about the town government? Was there a town government before it was incorporated?

Judith: Uh, they had what they called a coordinating council. And I think I talked to you about that before because mom was on the coordinating council and that was simply that all of the organizations got together and decided because there was so much limited space or the space was so limited. Let me put it that way, as to where you could have anything. Any kind of meeting whether it be church or an activity or a dance or whatever it was, the only places they could meet were in school rooms, in the theater, um, on the, on the square, um, what we called the square, which was nothing more than where some of the Quonset huts had been down at the plant. And they would often hold dances and that type of thing down there simply because it was a big concrete area and they kinda lit it up and that type of thing, depending on the weather and what time of year it was and that type of thing. But there were so many limited places where you could go for any major entertainment or organizational anything. We had, what, uh, before they built St. Peters and...St. Peters and the Community Church were built by the government. I mean that was part of the deal of building the town. And uh, so they built a Catholic Church and a non-sectarian church, the Community Church, uh, which, of course, is now where the Senior Citizens...is. Ok. Yeah. And so, but there again they were churches and they didn't have at that point in time, they didn't have any kinda annex on them where they could have a social hall and all. The Community Church was the first one to add on to theirs because that's where we went to Junior Treaders. I think I talked to you about that before. That was the dance group where we were allowed to go. So the coordinating council had to coordinate all the rooms at the schools as to when they would be available and who got to use them. The Elks and the Lions and the, uh, Kiwanis and every, every group in town, every kind of community auxiliary that existed, uh, would have to coordinate where they were going to meet. And, of course, a lot of people simply met in homes. I mean if you just had a small group of five or six you met in the living room of somebody's home or out in their backyard. Um, but if you wanted to get a large group together for any reason, you had to be really careful. You had one gym that had to incorporate all the sports for school, and all of the plays and all of the concerts and everything else plus all of the community activities. And, uh, and that's one reason that, of course, that's something you don't see nowadays in the movie theater. You don't see a stage, but we had a stage at the old Victory Theater simply because that was the community place. That's where they used to have Baccalaureate before graduation. And, uh, if they

were going to have a large meeting, of, of some kind, uh, some kind of a community meeting, many times they would have it at the theater. Um, it wasn't very bright in there but, (laugh), but they would, they would go in there and have it in the theater because that would accommodate, you know, two or three or four hundred people. And especially if they had something else going on in the gym, and, uh, and so you know, they had to coordinate what little space they had and yet everybody had their say. And, of course, on Sunday, if you had a very small church group you got a classroom. If you had a larger church group like, uh, like the Catholics before St. Peter's was built, or, uh, the Mormons and so forth, then they got to use the gym on Sunday. But you'd set it up for the Catholics. You'd have an altar and then you'd take the altar down and the Mormons would come in and do their thing and then in a few minutes the Community Church before it was built, then the Community Church group came in. And in the meanwhile if you had any Jewish people, they met down in a little classroom or they had a group of Baptists or Methodists or whatever, they would meet in the classrooms. And we had, in those days we had pianos in, almost in every classroom because everybody had music then. That was just part of your curriculum. And so, and they...and if your classroom didn't have a piano and you needed it, then you coordinated with the guy down the road here and used his. So, but, they...that was the government of Henderson at that point. They just all got together and coordinated.

Interviewer: Worked well.

Judith: PTA...it did! It worked extremely well. And, and that's something I think that as people we have lost. And certainly as we get larger. You know. Even now in Henderson it's sad that things happen (quote) "downtown Henderson" and then Green Valley does their thing and Anthem does their thing and yet we're all Henderson. And back in those days we were all Henderson and you walked to and from everything. And, uh, but there was that feeling of, of coordination with everything that, that came. You worked together as a group. It didn't matter which religion you were or what your political philosophy was or anything else. Everybody cooperated with everybody else. So, and that was...and I miss that. I, I do. Even at this point in time I still miss that. Uh, there are a lot of things nowadays that I keep going, you know there were, there were a lot of things back in those days that I'm glad that it's over with. Women's Rights for one thing, you know, uh, the Civil Rights. Uh, there are a lot of things that we couldn't do back then that we are allowed to do now, and that we've progressed that far. But at the same time we've paid the price of being able to work together, I think. And, and that sense of community that I dearly loved in Henderson. And, you know, even now we hardly know our neighbors on the same street, much less everybody in town. And, uh, and that's the part that I miss of old Henderson.

Interviewer: Yes. Well, that's all I have. Is there anything else?

Cameraman: Was that coordinating council, was that a formal organization?

