

Henderson Libraries

Henderson Oral History Project

Kathleen A. Franklin

Oral History of Kathleen A. Franklin

conducted by

Anne Marie Hamilton-Brehm

and filmed by

Edward Feldman

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Interviewer: *Today is May 8, 2014. My name is Anne Marie Hamilton-Brehm and our cameraman is Ed Feldman. We're interviewing Kathy Franklin as part of the Henderson Oral History Project of Henderson Libraries. Thank you for joining us Kathy.*

Kathy Franklin: You're welcome; it's my pleasure.

Interviewer: *I'd like to start by asking about your childhood, so could you tell us a little bit about where you were born and raised and what your parents did for a living?*

Kathy Franklin: I was born in Glendale, California. My mom and dad—my mother was a homemaker, my dad was a banker. And—well he wasn't a banker at the beginning. I remember him selling cars, so he wasn't a banker when I was real little. And then when I was—I went to school in Glendale until the sixth grade. And in between, my dad was taking—a friend of his convinced him to join the Air National Guard after he got out of the Army. So as soon as the Korean War started, they took him back in, which he wasn't planning on, and we moved to Washington State. And we lived up there for two years and then came back to California. And it wasn't too long after that in 1953 that I moved to Henderson, because the first bank was being built in Henderson. At that time it was a small community. They didn't have a bank here and my dad was hired to be the bank manager. So we moved to Henderson in 1953 when I was in the sixth grade and my—I remember when—my mom and dad bought their house sight unseen. There wasn't a lot of house hunting here. What you got is what you got, I guess.

Interviewer: *Wow.*

Kathy Franklin: And when we got here my mother just cried. Because we lived in this—the house, I guess—I don't remember it, but she said it was—everything was full of sand. You know, no—of course there was no yard. We lived down on Blackmore right off of Major. And it

was a new house, but it wasn't very attractive and, of course, there was no flooring. It was just on the cement slab. And so we moved there and I started school at Basic Elementary which is now McCaw on Tin, I think that street is, right across from the old Gibson [Library]. I was in the sixth grade there, and then I went to junior high school where the Gibson Library used to be. There was a tennis court on the corner. There was a football field where the City Hall is. And there were classrooms which had been the old high school and then they made it into a junior high school. There was classrooms all the way down to through where the Convention Center is now. And I went to junior high school there for the seventh and the eighth grade. And then when I went to high school, I went to Basic. And Basic was located where Burkholder Junior High School was, although it was not a new Basic—well it's not new now, but when I was there it was—when I started high school, they hadn't built a Basic High School in its location where it is now. So I went to that school. At that time they had a marching team, a girls' marching team in high school called the Desertaires. So I was a member of the Desertaires and we marched at halftime. Nothing like—nothing like you see now. We didn't do any acrobatic tricks. We just kind of marched around in formation, but we thought we were pretty hot stuff. [laughter] And so we—I was a member of the Desertaires while I was in high school and then after I graduated—well, I don't know how far you want me to go with this. That's pretty much, you know, where I was when I was growing up.

Interviewer: *Well, tell me about Henderson. What was it like when you first moved here?*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, I remember the very first time we came. When we came here, well, Henderson was very small, of course. And I—at the end of town was as far up as Major goes to Van Wagenen; that was the edge of town, the new edge of town. Water Street was all homes

except for the, just a small like two blocks where the Eldorado and the Rainbow [were], which weren't there then. But I remember the second day we were here, my mom and my brother and I, who was younger than me, we walked downtown and we ate at a little hamburger place that all the high school kids went to. It was called the Tasty Tavern. And it was right across the street from where the old movie theater—I think it—I'm not sure if that's even there anymore. [Editor's note: She refers to the Victory Theatre, which has been torn down.] But there was a movie theater down, right downtown behind where the Eldorado and Rainbow are now. And there was a Rexall Drug Store with a fountain which was really neat. You know, the kids would go in there and get a coke. And also there was a grocery store down there where the parking garage is now for the Eldorado, Foodland Grocery, Desert Wear Women's Wear, Van Wagenen's Shoe Store, and it was—I don't believe there was any sidewalks. It was just—when you walked downtown, the street was paved, and I don't think there were any sidewalks. I'm not positive. I could be wrong about that, but I don't picture sidewalks being there.

Interviewer: *Were other streets still dirt or were the streets paved?*

Kathy Franklin: No, I think—as I remember, the streets were paved. I don't think it was dirt streets. And right up at the top of Water Street next to the LDS Church, there was a Pepsi Cola Bottling Plant which on Trick-or-treat we all loved to go to because they gave us a Pepsi. So that was exciting.

