

Henderson Libraries

Henderson Historical Society

Giles L. “Bud” Franklin

Oral History of Giles L. "Bud" Franklin

conducted by family friends of

Bud and Kathy Franklin

with Fredric Watson

for the

Henderson Historical Society

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Interviewer: *I want to start by hearing about your early life. Let's start with when and where you were born.*

Bud Franklin: I was born June 21, 1928, in Three Rivers, Michigan, and I was the youngest of four brothers and five sisters. Well, I had one sister that was slightly younger than me, so I was eighth out of nine. My sister, who is here in Henderson, we've always been close. Her name is Betty Weise now and her husband was Gordon Weise, who passed away a few years ago. So Betty is still here and all of our lives we've always kind of looked after each other. And so – what was your question? [laughter]

Interviewer: *Oh, when and where were you born – that was pretty much it.*

Toni Tibbets: *And you did good. You did good.*

Interviewer: *Tell me about your family. Who were your siblings?*

Bud Franklin: My family? My parents were born in Ohio, in Paulding, Ohio, and they decided to move to Three Rivers, Michigan because there was three rivers and back in those days there was a lot of poverty and people were – there were just no jobs and it was terrible. There was thirty percent unemployment whereas now there's only thirteen percent or twelve percent. Back then there was twenty-eight and thirty percent unemployment. So they – a lot of people went fishing because all they had to eat was fish. They had no employment. So anyway, they moved to Three Rivers and they had a couple of factories there. They had a paper mill and a – I can't think of all the names of – they had several factories there in Three Rivers and they had ten lakes all within fifteen minutes of Three Rivers. So there was a lot of people living on the lakes and everything. And so my folks moved to Three Rivers, Michigan, and it turned out that it was a better place, a more profitable place to live than in Paulding, Ohio, which didn't have

much back then, back in those days. But anyway, that's how we – why we moved to Three Rivers, Michigan.

Interviewer: *What did you do for a living and what did your parents do for a living?*

Bud Franklin: My dad, when we went to Three Rivers, he had borrowed four hundred dollars from an uncle that had a few dollars and made a down payment on a farm. And back in those days you could buy a nice farm for five thousand dollars. And so the farm had fruit and we had room there to plant vegetables and we had a lot of chickens and my dad felt that the farm would supply us with everything we needed because he had a double hernia and he couldn't do anything physically. So his sons did everything and so we had vegetables, we had fruit, we had chickens, we had some pigs and we found out that squirrels were good meat. And when we ran out of meat, my dad would say, "Okay, one of you boys go out and shoot a squirrel or two [laughter] and that's what we're going to have for dinner tonight." So anyway, that's part of it.

Interviewer: *Ah. I want to hear about your experiences living in Henderson. First tell me about your family – why your family came to Henderson. What year?*

Bud Franklin: Why I came to Henderson? I had two brothers in Arizona. Well, actually, I had one brother in Arizona. The other one came later. But I had one brother in Arizona who had previously talked me into joining the Marines when I turned eighteen. Well, I joined the Marines and he said all the tough guys are Marines. And so I believed him so I joined the Marines and I found out you had to be a tough guy to survive Parris Island. It's just a pile of sand out in the ocean off the coast of South Carolina. And that was back in the days when the men in charge of you could beat on you or hit you or slap you or – they all carried a whip and if you didn't obey them exactly like they said, they'd whip you. So anyway, I found out they were

pretty tough guys. They always had an ambulance following us around. There was always guys dropping down.

