

Henderson Libraries

**Henderson Historical
Society and Robert
Taylor Elementary
School**

Michael Manion

Oral History of Michael Manion

conducted by students of

Robert Taylor Elementary School

with

Fredric Watson

for the

Henderson Historical Society

in cooperation with

Dr. Janet Dobry, Principal

and

Barbara Tabach, UNLV Oral History Research Center

March 7, 2012

Interviewer: *What is your name?*

Michael Manion: What is my name? My name is Michael Hugh Manion. I was born in Kansas, Marysville, Kansas, February the 24th, 1941. My parents were both from Kansas. My mother was born in Valley Falls, Kansas and my dad was born in Mount Rose, Kansas. And my sister was – I have a sister that's older than me and two younger brothers. My older brother – my older sister was born in Leavenworth, Kansas and I have a brother that was born in Milford, Utah, and I have a brother that was born in St. Rose de Lima Hospital after we moved here. We moved here in 1947, but before we moved here, my dad, who worked for the railroad here, he had a job. When I was a baby, he was a truck driver, and then he quit that job to sell insurance. But insurance wasn't too popular right then because we were in a depression and not too many people would buy insurance, so we moved. He got a job with the Union Pacific Railroad and we moved to Milford, Utah. And that's where my one brother was born. And then we moved on about a year after that because his seniority got better as he moved – in other words he got better jobs as he moved west. And so then we moved to Caliente [Nevada] and we spent about a year and half there, and then we moved to Las Vegas and then on out here to Henderson. And we had an apartment in Victory Village and I don't know the number of that apartment. We lived there about a year and a half, and then we moved – actually, we had three residencies in Henderson when I lived here. I live in Las Vegas now. The first residency was Victory Village and then we moved up on Tin Street, and Tin Street if you go up Water Street to Basic Road and you take a right on Basic, the very first street on the left, and it's about a hundred yards long, there's probably about ten houses on that street, and it's called Tin Street, T-I-N Street. And then we moved later down to Victory Road, and that's the last house I lived in in Henderson.

While I was in the Service – I got drafted into the United States Army – while I was in the Service, my folks moved to Las Vegas. So I lived in Henderson approximately seventeen or eighteen years. And that’s – this is where my childhood was and that’s about it for my family.

Interviewer: *All right. So I want to hear about your experiences living in Henderson.*

Michael Manion: Okay, experiences here in Henderson? Well, like I said, I was a child of six when I moved here, so I spent all of my grade school years here, all my high school years in town, and I also went to UNLV, which was called Nevada Southern University. And then, I dropped out of UNLV for a semester thinking I could sneak through that semester without getting drafted, but the Vietnam War was going on and they drafted me about two weeks after I dropped out of school. Because what I intended to do was drop out for a semester, then go back to school. Now, my childhood, you have to remember, the town was an awful lot smaller than it is now and we’re probably sitting on what was part of Victory Village.

Fredric Watson: *What school did you go to?*

Michael Manion: Oh, what school did I go to? Okay, I started at Carver Park School when I was in the first grade. And I had to repeat the first grade because I was ill for about three months and then at that period of time is when we moved up on Tin Street, and then I went to the Townsite, I guess they call it the Townsite, the only grade school in town. And it was located at that same corner, Basic Road and Water Street. The grade school was in there. The high school was in there, and the football field was there too for the high school team. And I went to that school; I did the first grade over – the second grade. Well then Saint Peter’s opened a Catholic School and I started the third grade in the Catholic School. And I went from the third grade all the way through the eighth grade, so that’s where I went through all my grade school

education. And then I went my freshman year to Basic High School and Rick was already at Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas and I was talking to him one day and he says, "Yeah, I think there's room for you. You can get into school in there." I said, "Okay," and so I started going to Bishop Gorman High School then. And then after Bishop Gorman High School, I did go to Nevada Southern, well, it was called Nevada Southern for two-and-a-half years before I was drafted and that was the end of my schooling right there basically as far as organized schooling.