Interviewer: *How many times did you go in one night to the Pepsi place? [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, well, [laughter] usually I just went once. I think I just went once. I'm not sure. I could have gone more than that, but word went out who was passing out, like today, who gave a whole candy bar instead of one little piece. So we would go there and get a Pepsi,

which was so exciting, and there was a drive-in right across from where the Eldorado is now. It's now the Mexican Three Muchachos or Three Sons or something, it's called right now. There was a drive-in there, it was called the Arctic Circle and we'd go there with a quarter and we could get French fries and a coke for a quarter. And sometimes my mom would take my brother and I to Sunday School at the Community Church, which is behind there, and turned—it's now the downtown Senior Center. And we would go to church. My mom would give us fifty cents to put in the collection, so I would put a quarter in and then after church [laughter], after church we'd go to the Arctic Circle and get a Coke and a French fry.

Interviewer: *[laughter] Sneaky.*

Kathy Franklin: That's about as dishonest as I ever was. [laughter] But it was another place where the kids hung out. And then down on Lake Mead there was a drive-in called Dante's and that's another place where the kids would hang out in the parking lot as kids do. When I got a little older, we would drive into Las Vegas and cruise up and down Fremont Street. So that was quite a—at that time, there was nothing—it didn't look like—it was all desert between here in Las Vegas except for East Las Vegas. Then you just had a big patch of desert till you got to the Showboat.

Interviewer: *How did you get to Las Vegas? Whose car was being driven?*

Kathy Franklin: I can't remember. Well, I had several friends. My—like some of the boys. Usually the boys that were my friends were maybe a year older, like in the class ahead of me in school. So they were probably sixteen. I don't know if they had a car. It was always with a group. And I never drove in there because I didn't have a driver's license 'til later. But I imagine

some of the boys and the girls, we just piled—and whoever had a car—and do whatever, you know.

Interviewer: *Because I heard that not too many people had cars.*

Kathy Franklin: No, well they weren't cars—you know, they were all junkers, and we'd all get together and put a dollar's worth of gas in it. At that time, it was probably, you know, a quarter a gallon or something like that, or whatever change we had, that's the gas money that we used. Sometimes we'd go out to the lake, and when I was a kid, my mom would take us out to the lake a lot and they had rafts out in the water and lifeguards on Boulder Beach, so we'd go out there in the summer a lot.

Interviewer: *There was a swim program back in the early '50s. Were you engaged in that, were you participating in that?*

Kathy Franklin: I remember I took a swimming class at that—when I was—when we first moved here, there was no swimming pool, community pool. And they had a fundraiser for the Youth Center and Sophie Tucker and Frank Sinatra performed on the football field at Basic and Water Street to raise money to build the Youth Center. And after the Youth Center was built, they had a—the Center had a basketball court and they had dances and we'd go to the dances there, and they had the pool room, and then the pool. And I taught swimming lessons one summer at the city pool, just the little kids where they're just starting to hang on to the side of the pool and kick their legs and when you first begin to swim, just getting to be able to put your face in the water when you first start. So I did that for one summer, and I couldn't tell you what they paid me because I don't remember. Maybe they didn't pay me. I don't remember getting a

paycheck. I think I must have just volunteered. [laughter] Probably because the boys were there. I'm not sure. [laughter]

Interviewer: *[laughter] Was the pool a big hangout for the teenagers?*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: *A big draw?*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, the kids would all go to—we'd go to the pool; we'd go to the movie theater. And lots of times we'd go to the movie theater when the movie was half over, and then they'd let you go in for free, because we didn't really care about looking at the movie. And there was always one spot in the theater where everybody sat. You know, down on the right in the bottom half, that's where everybody went. And the kids that were going steady, you know, would sit there and hold hands, and it was such an innocent—much different than today. And then we'd all walk home together. You know, it was real—you could just walk around—not like now. You could just walk around town and not be afraid something was going to happen to you and you played out in the yard, and you slept out. We had sleep-outs in the summer; we'd lay out in the front yard with our sleeping bags and nobody was worried that, you know, something would happen to you.

[break in recording]

Interviewer: *What are your memories of Carver Park?*

Kathy Franklin: Well, my memories—I mean I remember Carver Park—when I was in school, I had some friends that lived there. But I was more familiar with Victory Village, which was across the street.

Interviewer: *Did you live in Victory Village?*

Kathy Franklin: I lived in Victory Village two times.