Interviewer: *[laughter]*

Bud Franklin: But my folks, both my folks were a lot older than me and my mother had breast cancer and my dad, of course, had a double hernia, and so I had to – they gave me an early out of the Marine Corps so I could go home and take care of my parents, which I did. Well, it looked like my mother was going to be all right. She had an operation and my dad got a job selling, which wasn't physical, selling cars. And he was doing pretty good selling cars, and he also sold appliances. And so the Korean War broke out and because I got an early out of the Marine Corps, I only served a year in the Marines, and the War, World War II ended, so – and between that and my parents being sick, they gave me an early out of the Marines. And then when the Korean War broke out, they drafted me into the Army. So I spent two years in the Army at Fort Sill. And I was a forward observer for the artillery for the Army in Korea, and my job was to go out in the enemy territory, seek out targets and call on the artillery. And our artillery covered about the size of a football field. It would wipe it out if there was a truck full of – when the Chinese came into the Korean War, there was Chinese and North Koreans all over the place, and so when I called in firearm, they'd wipe out a whole football field of soldiers and people and tanks or whatever it was. But anyway, I survived that, came back. Ah, let's see. I came home and my parents –

Kathy Franklin: *I was going to say, you came home to Kathy who was in Henderson, in the sixth grade. [laughter]*

Bud Franklin: So anyway, yeah, after my mom passed away and my dad had a stroke and he was pretty bad and he – it didn't look like he was going to live very long, so one of my sisters, or two of my sisters told me, "Look, Bud, you're twenty-nine years old. You've got to start living your own life. You do what you want to do and we'll take care of dad." So I just ran. That's when my brother told me, "Come to California and we'll lease this nightclub." And then, of course, I told you about my going from the nightclub, The Blackpoint Inn, that we bought, and then I left Blackpoint Inn with enough money to – and I was going to get restarted down in Arizona. But I really liked the people in Henderson. They were just really nice and down to earth. There was a little bar called the Jolly Jack down there for sale for twenty-five hundred dollars, so I bought that Jolly Jack's and I renamed it Bud and Bob's because a guy that I was in the Army with had come out here and wanted to be involved with whatever I was going to do. So I called it Bud and Bob's, but I found out that the bar wasn't the best investment in the world because it was down in Pittman, and everybody down there wanted to have a charge account. And I did a lot of business. I just had it jammed up with business. Anybody that ever was – remembered Bud and Bob's remembers that we just jammed up business, but it was – like there was a snake crawled up in the bathroom, girl's bathroom. You know, I mean that's how bad the building was. So anyway, I had trouble with the building and the city said we have to tear that building down because it's not in good shape. So while this was happening, Don Yost – I don't know if you remember Don Yost –

Voices: *[affirmative expressions]*

Bud Franklin: He owned the Townhouse and the guest rooms there. He said, "Look," he said, "My business in this Townhouse isn't doing too well, so if you'll come up there – I see what you

can do. So if you'll come up to the Townhouse," he said, "I'll give you a commission and a salary and I'll give you five percent of all the money you take in." So I went up there and his average night – in his average night, he took in like sixty-five or seventy dollars. So my first night, I took in a hundred and fifty dollars, and then the second night I took in two hundred dollars, and, oh, he was just so happy. In fact, one of my customers, a guy who used to hang around there because there was pretty girls like Toni and Kathy come in from the, from the Telephone Company, would come in and say hi, and so they helped me get customers too. They would sit there and chat with them.

Kathy Franklin: *And Bill Boyd came.*

Bud Franklin: And Bill Boyd was one of my –

Fredric Watson: *Bill Boyd from the –*

Bud Franklin: – customers. And he offered me a job to go up and run the Eldorado. And I said, "No because I'll only get – I just want my own business." So I made enough money to buy out the Townhouse business. Just – not the motel part, but just the tavern business. And while I was there, my nephew, Jerry Franklin, who also became a councilman after I left – or I was running for County Commission and Jerry ran for my spot on the Council and so he made it. So there was Bud Franklin was a Councilman and then Jerry Franklin was a Councilman. And both of our names are etched in marble up above the City Hall.

Kathy Franklin: *[laughter]*

Fredric Watson: *Oh, yeah.*

Bud Franklin: But, anyway –

Fredric Watson: *That's neat. That's a nice way to be remembered.*

Bud Franklin: Anyway, I invested in some stocks, and the stocks went up enough so I had a few thousand dollars to make a down payment on the Gold Mine property. Do you know where the Gold Mine –

Fredric Watson: *Here on Water Street?*

Bud Franklin: Yeah, yeah, that was – the guy that had the furniture store, what was his name?