Interviewer: *Okay. So just tell me how your family came to live in Henderson and what year was that?*

Michael Manion: Well they came to come here – well, actually my dad, like I said, he kept moving further west to get more seniority – in other words, get more jobs with the railroad here. The railroad is a company of seniority: the more seniority you have, the more jobs you get. And we tried to get a place in Las Vegas, and there were no places to be had, and then we tried to rent one of the old Townsite houses here. It was not to be had and so we ended up moving into Victory Village. And that was not a happy time in my life because there was a lot of poverty and there were an awful lot of kids in the class that I went to. I think we had, if I'm not mistaken, I think there were forty-eight kids in that first grade class. And we had several different teachers; we had three different teachers. And then I was sick for about a month and so they held me back, and then when I moved up – when we moved up to Tin Street, life got a lot better – it seemed to me like a lot better for me. I was healthier and the schooling up there, the class sizes were smaller. And so, you know, when we lived up there on Tin Street, what I remember the most is there was no television in those days, absolutely none. In fact, there were just rumors that someday there would be television. I really didn't think that it would ever

happen. I mean how – I couldn't figure out how radio worked. How could you put pictures over the airways. It just seemed impossible to me. And later, after we did get TV, then they started talking about getting colored TV. I said that'll never happen. You can't put colors over the airway. And they made a liar out of me again, or they'd strike me out again by coming out with colored TVs. And I would have never dreamt of the computer and the computer age somewhere in that. You kids are living through a wonderful age right now, and take full advantage of that. Learn the computers and all those things. It'll be very helpful to you. But here's what we used to do for entertainment. We'd make rubber – we would make slingshots ourselves. We would make stilts. We would go through – see, every summer and every winter we would go through these, because there was a whole bunch of kids in that neighborhood, and we'd make stilts.

Fredric Watson: *You kids know what stilts are?*

Interviewer: *No.*

Fredric Watson: *Tell them about that.*

Michael Manion: Okay. What you'd do is you'd take two long 2x2s and then you, and you carve a place where you can – you carve that out of a piece of wood, and you nail that on there so you can stand on it, and then you'd get both feet up, you get up on those stilts. You'd stand on several high so you could step over on them and you'd hold your legs real stiff and you could walk around, and you're real tall then. And that was, that's what a stilt is. And you'll see it sometimes in circuses and stuff like that. And then we'd make slingshots out of old inner tubes and stuff like that. We'd hunt lizards. We'd take dogs with us and the dogs would chase the lizards into their hole and then we'd dig the holes up and get the lizards, out in the desert,

because the desert on Tin Street was all desert completely out to Black Mountain. There were no houses out there then. There was nothing out there and just other things, we'd make match guns. You'd get one match and they'd only go out about that far, but it would light the match as it was coming off the thing. And it would only go about that far; we never caught anybody on fire or anything, but – and we'd make spoke guns. You'd take a spoke and turn it around, you'd take caps and stuff it in there and put a BB in there and you'd hold a cap underneath it and it fires off just like a – but it doesn't hurt anybody, you know. Just – we had to make our own fun because we didn't have computers, we didn't have video recorders, and we couldn't play video games. And they didn't have the little video games you can carry around. They didn't have any of that stuff. That was all rocket science to us. We didn't even – those were things that we'd just dream about doing and we never dreamt that somebody would go to the moon or anything. And all the new technology is just overwhelming to us. I can't hardly use a computer. I mean it's – I have to really struggle with it because I didn't – never learned to type and – but anyway, yeah, it was fun. We had a – and radio listening was what we did the most, you know, for entertainment. And they had different programs on, they had kids' programs on Saturday morning and they had programs like, "Big John and Sparky." Big John would come on with a deep voice and Sparky would come on with a real – he'd speak Big John's voice up I think to make Sparky, and he'd go, "Hi Sparky." "Hey Big John!" Kind of corny stuff but, you know, it was fun to listen to. And what it did is it honed our listening skills. We were I think sometimes better listeners than – and that's a real art, listening is. And I really had trouble with that in school, but anyway that's about it for that subject.