Interviewer: *Okay.*

Kathy Franklin: I lived in Victory Village when I first got married and I didn't live there—I got married very young and I lived in Victory Village not for too long, a few months. I was married before I was married to Bud. I had the first, my first—Bud's my second husband. So I lived in Victory Village and then my husband at the time and I moved to California. He was in the military. We moved to California, and when I came back, I came before he got out of the military, and I got an apartment then in Victory Village, which was probably about 1960. And my two children and I lived in Victory Village not for very long, a few months. [speaking to her husband, Bud Franklin: Thank you.] And then after that we moved—I rented a house over in the Townsite area. Victory Village or Carver Park was not the ideal place to live in my opinion, but it was there for a lot of—you know, it was there when you needed it. I mean I was glad to be able to find a place to live and that was affordable because I didn't make much money at all. At that time, I was working at the telephone company, so I made \$1.90 an hour with two kids. So it was pretty tight. But Carver Park, I know there was a market over there but other than visiting a friend from school I really never had any—I never spent any time there.

Interviewer: *Did you have African-American friends?*

Kathy Franklin: I had one girl in my class, there was one black girl in my class, Gladys Sledge. So she and I were always together like in class pictures because alphabetically Gladys was Sledge and my last name was Smith, so we would be beside each other in a class picture, and of course she was in classes with me. But I wouldn't say we were best friends. No, but she was a nice girl as far as I could tell. At the time, I don't think I paid any attention. But it seemed like everyone,

you know, everyone was nice and it didn't appear that she had any problem. When I think of it now, I think how difficult it must have been to be the only black girl in the class. And as I recall there was one—I think she had an older brother. There were very few black people in the school, like in the high school or the—I think after Victory Village and Carver—I don't know why, I really can't tell you why they all seemed to live in Carver Park rather than Victory Village. I wasn't aware of any segregation. Whether there was some or not, I don't know, but I never noticed any. But I wasn't paying attention.

Interviewer: *Well, what we know from the historical record of BMI is that Carver Park was designed as a neighborhood for the black workers at BMI, but the thing was they didn't really want to live there. They really wanted to live on the Westside of Las Vegas and commute to the plant.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, well that's understandable. I don't think anybody really wanted to live in either of those places.

Interviewer: *Oh, really?*

Kathy Franklin: I don't know if you've seen pictures, but they were bare minimal living conditions. Lots of apartments—they had buildings with four and six apartments in them.

Interviewer: *Wow.*

Kathy Franklin: And they were like just big long cinder block buildings. I mean there was nothing aesthetically attractive about them, and I can't imagine that anybody really desired to live there. It was just a matter of finding a place to live in Henderson. When Henderson was new there wasn't either—most people that lived here permanently probably lived in the Townsite homes, and then when I lived here the only newer homes to choose from were above,

at the top of Water Street and then down on Victory Road and down behind the hospital. And those were new; now they're over sixty years old, but at the time they were new when I moved here. But they were also—not a lot of money was spend building them, I think. But that's all there was. There wasn't any developments here like, you know, now. The first development that I remember of any kind was over on, around Center Street and over at Center and Major they had built some homes and that was the first home I ever lived in that had two bathrooms. They didn't have that then. It was all—everybody had one bathroom. You never thought about having two bathrooms. That was luxurious. [laughter] But anyway, I don't have many memories of—I know I remember going to Carver Park, they had a real butcher in the market and that was—but they had a grocery store uptown too. The post office was uptown. Everything was on Water Street.

Interviewer: *Did you have to go shopping in other places or did Henderson have all the things that you needed.*

Kathy Franklin: Well, I mean I just shopped in Henderson. At that time, going into Las Vegas seemed like a trip. You know, you had to—it was just desert.

Interviewer: *How long did it take to get there?*

Kathy Franklin: Well, probably—then there was—

Interviewer: *To get to Fremont Street, for example.*

Kathy Franklin: It probably took, you know, twenty, twenty-five minutes.

Interviewer: *That's not too bad.*

Kathy Franklin: But there, you know, I did go shopping down there. That's where Penney's and Sears were, and Dillard's, and they had a Woolworth drugstore, and they had shoe stores down

there. Everything was on Fremont Street, but most of the time I couldn't afford to shop there. I don't remember that they had—I think we had a nice dress store here and we had a shoe store but we didn't have—like there was no Walmart. The first discount place I remember going to and I think it was discount, it was called Vegas Village and it was in Las Vegas right at Maryland Parkway and Sahara. And it was a kind of a big box store. That's like the first time I remember going to—and then there was another one called Wonder World, but they were—they weren't like they are now, like on every—you know, now there's a drugstore practically on every corner. We had one, the Rexall Drug Store.

Interviewer: *Did you ever go to Boulder City to shop?*

Kathy Franklin: No. Boulder City was [laughter]—when I was in school, they were—when I went to high school, there was four high schools in the Valley. There was Basic, Boulder City, Rancho, and Las Vegas High School. Boulder City was our arch-enemy.

Interviewer: *That's what I've heard.*

Kathy Franklin: Yes. And all—and, of course, the girls in Henderson hated the girls in Boulder City.