Kathy Franklin: *Gunville.*

Bud Franklin: Gunville –

Fredric Watson: *Jim Gunville.*

Bud Franklin: – owned the property. So I made enough on the stocks that I had to make a down payment on the property. And it didn't have a bar there or anything. It was just a – it was kind of a pool hall. It wasn't a business or something like that. I can't remember now, but I know it was just an empty building. And so I got a liquor license.

Fredric Watson: *What year would that have been? Early sixties?*

Bud Franklin: In 1965, I opened the Gold Mine Club and –

Fredric Watson: *I'm sure I stopped in there –*

Bud Franklin: [laughter]

Fredric Watson: *– and I've enjoyed a few cold ones. [laughter]*

Toni Tibbets: *Jerry Goyenechi.*

Fredric Watson: *Jerry and Mike and I.*

Toni Tibbets: *You remember Jerry Goyenechi?*

Kathy Franklin: *Yeah, I do. He went to school with me. Big redheaded guy.*

Bud Franklin: But anyway, in 1965, I opened the Gold Mine Club and we did very well, very well. And I kept it until 1977, and I decided I wanted to go gold mining.

Kathy Franklin: *Is that your next question?*

Bud Franklin: I owned the Gold Mine Club, so I'm going to go gold mining. So I sold – I paid – forty thousand is what I paid for the Gold Mine property and I sold it for a hundred and twenty thousand. So it gave me a few bucks to work with. So – do you want me to keep going?

Interviewer: *Yeah, you can, I don't care.*

Toni Tibbets: *Ask about Ellen Shirley. How – with him getting the letter from Ellen Shirley.*

Kathy Franklin: *Ellen Shirley wrote to you and that influenced you to stop here.*

Toni Tibbets: *Yeah.*

Bud Franklin: Yeah, Ellen Shirley –

Toni Tibbets: *From the Chamber of Commerce.*

Bud Franklin: – wrote me a beautiful letter, and I'd never met her or anything, but she did answer my letter inquiring about the area and she wrote me this beautiful letter, and it really was the thing that made me decide to check out Henderson. And so anyway, I met her a couple of times but I didn't really have her as a friend that long. I just met her a couple of times and she told me about Henderson. At that time, we had between twenty and thirty thousand population.

Toni Tibbets: *Can you believe it?*

Bud Franklin: And so while I was Councilman, we got property from the Federal Government and the Federal Government sold it to us for fifty, sixty dollars an acre, somewhere in that area; it was always different. And there was quite a few thousand acres that the Federal Government

sold us, including where Green Valley is now, out there where – but anyway, we resold that property. Well, first of all, when I became councilman, the City was bankrupt. Joe –

Toni Tibbets: *Yeah, Ortega.*

Bud Franklin: Joe, the –

Toni Tibbets: *Joe, the –*

Bud Franklin: Joe and –

Toni Tibbets: *You know –*

Kathy Franklin: *McBeath?*

Bud Franklin: McBeath, Joe McBeath and I got to talking one time.

Toni Tibbets: *Yeah.*

Bud Franklin: He had a little lunch counter up there and I'd go up there once in a while and have lunch. We got to talking.

Toni Tibbets: *Rexall.*

Bud Franklin: We realized that the mayor was running the City; the city manager wasn't running the City. The mayor was running the City. And evidently, we decided that the mayor wasn't doing a good job of running the City because they were bankrupt, but he was paying friends of his to sweep out the Hall, and he was paying them electricians' wages. So Joe told me, he said, "Look, if you'll run for City Council, I will help you try and get elected." And he invested – he gave me enough money to buy big page ads.

[break in recording]

Bud Franklin: [holding a newspaper campaign advertisement] Can you see it?

Kathy Franklin: *Go ahead. Tell them what you just said.*

Bud Franklin: This is where Joe McBeath promised to help me if I would run for City Council and hire a person who knows how to run a City that would be a good city manager. So that was, like I say, that was one of the ads that Joe McBeath bought for me.

Fredric Watson: *Right.*

Bud Franklin: And after I got to be a councilman, I was appointed by my fellow councilmen to be mayor pro tem. So if the mayor wasn't able to handle the meeting, I would handle it.