Interviewer: *So was living here in Henderson, Nevada, dangerous in any way?*

Michael Manion: Well, as a kid when I lived in Carver Park, I thought that that setting could be dangerous, yeah. And you always heard rumors of kids getting beat up and stuff. It was kind of scary to live there, to me. But when we moved up to Tin Street, and from then on, no, I never feared for my life or anything. We didn't have any gangs in those days. We had gangs of kids that would play together or do things together, but we didn't really have what they call organized gangs. We didn't have a part of town that you were afraid to go in at night, no. None of that went on, no, so I really didn't fear for my life.

Interviewer: *Okay. So if you got sick, where or how did you get the health care?*

Michael Manion: Well, we had Rose de Lima Hospital and I did – my wife was having surgery not too long ago and they had a questionnaire for her and one of the questions that they asked her was, “When was the last time you were in the hospital overnight?” And I started thinking, the last time I was in the hospital [was] when I was in Rose de Lima Hospital when I was ten years old, and I was in there to have my tonsils removed. But I had another – I had what they call Bright's disease. It was an infection that they had to work on too, so they kept me there three days. But that was the last time I've ever been in a hospital overnight and that's really kind of remarkable because a lot of my friends have been in the hospital many times overnight, so I thank God for that, that I haven't been in the hospital. But that's where we would go. The doctors, the dentists, and all that, offices were real close to Rose de Lima Hospital out here.

Fredric Watson: *Did you ever have a doctor come to your house?*

Michael Manion: Oh, yes, yes. Doctors would come to your house in those days. If you called, if you had the flu or something and you were bed-ridden for a little bit, you could call a doctor and they would come by the house and examine you. And sometimes they'd give you a shot of

penicillin, and that would make you feel better. But that's all history now. They all want you to come in there and I guess it is more convenient for them, but, yeah, we had doctors that would come to the house.

Fredric Watson: *Who were some of the doctors in Henderson in those days?*

Michael Manion: We had Doctor Coogan. He was the one that would – he was a real big guy and he'd come by and give you a shot, and I can't recall too many other names of any other doctors because I really didn't have that much contact. However, I did, that time I got Bright's disease when I was a kid, I had to get fifty-two shots of penicillin, so I had to walk from my house on Tin Street to school at St. Peter's, and then I'd walk across the highway and go over to the clinic and get a shot each day. And then later after they cleared that up is when they put me in the hospital and took my tonsils out. But that's the only extended illness I've had in my life. It's just, like I said, it's a real blessing.

Interviewer: *That's very interesting. So what changes in Henderson have you observed?*

Michael Manion: What changes have I observed – well, for one thing, Henderson was awfully small. All that was in Henderson basically was Victory Village, Carver Park and the old Townsite houses. The old Townsite houses are the ones that were made out of redwood. Henderson is a war town. It was built for the workers to work at the plant and make bombs for World War II. And I was told that there were plans to tear this town down after the war, but it didn't work out. Instead they sold the property to the people who were living in the houses. And then the town grew on top of that. So all we have are the redwood houses, Carver Park, and Victory Village, basically. I guess there were a few houses that were built a lot further out, but not very many, and probably three or four thousand people. And in Las Vegas at that time, in 1947,

there was probably no more than thirty thousand people, maybe only twenty thousand, and in North Las Vegas was another five or so thousand, and now Henderson itself is probably got three hundred thousand or more, maybe six hundred thousand. And I think in the Vegas Valley there's a million and a half people, so it was a lot smaller, so we had to watch the town grow. And I can't think of anything else to say about that.

Interviewer: *So what do you enjoy the most about living in Henderson?*

Michael Manion: Oh well, you know, like I said, it was my childhood, it was the place where I grew up, so it'll always be fond in my mind, and the people – that's what always makes things interesting to me, are the people that I – I would have never met Mr. Watson if I hadn't lived here, and several others. And some of the people that I know, unfortunately, have passed away. Mr. Watson and myself and another friend of ours that were real close – we did a lot of things together, we went to high school together and grade school together – he has passed away now, so those things happen. But yeah, it's mainly the people that I knew out here and it was just a wonderful, wonderful place to be a child, it really was. I hope you kids have a good time too.