Interviewer: *[laughter] Of course.*

Kathy Franklin: But the boys in Henderson liked the girls in Boulder City, and that's probably why we hated them. But no, they were our—one year there was so much trouble, I think the boys all went over—they were having a bonfire for their homecoming, so the boys all went over like the night before and burned down their bonfire—from Henderson.

Interviewer: *That's really mean. [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: [laughter] Yeah. And I heard, I didn't see it and I didn't go to that. I heard about it after, but they actually had police up by Railroad Pass to stop the Henderson kids from going up to Boulder City because they were afraid there'd be a big fight or something.

Interviewer: *Wow. Well I heard that they almost had like rumbles.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, it was.

Interviewer: *With chains and stuff.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, it was kind of like the Sharks and the Jets. [laughter]

Interviewer: *Yeah. [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: But I never saw any of that, but it was—I heard about it. I was kind of timid. I didn't do anything like that, just the bad girls. And I was such a good girl.

Interviewer: *You were a good girl. [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, I was a good girl. The bad girls smoked the cigarettes. But anyway, it was, yeah, I never went to—no, I don't think Boulder City's changed much since I was high school. It looks practically the same. But I never went over there for any shopping or anything else.

Interviewer: *Did you, when you were in high school, you said you were in Desertaires. Were you in any other social groups?*

Kathy Franklin: Well at that time, they had what they called Girls—GAA. It was Girls Athletic Association. I don't know why, because I was not athletic.

Interviewer: *That was probably a new thing.*

Kathy Franklin: And they had "Future Homemakers". You know, then you aspired to be a homemaker.

Interviewer: *Sure, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: It was just assumed that's what—be a secretary, a teacher, or a homemaker. So we had Future Homemakers of America, Spanish Club, I was in Spanish Club.

Interviewer: *Do you speak Spanish?*

Kathy Franklin: No.

Interviewer: *No?*

Kathy Franklin: I learned a very few, very few words in Spanish class. I just didn't pick it up. Now I have the—Irma that comes and helps me, I've learned more Spanish from her than I did in class.

Interviewer: *Yeah. It helps to actually speak it with somebody.*

Kathy Franklin: Oh yeah, she comes and says Spanish words to me a lot.

Interviewer: *That's great.*

Kathy Franklin: But I never remember them very long.

Interviewer: *Were you in any social groups when you were an adult later on?*

Kathy Franklin: You know, not really. I worked since I was twenty. I worked all the time. I had three children, so the only thing I can remember doing like that would be I belonged to a bowling league. But other than that—one of the places that I worked sponsored a team, ladies. But no, most of time I just worked and took care of my—I just didn't have time. I had the three little kids and I was working, so I never had time to.

Interviewer: *And so you worked for the telephone company.*

Kathy Franklin: I worked for the telephone company for twenty-eight years before I came to the library.

Interviewer: *Wow.*

Kathy Franklin: And most of that time I worked in Henderson right down on Water and Pacific. I began as a telephone operator and then I moved into a different department where we handled all the repair dispatching for repairs or installation. And then at one time I actually worked in the switch room and I soldered and ran wires and worked—I was the only woman, there was—the rest were men. And then this telephone company was purchased by the Las Vegas—at that time I think it was Southern—maybe Centel or—and I went into Las Vegas and worked on Fremont Street in the old Sears Building. And then they built a building on Valley View and I worked out there. And I left—I didn't like it. And once I moved into Las Vegas, I wasn't happy with my job. I liked what I did. I just didn't like the—it was just different. I can't tell you why. I just really didn't like it.

Interviewer: *Well Las Vegas is very different from Henderson in—*

Kathy Franklin: Yes, very.

Interviewer: *—in spirit, I think.*

Kathy Franklin: Yes, the people were different and, of course, when we were out here it was real small and it was more—I don't know if you'd want to say casual or laid back. But when I went into Las Vegas, I went to timecards and no talking and no—you know, so it was just—it wasn't as—I didn't fit in very well, especially the no talking. [laughter] And finally I just decided I can't do this anymore, so I gave my notice and I came home for three years. I was by myself. By then my kids were grown and gone and Bud worked in Las Vegas, and I came home and I decided I'd take classes at the community college, which was here. Just fun things, I didn't want to get a degree. I just wanted to take a class and just—I took Nevada History and Art History and Literature, things that I was interested in, you know, that I just enjoyed. And then I had a

niece that worked at the library, which was on Water Street. I had been a library user all my life, and she worked at the library here and she suggested I volunteer. So I said, well that would be fun, so I went a couple of days a week to volunteer and I worked in the—at that time it was called Technical Services. I would help them do, you know, cover books or file or whatever they needed done. And then she moved to Michigan and the position became open, so I applied for it and I was hired by Carol Gardner, who was the director at the time, in 1990. And I continued to work in that department. I never worked in the Circulation Department except to help but I would go two days a week out to Circ. In the morning, Carol felt like we should all know what—if you needed to know it, you should know—you know, in a pinch, you might want to know how to go to Circulation if something—somebody's sick or whatever.