Judith: Oh, yeah.

Cameraman: It was being created for, specifically for that purpose?

Judith: Oh yeah. Out of self defense. (Chuckle) Yeah. And I think the plant, the plant managers were really the ones that came up with it because they said something has to be in place to, to utilize what facilities we have and all and who gets to do what, when and who has priorities here and there. And, uh, and so I...and I really honestly believe it was probably the school district, whichever district we were in at the time...the schools coordinated with them because they were the ones that held the space.

I mean, it's just like, you know, you look at "Little House on the Prairie" and they had church there on Sunday and they had weddings and they had town council meeting and everything in the little school building. That was typical of the Western part of the United States. Um, far more so than the Eastern part because when they came to the East they started building their buildings immediately almost. You know you had the various churches and you had...um, I'm not talking colonial days. That's different. But as soon as they...as soon as Boston, Philadelphia and so forth started to grow they immediately made their government buildings and that type of thing. They didn't do that in the West because the West was so transient for one thing. They came to find silver or they came to mine something or to, uh, take the timber off of this mountain or whatever, and when that was gone many times the town was too. And so you had...they had that cooperative and learning spirit here in the West that they didn't see so much in the East. And, uh, and that, that's just part of our Western heritage I believe. Uh, and being able to get along. You know, it doesn't matter who you are or what your philosophy was. I mean that, that's typical of the old West. You are who you are and I either put up with you or I shoot you (Laugh)...one or the other. Don't take my property. You know, they took the law into their own hands and yet it wasn't long before they always hired a sheriff in town, didn't they...and, uh, and the same thing here. They just...and, of course, any time we get women together, they're going to organize something. It doesn't matter what it is. They organized the kids to go to school. They organized the music. They organized the churches and whatever, and that was very typical here. The men would go off to work and the women as well. You know, as my mother and so forth off to work, and yet, at the same time, uh, they're the ones who said we will have these kinds of services...and we're going to work it out so that we can. And that was important to them. But, but again, a good point...but I think that just comes from our Western philosophy, and even though we were just given a town by the Government, nonetheless that same philosophy just came through. Even as the ones came from the East to settle here...I mean that was one of the big things when I was a kid in school...every, every time we got a new kid in, we wanted to know what State they were from and could you spell it. (Laugh) Can you spell something besides Utah and Nevada. But, uh, I never liked it when they came in from Massachusetts myself but (chuckle) that was a hard one for me. But, um, but, there again, they would bring their ideas and philosophies and they, they soon learned they had to blame them what was out here. We would accept you to a point but don't try to shove it in our throat type of thing. And, and again, we just happened to, uh...they had the purpose, that was the plan, they had the town and they had the government and thus the coordinating council. And so that made life easier for everybody. And everybody had a voice in something. And that was nice too. You know. And they were socially responsible enough to have a voice in something. I mean, you spoke up and said, "This is what I want." You didn't, you didn't go in your house and let the rest of the world go by because you had to depend on each other. If one person had enough gas to go to town, they would do, they would do little chores or pick up things for maybe ten or fifteen people and bring them back home and then they'd all walk over to your house and get their loaf of bread that, that you'd picked up for them at the store or whatever. Uh, and uh, because things were so limited, uh, you know, you would use each other's stamps, the stamps and stuff that we had for sugar and all during the war and, uh, everybody cooperated with everybody else. It wasn't, "I'm here...leave me alone." It was just a matter of survival. And, and now, you know, even if you're in the dark woods of Alaska, FedEx will get it to you. And so consequently, you can still walk in, close your door and be alone. You turn on your TV, your, you know, your satellite TV...you turn on your internet and this type of thing and you're as connected to the world as I am if I'm sitting in my house by myself. And, that wasn't, that simply wasn't true back then. And if somebody ran out of something...they needed a birthday cake for their two-year-old then you loaned them the cup of sugar. You know, and you didn't think anything about it. And they always paid it back. But there again, nowadays, neighbors seldom borrow from each other like that anymore. You...I know my next door neighbors very well and yet I would sooner get in the car and drive across Boulder Highway...get in the

car and drive across Boulder Highway to Albertson's and pick up a bagful of sugar then I would walk next door and say could I borrow a cup of sugar until I can go to the store...because you made every trip count back then. And we don't now. That's why we're gas guzzlers. You know because we just don't do ten things at the same time we're out. We go back and forth home ten times. But Henderson is still the best place to live. It is. I don't care how much you change it, it's still home.

Interviewer: (Chuckle) That's right. Well, thank you so much.

Judith: You're more than welcome.