Kathy Franklin: *Tell them about your hiring of a new city attorney.*

Bud Franklin: So anyway, we hired a – at that point, the Federal Government was giving money to the cities because a lot of the cities were having financial problems. So North Las Vegas was getting most of the federal money, but – because the city manager had to know what to do to get the money from the Federal Government. And George Charchalis was the assistant city commissioner in North Las Vegas and he was the one that was handling all the money from the Federal Government. And he knew all the guys from the Federal Government by their first name. He was very involved with getting money to North Las Vegas. So I talked the City Council into hiring George Charchalis to be our city manager. Now in hiring him, I upset Delby Shirley. I upset Mike O'Callaghan. Mike O'Callaghan wanted to be our city manager, but he never had any experience as a city manager. And later on he became the governor. But anyway, at that point, we needed somebody who knew how to run a city and George Charchalis was a very good, very intelligent man, and he did a good job of running our City for quite a few years. So anyway, Mike O'Callaghan said, "Well, I won't be a city manager there unless I get a 5-0 vote." Well, I wouldn't vote for him. I said, "I ain't voting for anybody except George Charchalis. So the

other councilmen went along with me and we hired George Charchalis at sixteen thousand dollars a year. And, [laughter] –

Fredric Watson: *Was that a pretty good salary in those days?*

Bud Franklin: At that point, it was pretty good wages, but he did a really good job. And anyway, we got that money from the Federal Government and resold it for – well, Hank Greenspun bought a big bunch of it and started Green Valley. And anyway, all of a sudden, our bankrupt city is rolling in money. We had more money than we knew what to do with. We had millions coming in.

Fredric Watson: *What year was that? What time span?*

Bud Franklin: Let's see, I got elected in '65 so it was – and I was a councilman for four years.

Toni Tibbets: *Probably '68?*

Bud Franklin: Probably was '68 or something like that.

Kathy Franklin: *How about the city attorney that you were asked to hire?*

Bud Franklin: Oh, I was asked to put the name of a man in for city attorney, and at that time, our councilmen weren't really happy with the person we had who was city attorney, and I can't remember who it was. But anyway, we were all pretty impressed with Harry Reid. Now, he was assistant city attorney. He was assistant city attorney and we were impressed by the fact that he lived in Searchlight and came into Basic and he played football for Basic and he was president of his class, and we were impressed with him. And so, we made him city attorney.

Toni Tibbets: *Did you know that?*

Bud Franklin: And so from there he went along to become the second most powerful man in the United States. He is the majority leader in the United States Senate and he married a nice little lady named Landra.

Kathy Franklin: *Gould.*

Bud Franklin: What was her last name?

Kathy Franklin: *Gould. From Basic High School. Her father was a chiropractor in Henderson.*

Toni Tibbets: *He used to teach us square dancing.*

Bud Franklin: So anyway, Harry was very persistent and he just kept on going until he got to be the United States Senator, and that was one of the things that I did, or we did, that I thought was okay but, but I'm not, I'm not completely – I don't completely agree with everything he does, but he does enough good that we might never have another man from Henderson to be the second most powerful man in the United States.

Toni Tibbets: *Yeah.*

Fredric Watson: *That's great.*

Bud Franklin: So –

Toni Tibbets: *Okay.*

Fredric Watson: *Cole, you have another question?*

Bud Franklin: He will listen if you give him some opinions and so forth. He will listen to you.

Kathy Franklin: *Let's hear what Cole's next question is.*

Interviewer: *What did Henderson look like when you first came here?*

Bud Franklin: It was just a little tiny city. It had Victory Village and it was just a tiny city and, like I said, we had only twenty-some thousand population and –

Kathy Franklin: *We had no signals. No stoplights.*

Bud Franklin: And what was the other place? Victory Village and –

Female Voices: *Carver Park.*

Bud Franklin: Carver Park was where a lot of the people lived and they lived there because there was not a lot of work to be had. But we did have TIMET, and who was the other – what was the other?