Interviewer: *Yeah. So is there anything else you would like to share with me?*

Michael Manion: Oh, just that I hope that you kids have as much fun here as we did. I hope that that one question doesn't pertain, that if I was ever afraid of – you know, we all have fear in one degree or another, but I was never afraid of my wellbeing or my life. After we moved from Victory Village, I had a little bit of fear when I was about six, but just enjoy your schooling. It was one of the most important parts of my life and by the time you finish high school and go on in your life, you'll look back, and schooling is one of the funnest, most important things in your

life, and you'll remember. You'll have friends you have right now; those friends will stay your friends all the way through your life. You may move to Canada or you may move to the East Coast and your friend that you have now will still be out here, maybe just a few miles from here, and you'll still be in contact with them. That's just the way friendship is and I just hope you guys have as much fun as we did. Thank you.

Interviewer: *Thank you so much for your time. I really liked hearing your stories.*

Michael Manion: Oh, you're welcome, you're welcome. Thank you for having me.

Fredric Watson: *Mike, tell these kids a little bit about what your dad did for a living and although you mentioned it earlier, but, so they have – and what was going on in that line of work when you first came to Las Vegas.*

Michael Manion: Oh, okay. Yeah, of course I told you that my dad sold insurance and was a truck driver, but his main occupation for thirty-eight years was the Union Pacific Railroad. And when he first started on the railroad, there were coal burners, steam engines, and he used to, as a fireman on the engine itself, he would shovel the coal into the furnace and you had to keep that fire – you had a foot thing that you'd kicked the door open with, and you had to keep that fire burning even for it to do its job. And so he would just keep throwing it over to one side, in the middle – he had an art in the way he'd do that. And each time he threw a shovel in, he had to let the door close, so that was really hard work. But not too long after he took the job, they started diesel engines, the diesel fuel for the steam engines, so they didn't have to shovel coal anymore. And then later, of course, they had diesel engines, and those diesel engines my dad didn't like too well, because he – they were a lighter engine and they could pull more and they had more power – but he just said that was – the end of the steam engine was the end of

railroading for him almost. And of course he went right on and worked many, many more years, and he finally became an engineer. But it was just an interesting occupation, and he had his own ups and downs with management and all because they were always – management was always trying to cut back expenses and one way to do that was to lay men off. And the only time – my dad did belong to a union, but the only time they ever struck was to save their jobs.

Fredric Watson: *Where'd that railroad run? These kids probably – I don't think you can ride on the train anymore, so they may not even get a sense of –*

Michael Manion: Yeah, the Amtrak doesn't come through here anymore, you know.

Interviewer: *Up in Boulder City you can.*

Fredric Watson: *Yeah, have you been up to ride the train up there?*

Interviewer: *No.*

Michael Manion: Do they run that train up in Boulder City?

Fredric Watson: *Yeah, they have a short run.*

Michael Manion: Yeah, and it's a diesel engine I think.

Fredric Watson: *But the railroad your dad – the route your dad rode on, tell them about that.*

You know, where did it –

Michael Manion: You mean from Milford?

Fredric Watson: *Or from the whole line.*

Michael Manion: Well, yeah, when my dad first got the job, World War II was going on and they were trying to get munitions and tanks and men to the coast as fast as they could to load them on ships so they could go over to go to war. And they would want – they would encourage them to get those trains going as fast as they could. But my dad said that he knows –

they didn't have a speedometer on those engines, but he says he knew that they were – when they were down on the flat, he said, "We were going well over a hundred miles an hour on those engines." And that's to get those troops to the coast as quick as they could. My dad worked an awful lot of hours in those days, and when the war ended, I think we were still in Milford.

Fredric Watson: *The kids all know where Milford is? Milford's a little town in Utah, isn't it?*

Michael Manion: Yeah. It's, it's not too far from Cedar City. It's kind of inland a little bit, but it follows the railroad. And my dad finally retired on a pension through the railroad and died. He didn't live too long after that. He got ill and passed away.

Interviewer: *Well, thank you.*

Michael Manion: It was a pleasure being here, and thanks for having me.