Interviewer: *Right, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: So I was in circulation two mornings a week. And I requested to be out there when the little ones had their reading, when they came in for the reading, story time. I love the little ones. They're so innocent and cute. And—but I stayed—Bud—

Bud Franklin: [entering to display a photograph] This is my favorite picture of my wife at five years old.

Kathy Franklin: Bud, they're filming. He's just oblivious.

Interviewer: *It's okay, it's okay. Maybe we can get a picture of it, Ed. Can you see this?*

Kathy Franklin: Bud, he's got the camera going.

Bud Franklin: Hey, Ed—

Interviewer: *Does it—down? Okay. This a picture of Kathy when she was how old? How old was she, Bud?*

Bud Franklin: Five.

Interviewer: *Five. Isn't she beautiful? Thank you, Bud.*

Bud Franklin: That's my favorite picture.

Interviewer: *That's a beautiful picture.*

Kathy Franklin: Goodbye. [laughter]

Interviewer: *[laughter] This is a fun interview. We're just having a good time.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, and I have to tell you, Technical Services was a lot different then than it is now. We had typewriters and card files and we did all of the—nothing came covered. We did all the covering, all the repairs. We typed labels on the typewriter. I'm thinking we—there was just—I wasn't there too long and Laura [Carroll] came as a volunteer. And she was hired like very shortly after she became a volunteer. They hired her part-time. So Laura, I've known Laura quite a long time now and we—I did—we had cards files, everything that was on order, we wrote a file card and put it in the box. Then we had the old card file, you know, with all the drawers, and we kept track of anything that was on order. That way, when they came we'd pull the card out and put it in the book. And then we'd put the pockets in and we'd stamp all the sides and make the labels and cover the books. And we had a dummy computer that we would enter the books in and twice a year—I'm not sure how it was done, but twice a year they would run off a tape or something and send it to California to be all put—I don't think it was digital—to be put on a floppy probably. And then they brought, they would mail it back like a month later, and we would load it on to this patron terminal so you can see that the updating was not very—it didn't appear for the public very quickly. And they would get an update like every six months or something like that of what was new. And so that's how we worked for quite a long

time and just—we didn't know there was any other way to do it. And then we got lucky enough to get Michelle [Mazzanti], and she just dragged us into the twentieth century [laughter]. She got computers and she got printers and she couldn't believe how we were still—I guess we were antiquated, and she just couldn't believe, you know, how we were doing things, so she came from Las Vegas and they were much more progressive than we were. I don't think we really ever had a person at the library with that kind of experience. They were reference librarians. When I first started, we had one reference librarian and she only worked half a day at the reference desk and then several other employees would fill in for her when she was—in her four hours back behind the scenes. There was a real small staff. There was probably ten of us. And then we had a Pittman Library, and we had one lady that went to Pittman every afternoon, and then on the weekends we all rotated and went down to Pittman and opened the library on Saturday by ourselves. At that time we didn't—it never occurred to us that something might happen to us by ourselves in the library—including Ed's mom. She rotated with us; she was in Circulation. And so we had—actually—and I did story times a few times when the children's librarian was sick or on vacation or something. They would ask who could do story times, and they asked me to do story times a few times. I was so nervous, you'd think I was going to go on the Broadway stage. And it was like four year olds [laughter] but I was so nervous. Of course, their mothers were there too.

Interviewer: *Well, hey, they can be a tough audience, you know.*

Kathy Franklin: [laughter] Yeah.

Interviewer: *Got to keep their attention. [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: Yes, I was so afraid, but I don't know why. I guess I thought they were going to critique me. [laughter] But it was fun. You know we had a really nice group and several directors when we were at Gibson. And then after we kind of outgrew Gibson and Joan Kirchner came as our director, and we knew we were going to have Paseo Verde, we knew we needed more space because the Acquisitions—we just had no place to store books. At first we started putting them in the—they had a community room at Gibson, and then they eventually turned that into the children's library, but we put books in there. We tried to keep them in order by fiction. I put fiction—everybody with the last name A or B—and, you know, separate them so we could find them easily. And then we moved down to Water Street—they found this terrible—I'm not exaggerating—a terrible place for us to work. And we went down on Water Street down by where the Bank of America is or used to be on the corner there. And Joan Kirchner and Stan—I can't remember Stan's last name—anyway, and Tru—or Marina and Laura and I and Michelle started down there, and Jarka, Jarka came there. And we were in these—they actually had built a room within a room, the people that owned the building. And the room within a room had windows in it just like in your house. No air-conditioning in there, and we had a beautiful supply of mice and pigeons and homeless people [laughter]. And we were down—Michelle and her friend went down—and fortunately for us, she painted the bathrooms and made the bathrooms at least somewhat nice for us. She painted it and put up a nice lamp.