Kathy Franklin: *Stauffer.*

Bud Franklin: Stauffer, so we did have a place for people to live, and of course they increased past that as the businesses increased.

Kathy Franklin: *What did Water Street look like when you opened the Townhouse? Do you remember? I can't remember that well.*

Bud Franklin: It was just a plain –

Kathy Franklin: *Did we have sidewalks? Do you remember?*

Bud Franklin: Yeah, I think we had sidewalks, and I can't remember – I know it was just a street up and down and like twenty to twenty by – but anyway, after we sold all this property from the Federal Government and in fact this property we're at right now was part of the property that the Federal Government sold us. But anyway, after we sold all the property and there was so much building going on, and when I left the City Council, there was probably – I don't remember now, but probably a hundred and fifty thousand population or something like that.

Kathy Franklin: *I can't remember.*

Bud Franklin: I can't remember now.

Fredric Watson: *What would you estimate the population of Henderson is right now?*

Bud Franklin: Two hundred and sixty thousand.

Fredric Watson: *It really grew.*

Bud Franklin: Yeah. But anyway, also, I got to be friends with a guy named Carlton Adair. And I don't know if you ever met him or not. And he owned some property on Lake –

Toni Tibbets: *Lake Las Vegas?*

Bud Franklin: Lake Mead. He owned some Lake Mead property and the Government agreed to trade him some property at the edge of Henderson for his property on Lake Mead. So he came to me and said, "Look, I've got this property out there and I'd like to develop it," but he said, "what I've got in mind is making it an earthen mine at the end of the property."

Kathy Franklin: *Earthen dam.*

Bud Franklin: Earthen mine? Is that what I said?

Kathy Franklin: *Yeah, it's dam.*

Bud Franklin: Earthen dam at the end of the property and forming a lake there. And then the water, the bad water that comes down from Las Vegas is the only problem that we'd have. And I said, "Well, let's build a tunnel underneath," which is what they did. So, anyway, we progressed with Carlton Adair and we were going to name the lake, Lake Adair. In fact, some of the people in Henderson said that'd be a beautiful name to change Henderson to. Let's just call Henderson the City of Lake Adair. And so we had discussed that, and Morrie made – the guy with the newspaper – made a big article on it. It said, "THE CITY OF LAKE ADAIR," big headlines, I still got in there if you want to see it.

Fredric Watson: *At some point in time it would be nice if we could copy those, take a picture of those.*

Bud Franklin: Yeah, but anyway, unfortunately, once we got everything started and he had all the plans drawn, and all these companies that was hired to do it, he died and his wife sold it to somebody else. I think it was some company from Los Angeles or something. I don't remember now but she sold it to another company and they felt like calling it "The City of Lake Las Vegas" would be more attractive than Lake Adair, which really hurt me because Carlton Adair said that he was going to call Main Street in Lake Adair Bud Franklin Boulevard.

Female Voices: *Aw. [laughter]*

Bud Franklin: That would, oh, I'm just – oh boy, Bud Franklin Boulevard would not have died.

Toni Tibbets: *[laughter] At Lake Las Vegas.*

Bud Franklin: And the new company called it "Lake Las Vegas" now. Oh no. I was really disappointed. But I'll have to say one thing. They did a good job up there.

Toni Tibbets: *Oh, beautiful.*

Bud Franklin: Oh, it's a beautiful, beautiful place, plus it brought in millions of dollars in taxes to the City of Henderson and a couple of the councilmen voted against it, even having it, being involved with it, and I said, "Nope." I and Paul Marshall and Bob Hampton, three of us, got it going, and then after this whole thing progressed, we got all the councilmen to go along with it. But anyway, I think Paul Marshall and Bob Hampton were exceptional councilmen and Mayor – Bob Hampton was the mayor, Paul Marshall was a councilman. [telephone rings]

Kathy Franklin: *Excuse me.*

Bud Franklin: And anyway, between the three of us, we made some good – what I felt was good decisions.

[break in recording]

Toni Tibbets: *[reading from a certificate displayed by Bud] Giles Franklin, Henderson Boys Club.*

Bud Franklin: [referring to the certificate] Did you get it?