Fredric Watson: *Just one more question.*

Michael Manion: Okay.

Fredric Watson: *Excuse me for butting in, but Mike's dad was really interested in music, particularly piano. I think your dad played piano, didn't he?*

Michael Manion: He did, he did play the piano. He had forgotten a lot, but he did play the piano – because we didn't have one for years.

Fredric Watson: *But he had a really good record collection.*

Michael Manion: Oh, he did. He had a wonderful record collection, some of the old blues piano players, and that's what he was mainly interested in.

Fredric Watson: *What was the name – there was one really good piano player I remember that he really loved.*

Michael Manion: Oh, there were several: Art Tate and Teddy Wilson, and then, you know, you have – it was mainly jazz, or jazz piano – Shatz Waldon. In fact, they made a play about Shatz Waldon not too long ago. It was on Broadway. It was the old time piano players, and a lot of them were heavy drinkers, too, because they started in the gin mills. That's where they started playing. Sometimes that's how they'd pay them off, with liquor.

Fredric Watson: *Do you think your dad's interest in music influenced you at all?*

Michael Manion: Oh, sure, yeah, I love music. I love all kinds of music. I love classical music, country and western, jazz, you name it. I've got some of a little bit of all that at home. Yeah, I've got quite a record collection myself. Of course, they're discs now. What will they be in the future? Little discs I thought maybe.

Fredric Watson: *When we were kids, where would you go to get records and what did they look like?*

Michael Manion: They had record stores here, actually record stores. And the first record that came out while I was alive was called a 78. It was a big heavy disc like thing, and you'd put it on there. And then after that, they came up with the 45. It was a lot smaller. They'd have the same amount of music on it. And now they have a disc that's even smaller, that they could put twenty times the amount of music that one of those records had on it. And so that's all changed. So every time it changes, I have to go back and renew my record collection. And I don't know what they'll come out with next. They'll probably have little bitty things like that that you can have tons of music on. I just can't imagine what they're going to come out with next.

Fredric Watson: *Where in Henderson could you go to buy records?*

Michael Manion: Oh, they had a record store right on Water Street. And they had another one up on Army Street, where the old show theater was. We had a show theater, a big show theater, and we would have – that was another fun thing we'd do – the show theater would sponsor – the town would sponsor for Halloween a costume competition, and we'd have it on the football field up on the corner of Basic Road and Water Street, and you'd all wear your costumes, and then he'd pick out three winners. Well, after that was over, we all walked down to the show theater for a triple feature for free. They'd just let you come out for free. Guess how much it was when it wasn't free for a kid to go to a movie. Eleven cents.

Interviewer: *Wow.*

Michael Manion: Eleven cents, yes.

Fredric Watson: *Now what would you get, you know, just for a treat while you were watching the movie?*

Michael Manion: Oh, they had all the same candies and stuff, candy bars and popcorn and Jujubes and, I mean, anything you wanted you could buy and of course load up on, licorice and all that stuff to sit and watch the movie, and it was a lot of fun.

Interviewer: *How did the movie theaters change?*

Michael Manion: Oh, a great deal. We went from just a flat screen, and then later on they had what they called CinemaScope, and all the theaters didn't have this. The flat screen, and then the CinemaScope kind of wrapped around like that. And kind of like the new big screen TVs, only it had a little wrap-around to it. And then they had another. They had CinemaScope, and then they had – well, they had 3-D for a while. They had some 3-D movies. Now, I mean, 3-D's on every TV set almost that you could buy.

Fredric Watson: *I'm trying to remember what the 3-D movies – they were usually scary.*

Michael Manion: *House of Wax* was one of them.

Fredric Watson: *Scary movies. You kids ever see the House of Wax?*

Interviewers: *No.*

Fredric Watson: *I guess they've remade that.*

Michael Manion: Yeah, and then that one John Wayne, *Hondo*, was done in 3-D, one of John Wayne's movies. Well there were two or three others. There weren't too many 3-D movies that came out. But it wasn't as good as it was now, I'm sure. Do any of you have 3-D?