Interviewer: *Did they actually expect you to work in that space?*

Kathy Franklin: We had more fun down there.

Interviewer: *Really? [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: You know, it's funny, after we left there, we would all say, "I kind of miss that, miss our Water Street". One of our volunteers, Chloe, who still volunteers at Paseo, she called it "the hovel". She said, "I miss that hovel that we worked". She came and volunteered there right at the beginning when we were down there.

Interviewer: *Now, was that—you found something in a warehouse when you were moving books. And that's maybe another story, but—*

Kathy Franklin: I can't remember—well, we didn't find anything. I don't remember finding anything, but Laura found—we decided to open up all the vents in that building and pigeon legs fell out.

Interviewer: *Oh, my gosh.*

Kathy Franklin: [laughter] We had mice, and when they'd run by, we'd—Laura and I would jump up and they'd be like running up—it was nasty. Then one day, Laura and I went out for a walk and—we used go on our break and just, when it was a nice day, just go for a walk. And we were walking down behind the building, and we spotted a man laying over on the lawn and Laura said, "Oh, look, it's a homeless guy. He's asleep over there." Well, when we came back, he was still laying there and he hadn't budged, and we said, "Do you think he's alive?" So we kind of crept over and took a look, and we decided he was dead. [laughter]

Interviewer: *Oh, my gosh.*

Kathy Franklin: So we found a dead guy out there. He was a—the police came. He'd probably—was like a wall in a house, and he was sleeping in between the two, the wall and the house.

Interviewer: *Oh, gosh.*

Kathy Franklin: So everybody would tease us, “Have you found any dead bodies lately?” We’d [say], “No.” [laughter]

Interviewer: *Of all the things.*

Kathy Franklin: Fortunately, no. And right next door to us, there was a probation department, and so they had some sketchy characters in and out all the time. And I’m not sure if Ed was there at that time, but we had—we used to get the—we’d bring in food. We really had a good time. We’d bring in food and have lunch. And one time, we were sitting in there having hotdogs, I think, and we most of the time kept the front door locked because we weren’t open to the public or anything. And a homeless man came in, and he just decided he wanted to have lunch with us.

Interviewer: *Oh, yeah? [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah. It was real funny, so I think Trudy or Joan, somebody fixed him a plate, and then it was funny, we laughed so much because he would say, he said, “Well, do you have a little more mustard?”

Interviewer: *He really wanted the mustard.*

Kathy Franklin: [laughter] Yeah, he was like ready to just—he was hungry. So anyway, they fixed him a plate, and we got him on his way and locked the front door, but we laughed over that for the longest time. He just came right in and decided he was going to eat with us.

Interviewer: *How about that.*

Kathy Franklin: But we really did have a good time down there because it was just a few people and there was no public so we could be silly, and it was a lot of fun. Didn’t you think so, Ed?

Ed Feldman: *It was; it was a lot of fun.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, it was. We had a good time there. And then Ed and Eric, who worked there at the time, would—we had stacks in there, you know. We'd started out empty with all the stacks they could install in there. There wasn't that much room, and then they would have to pack them up when they got full, and they rented some storage units for them, until—we kept doing—I think we did that for—we were probably there a couple of years getting everything ready for Paseo Verde as much as we could. And then when we moved into Paseo Verde, of course, they moved all the boxes over and we'd label them so they were able to put them relatively close to where they would be shelved. Then we had a giant shelving party for about a week, everybody helping out, putting things away before it opened.

Interviewer: *That must have been fun.*

Kathy Franklin: It was fun. You know, we had a good time and we all were—I think everybody—Barb [Barbara Bloom] came to work there at that time—and everybody had a relative—we all enjoyed it. And that's what we wanted to do. It was really fun and we all liked books, and so it was—I really—if could've have gone to work at the library when I was twenty, if I could do my life again, that's what I would do. I loved working at the library, I really did. So when we came over to Paseo Verde, it was pretty—you know, from where we came, it was pretty nice. We felt like we had all this room, and I was surprised at how fast we outgrew it. It doesn't take long to realize you need, you know, when you're living in a place, soon you know what you really need. But it sure was fun. I just loved my job, everything we did. Then in Acquisitions [and Bibliographic Services], it was Michelle and I and Laura and Ed and Barb for a while, and Jarka, we were Acquisitions, and we had a good time too. We liked to have breakfasts and lunches

and then we'd have our annual barbecue, not in October when it was nice, but we did it in July.