Fredric Watson: *Sure, why don't you tell us about it?*

Bud Franklin: I donated quite a bit of money to the Boys Club to help them, but I didn't have any children here, of my own, since I got divorced and my ex-wife moved back to California, but I tried to be involved in the Boys Club and was somewhat instrumental in getting that road named after one of the active –

Toni Tibbets: *Members.*

Bud Franklin: What was his name?

Kathy Franklin: *Like the director of the Boys Club?*

Bud Franklin: He wasn't – I don't think he was the director – maybe he was the director. He was very involved with the boys and they still got a street named, over there –

Kathy Franklin: *Is it Drake? Drake.*

Bud Franklin: [Dennis F.] Drake I think is his – but I was instrumental in getting that street named for one of the directors of the Boys Club.

Toni Tibbets: *He was the director.*

Interviewer: *Was living here dangerous in any way?*

Bud Franklin: No, I don't think so. I think we had a pretty good job done by our police force.

Interviewer: *If you got sick, where did you go to get health care?*

Bud Franklin: St. Rose.

Interviewer: *What changes in Henderson have you observed?*

Bud Franklin: Oh, boy. [laughter]

Toni Tibbets: *Everything.*

Bud Franklin: Henderson is spread out so far now, it's – the changes is Green Valley and Lake Las Vegas and there's no more Victory Village. There's no more – what was the other one?

Fredric Watson: *Carver Park.*

Bud Franklin: Carver Park. There's no more Carver Park. And everybody in Henderson has one way or another earned a decent living. In fact, after I got back from gold mining, I went gold mining and found some pretty good gold, until I hit a Black Angus bull with my truck and got my back crushed, and I couldn't gold mine anymore, but I could – I did manage to work a couple of years as a carpenter and I built sixteen houses and a bunch of patios, things like that, over the next few years. In fact, Black – did you know Blackie Evans?

Fredric Watson: *No.*

Bud Franklin: Well, he lived down around the corner. I built his house.

Fredric Watson: *Oh, really?*

Bud Franklin: But, anyway, I built sixteen houses.

Fredric Watson: *Where'd you learn all that carpentry?*

Bud Franklin: I learned to be a carpenter – after I got out of the Marines, I went back to Michigan, and my brother and I owned a club – not a club, but a business, and back in Michigan it's very important to have a basement. Everybody wants a basement because they can get down in the basement in case of earthquakes or tornados or whatever and they have plenty of them out there. So anyway, we started out building basements, and then I got to the point where I would do the wood work and my brother and another guy would do the block work for basements and then I would do the wood work up top. And they had a good carpenter out

there who taught me, and then when I came out here I met a carpenter who needed a helper. His name was Bill Martin. He lived down in Pittman and I worked with him, and between the two of us we built sixteen houses. And then I broke off. He moved down to Arizona; I broke off.

[break in recording]

Bud Franklin: I've got my hearing aids in, but you have to speak up.

Interviewer: *Did you go to Las Vegas a lot and how did you get there?*

Bud Franklin: Did I what?

Interviewer: *Go to Las Vegas a lot?*

Bud Franklin: Quite often when I was single, I went into Vegas, and attended some of the people who came into town, the Rat Pack and all those guys. I enjoyed, I enjoyed going into Vegas.

[break in recording]

Interviewer: *Okay, is there anything else you want to tell us?*

Bud Franklin: Is there anything else, what?

Interviewer: *You want to tell us?*

Toni Tibbets: *About Henderson.*

Bud Franklin: About Henderson?

Interviewer: *Yeah.*

Fredric Watson: *Any good stories that you left out?*

Bud Franklin: Oh boy, there's all kinds of – the only thing I can add to anything I've already said is I just have loved my – all of my time that I've spent here in Henderson and some of my relatives that came out here for a while have moved away, but I didn't have any intention to

move away from here. I love it here. The people are good. The people have always been good here and I was just so happy to be able to be a part of the Henderson growth, and I'm going to stay here until I die. [laughter]

Everyone: *[laughter]*