Interviewer: *Yeah.*

Michael Manion: You do have a 3-D movie?

Interviewer: *Yeah.*

Michael Manion: Or TV screen?

Interviewer: *Yeah.*

Michael Manion: Yeah.

Fredric Watson: *Does it actually look like things are coming right out of the screen at you and stuff?*

Interviewer: *I get scared when that happens.*

Fredric Watson: *You get scared? Makes you jump back?*

Interviewer: *What were popular movies back then?*

Michael Manion: Popular movies? Oh, I remember I begged my parents to see *Shane*, and now it's on TV every week. Because it was during – here's what they'd do. They'd have – at the show theater, they would have a Friday and Saturday – no, they'd have a Saturday movie, and then

they'd have a different movie on Sunday and Monday. And Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday they'd have another movie. And then Friday and – I can't remember whether Friday and Saturday were the same movie or not, but I remember *Shane* was right in the middle of the week, and it was a school week. They wouldn't let me go. And I finally talked them into it and they did let me go to see that. I was so happy. *Picnic*, that was a big movie.

Fredric Watson: *What was Shane about? Did you kids ever see that on Channel 40?*

Interviewers: *No.*

Michael Manion: *Shane* was about a gunfighter that – his name was Shane and he was riding west, and he runs into these people that are being abused. They're land holders, but they're being abused by this guy that was in town. He's the bad guy, and I think they call them squatters. They didn't want those people there. So Shane goes to town and they get in a big fist fight with this guy that hates them and then later on, they bring Jack Palance in – he was the gunfighter. Do you remember that part? And so Shane rides in. Alan Ladd is Shane, and he rides in to meet this gunfighter, and they have a shootout at the end, and that's about it. That's kind of the way movies were back then. And movies didn't have a sad ending usually. If they had a sad ending, that really upset people. Usually things could be bad, bad, but at the end of the movie, toward the end, things would straighten out and everything was just fine. That's the way movies were then.

Fredric Watson: *Do you remember Phil Burns and Julie Burns?*

Michael Manion: Oh, sure. Yeah, they had a – downtown, they had a barbershop, and they had a grocery store, you know, a drugstore. And the Burnses had a little delicatessen – it wasn't a delicatessen. It was kind of like a 7-Eleven or one of those, only it was smaller than that. But you

could go in there, and for a penny, if you gave Julie Burns a penny, she'd give you a stick of licorice. You got one of those, just one stick of licorice for a penny. Or maybe it was two sticks; I can't remember. But you could actually buy something with a penny. And for a nickel, you could get three or four of them. So you could buy some, and you could buy a penny bubblegum, you know, they had a wrapper around it and you'd undo the wrapper, Bazooka Bubblegum or something like that. But you could actually buy something with a penny. I know you can't now, but if you have a hundred of them, you could buy something. [laughter]

Fredric Watson: *Some of the other really favorite candies that Julie sold, do you remember, they had a lot of wax stuff.*

Michael Manion: Oh, that wax that had a liquid in the middle, and you'd bite the end off and suck the liquid out? Yeah, I forget what they called those.

Fredric Watson: *They were like wax bottles, but they were really small.*

Michael Manion: They had juice in them.

Fredric Watson: *Yeah, grape juice or something like that.*

Michael Manion: And you'd chew the wax up too, but that got old after a while, and you'd spit it out. But today, you have a lot of candies that we didn't have, you know, just an awful lot. But be careful eating candies; it's not real good for your teeth. [laughter] Does anybody have any questions?

Interviewer: *How has Water Street changed?*

Michael Manion: Well, Water Street has widened. It's gotten a lot wider and it's – they've decorated the sides of the street where it's nicer to look at, to drive down. There's shrubs and things that they have, and they've done some brickwork right downtown that's kind of pretty.