[laughter]

Interviewer: *Of course. [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: The hottest month out of the whole year, we'd have a hotdog barbecue and Ed was our barbecuer. [laughter] And we had fun with that. We'd cook breakfast and everybody'd come and have breakfast with us. We'd have pancakes or bacon or sausage or—and Tom [Fay] liked it too, the Director. You know, he enjoyed it too, having breakfast with us or lunch or whatever. We did a lot of things together as a group, so that was fun. I really enjoyed it. Okay, I'll be quiet now. What do you want to ask me? [laughter]

Interviewer: *No, well that's great. Ed, do you have any particular questions you want to ask Kathy about the library, her library experience because you, you played a role in this too.*

Ed Feldman: *I don't know, I was there for a lot of it.*

Kathy Franklin: I remember always saying—Ed sat across the wall from [me]—well you know where he's at. I sat where Jo's at [Joann Morrison]. I always think of that, when I'd say, "Ed, are you there?" He's so quiet, I never knew if he was over there or not. "Are you there?" "Yeah, I'm here." [laughter]

Interviewer: *[laughter] Well, it is a very enjoyable place to work.*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, I loved it. I just loved it. It was really a wonderful place. Everybody. You know, I can't think of any bad experience I ever had there. Or anybody I ever worked with and I didn't enjoy working with and everybody, you know, it was just a special—

Interviewer: *It's a great library.*

Kathy Franklin: It is! And it was a special time in my life that I will never forget. I think I might still be there if I was able. You know, I don't know, but I think I would have enjoyed working a few more years but it's hard to say, you know. One day you just decide, okay, time to call it a day. But I really, really liked it.

Interviewer: *How did you get to meet Bud?*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, well, I met Bud—my friend—I worked at the Telephone Company, and Bud, he owned a bar on Water Street. Not the Gold Mine, which he eventually owned, but he was at the Town House, and my friends and I a few times would stop in there after work and have a drink, and he was tending bar, so I met him, but I, you know—I mean, I knew him. We didn't begin dating or anything. And then he bought the Gold Mine and he was on the City Council and he was a busy guy. But when he bought the Gold Mine and opened that place and left the Town House, my friends and I would go there after work sometimes, and one evening he just asked me if I would like to go have something to eat with him. And I said, "Well, sure." So we just went and had—we went into Las Vegas to the Green Shack, which is not there anymore, by the Showboat, which is not there anymore, and we had dinner together. And I don't know, it just seemed like we just kind of fell together. It wasn't like, you know, it wasn't like—it took a long time for us to come to the point where we got married. I think we dated for about two years. And I had three children, so I can't imagine why he, after finding that out, why he stuck around. But he did [laughter], he did. So, you know, the old story, I met him in a bar, which is true. That's where we met. So—and we got married in—it's almost forty-seven years now.

Interviewer: *Wow.*

Kathy Franklin: So I think I made the right choice. [laughter]

Interviewer: *I think you all have a wonderful relationship.*

Kathy Franklin: I think we do. We have a great time together. He's a wonderful husband. He really is.

Interviewer: *That's great. Do you remember some other memorable events that happened in Henderson that you would like to talk about? I mean, we talked about some things at the library, but—*

Kathy Franklin: I remember the PEPCON blast, which I'm sure everybody would remember that was here at the time.

Interviewer: *Where were you when that happened?*

Kathy Franklin: I was here and I was not working at that time. I was here by myself, the dog and I, and the back door was open, and this big blast. You know, I just—I went to look out the back door to see what the heck it was and I could feel, a few seconds later, I could feel the, like the air from the blast.

Interviewer: *Oh, wow.*

Kathy Franklin: You know like the concussion or whatever you want to call it. And I thought, oh—my first thought, I grabbed the dog and I got down along under the counter. Because I thought, my gosh, we've been, you know, hit by a bomb or something. That's what I thought it was initially. For the first few seconds I thought, oh, my gosh, we've bombed. And then I heard another one. It did it twice. And so after that it was quiet, so I got up and went out in the back yard to look, and I could tell it came from the plant or someplace down there, and so I went in the back yard and looked and I could see this huge plume of black smoke, huge. And it did look like a bomb. So I jumped in the car—in a few minutes, I jumped in the car and went down to

the corner at the Seven Eleven, which was down there, and I thought, well maybe somebody there knows what happened. And, of course, there was people standing around and everybody said, well, I think Titanium blew up or Stauffer blew, but nobody really knew then. And I—so then I came back home. The only damage that we suffered, we have a—in the hallway, we have a piece that lifts up and you can get into the attic in the kitchen, the ceiling. And it evidently blew it up and then when it came, it cracked it in half. But that's the only damage we had. I know lots of people had broken windows.