But it used to be a real bland street that was just gravel beside it. You didn't have sidewalks in those days. I think there are sidewalks now, aren't there? Yeah, so they've really made it a lot prettier now down on Water Street. Water Street used to be the main street. I don't know whether they consider it now or not, but that was the main street in town and they kind of added – and there was a Pepsi Cola plant here too. Did you know that? If you went up Water Street, clear to the end and took a left, there's a – I don't know the name of the street, but the Pepsi Cola plant was right there. And if you went up there, for a nickel, you could get a sixteen ounce bottle of Pepsi Cola. And when you went around trick-or-treating, everybody took one or two extra masks with them, because they would give Pepsi Colas out. And then you'd go put your other mask on and you'd get another bottle of Pepsi Cola, then you'd put your other mask on and go get another bottle of Pepsi Cola. [laughter] Hester was his name, the gentleman that owned the Pepsi.

Fredric Watson: *What's his name again?*

Michael Manion: Hester, H-E-S-T-E-R, I think.

Interviewer: *And who was the mayor of Henderson when you were here?*

Michael Manion: Hmm, the mayor.

Fredric Watson: *Well, Bill Byrne was one of them.*

Michael Manion: Yeah, Bill Byrne, no, yeah, he was later. But I don't remember.

Fredric Watson: *Dr. French.*

Michael Manion: Yeah, you're right, Bill Byrne was one of the mayors.

Fredric Watson: *Dr. French was a [mayor].*

Michael Manion: Yeah, Dr. French.

Fredric Watson: *He was the first mayor.*

Michael Manion: Was he? Okay. Was Church – was he a mayor.

Fredric Watson: *Ben Church I think was a –*

Michael Manion: He was an educator, wasn't he?

Fredric Watson: *Yeah, he was the principle of the high school.*

Michael Manion: Yeah, that's what it was, and then he passed away, I think. That's what Church Street is named after.

Fredric Watson: *Yeah, Church Street, and the field, too. Ben Church Field, the football field.*

Michael Manion: Yeah, the football field, that's right.

Fredric Watson: *Which is gone, but –*

Michael Manion: And then those streets below the hospital. Mallory Street was named after one of the Mallorys who owned the Swanky Club. And he was killed in Korea. They named that street. Lowery was another one that was killed in the war, I think, in the Korean War.

Interviewer: *What was the Swanky Club?*

Michael Manion: The Swanky Club was a – they specialized in smorgasbord and specialized in chicken. They had really wonderful chicken. I'll tell you where – there's a casino there right now, but I don't know the name of it. It was down in what we call – see, there were three distinct towns between Henderson and Las Vegas. There was Las Vegas, and then there was Pittman, and that was its own town. It had its own township. That's part of Henderson now; it was just down there where all the bars are and everything. That was called Pittman. And then when you drove off, where East Las Vegas is now, that was Whitney, and those stood away from everything. The houses didn't go down to that like they do in Henderson. Henderson

stood, oh, a couple of miles apart from Pittman and three miles apart from Whitney, and then you went on to Las Vegas. So there was three distinct towns. But now, Whitney is East Las Vegas, and of course Pittman's part of Henderson.

Fredric Watson: *You know where the Swanky Club was, there's a – where Warm Springs crosses the Boulder Highway, Warm Springs then goes down and comes back in just below Sewell Elementary School. Well, right where Warm Springs and the Boulder Highway cross, that's where the Swanky Club was. And it was the only – one of the really few places where you could go out to dinner in Henderson, as I remember.*

Michael Manion: Right, and they did have good steaks and everything. It was just a good place to eat. People would come from Las Vegas and all over to eat at the Swanky Club.

Fredric Watson: *Swanky – the term 'swanky' – it was kind of a slang term, but it meant really high class. So, you know, when you got your good hat and your good clothes on and everything, that's swanky.*

Michael Manion: And they advertised that – they had a little air field behind there, and they had a plane sitting there, and they advertised that they flew their chicken in from somewhere once a week or something like that. I can't remember now, but that was one of the things that they advertised.

Fredric Watson: *See, I'd forgotten that.*

Michael Manion: Yeah, they flew them in from California or something like that.

Fredric Watson: *Most of these old places have souvenirs. If you went to dinner there, then you would get, maybe, a book of matches. In those days, most everybody smoked a pipe or a cigar or cigarettes.*

Michael Manion: Cigar or cigarettes. By the way, don't ever do that.

Fredric Watson: *But those match pads are historic, because, for places that are gone now, a lot of people still have these old match pads that they'd saved, or ashtrays. You know, ashtrays were – everybody smoked and would have an ashtray in their living room or their kitchen.*

Michael Manion: That was one of the questions in books of etiquette – is it all right to take the ashtrays and the matches from the table? Because they had them in restaurants too. You could smoke right in the restaurant while you were eating food. Oh, they used to smoke everywhere. I'm surprised they didn't smoke in church. Oh, yeah, they used to smoke everywhere.

Interviewer: *How did you get from place to place? Did you guys go ride horses or anything?*

Michael Manion: We walked. We did a lot of walking, yeah.

Fredric Watson: *She wondered if you still rode a horse.*

Michael Manion: I've ridden a horse, but I've never been on a horse alone. There were horse corrals up just about Tin Street, there used to be a reservoir. Is there still a reservoir up there? Right by that reservoir, there were horse corrals up there, and Dick Burt and his sister had a horse up there, and I went up there with Dick Burt's sister, and she let me ride behind her once. But I've never really ridden a horse all alone. But yeah, there were horses out here, yeah.

Fredric Watson: *And there were kids in Henderson that had horses. There was the Lanten family, Bobby Lanten and Frank – Bobby Lanten and Frank Lanten.*

Michael Manion: Did they have horses? Horses are a lot of work. You have to really take care of horses. Because a lot of people want to put them in a little corral out here and outside, but oh, that's brutal. Yep, you've got to have a lean-to so they can get into the shade and you have to feed them. They eat a lot.

Interviewer: *Were there many cars back then?*

Michael Manion: Oh, yeah, older cars, yeah, of course, because it was older times. I remember the Shettlers had that Studebaker with the doors that open out instead of opening – when you walk up to a car and you open the door like that and get in – well, they opened back like that. They're called suicide doors. I don't know why they call them that. But instead of opening up like that, I mean, you get in like that, you'd open back out this way and – or, no, you open it the opposite way.

Fredric Watson: *The front door opened the way the cars [do today], but the back door opened the other way.*

Michael Manion: Yeah.

Fredric Watson: *Like my truck does that. If you ever make a mistake when you're driving and open the car door, the wind would just yank your door off.*

Michael Manion: It tears your door right off. Or spring it.

Fredric Watson: *So bad it wouldn't close again.*

Michael Manion: Cars are a wonderful thing today. They are so much better. They get better gas mileage, they're more comfortable, they're – oh, those old cars that we had, they were gas burners. You'd get – you were lucky to get eight miles to the gallon. And now they get – I don't know of a car on the road that doesn't get twenty-five miles to the gallon. My little Toyota, on the road I get almost forty miles to the gallon. And the suspension's better. Tires are so much better than they used to be. They're all steel-belted now. Oh, tires are just wonderful. You can get seventy – I got almost seventy thousand miles out of a pair of tires that were – used to get,

if you bought a new car, they were factory rubber. They'd wear out within twenty thousand miles.

Fredric Watson: *We were always having flat tires.*

Michael Manion: Oh yeah.

Fredric Watson: *If you just – and they didn't have sidewalks, so if you parked your car on the side of the road and ran over a sticker, you know, the kind of stickers you find out in the desert, even those stickers would punch a hole in a bicycle tire.*

Michael Manion: Bicycle tires are so much better.

Fredric Watson: *We wore our tires down pretty thin.*

Michael Manion: Plastics are so much better. When I was a kid, the first time I heard that they put plastic radiators in a car, because the radiator gets very, very hot – that water gets to two or three hundred degrees – they have plastic radiators in cars now. Well, I would have never dreamt. The first time I heard that, I started laughing. I said – I could just picture just melting. Have you ever seen plastic when it melts?

Interviewer: *Yeah.*

Michael Manion: But that's how strong they can make plastics now. Just everything is a lot better.

Fredric Watson: *Okay, thank you, Mr. Manion.*

Michael Manion: Appreciate it, Mr. Watson.