Interviewer: *That's really lucky.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, we didn't—we were far enough—I think maybe the—I don't know of any people up here that had, you know—

Interviewer: *It was far enough away.*

Kathy Franklin: —the damage that was down in the ground, in the townsite area. I know that my sister-in-law lived right off of Lake Mead over by Van Wagenen and her front window was broken and her—she had some damage in her home. But we really didn't other than that it blew up and some insulation fell down in the hall and that was all that happened here. But that was really—and Bud at that time worked at Sahara and Maryland Parkway in an office. And he—they felt it there. He said they thought the window was going to break. They were in a storefront that had a big glass front on it, and he said it looked like, you know, they thought the window was going to come in. It didn't but—and in order for him to get home, he had to go out around Lake Mead and come back—go out around from Las Vegas. He couldn't get up Boulder Highway. It was all closed off. So he went around, out around the lake, and came home through Boulder City and came home that way. But it was big news for—it's a miracle that a lot of

people weren't killed. It really is, it's unbelievable. But I think only—as I remember, only one person died.

Interviewer: *I think it was two.*

Kathy Franklin: Two?

Interviewer: *But a lot of people were injured, especially at the marshmallow plant next door.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, yeah right, at the marshmallow, but I don't—I thought, oh, my gosh, hundreds of people must have died. I don't know how they got out. But, yeah that was—

Interviewer: *That was amazing.*

Kathy Franklin: I remember that. And, you know, it's funny, for a long time after that, every time you hear a loud noise, you kind of, you know, oh, my gosh. I can imagine how men and women that go to war—I can imagine how something like that makes them flinch. But that's really probably the biggest thing that I can think of that happened here.

Interviewer: *Do you remember any of the atomic tests?*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, yes.

Interviewer: *Did you used to watch those?*

Kathy Franklin: Yes, my dad would get us up in the morning. We lived on Blackmore down here. And they would tell us about like at 5:30 in the morning it's going to go. They'll set it off. So we'd get up and go out in the driveway. And the back of our house faced Las Vegas, so we had a pretty good view of the sky and everything. And we'd see the big, white flash and then we could see the mushroom cloud, a few—I don't know if it was seconds or minutes. But we could see the white flash. I don't think anybody thought anything about radiation. We just—probably

if it had been set off in East Las Vegas we'd have still got up to go to work. I—as a kid, it was just—

Interviewer: *I bet you would.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, you know, you wanted to see it. And they would warn everybody that if you're in the higher floors at a hotel or office building, you'll feel more of a sway than at ground level from it. But I do remember that, yes, the bombs. And it seemed like they did it pretty often. You know, it seemed like a couple of times a year they'd be setting off something. And, of course, lots of people worked at the test site then. I don't know—

Interviewer: *Did you have any friends that had a father that worked at the test site?*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah.

Interviewer: *And you couldn't talk to them about what they were doing, could you.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, well I think Ed's dad did. He worked out at the test site and couldn't talk about the Stealth Bomber, I think.

Ed Feldman: *Yeah, for a while.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah.

Interviewer: *Ed's like, "I can't talk about that". [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, you can't talk about it or they will kill you.

Ed Feldman: *[laughter] We'll have to edit that.*

Kathy Franklin: And I think Trudy's husband did for a long time. Because she—he would go get on a plane and fly out there like every morning and then fly back. And it's one of those "I can't tell you or I'll have to kill you" jobs. But when I was a kid, I didn't really—my friends, you know, we were kids then. As an adult I didn't know anybody that worked out there except in an

administrative way, you know. But after the above ground testing stopped then it wasn't—you know, they still did the underground testing, but after that I didn't pay too much attention to it.

Interviewer: *What are some of your memories about Industrial Days?*

Kathy Franklin: Well I remember being in the parade as a Desertaire.

Interviewer: *Oh, right, yeah, sure, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: We marched in that parade. And I remember when I was working at the Telephone Company, we built a big float. We spent weeks building this float, and it was just a big—it was really fun, you know, it was—and that's another thing: I was disappointed when they—to me it's always going to be "Industrial Days". I know now it's "Heritage Days", yeah.

Interviewer: *Heritage Days, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: But to me I always think of it as Industrial Days. It was a lot of fun and everybody—it was a real home town and, of course, the band from school and the Girl Scout troops and the Boy Scout troops and I think the Shriners and their little cars have been in it since Day One, [laughter] buzzing around the street.

Interviewer: *There's always Shriners in a parade. [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, there's always Shriners in those little cars. But, yeah, that was a fun thing to go to. I think that was going on—I don't remember—I always remember it happening here, so I don't know if that was going on before I moved here. I really don't remember. But I always remember having Industrial Days. And the beauty pageant, we always went to the beauty pageant.

Interviewer: *What was that like?*

Kathy Franklin: Well, like you would expect. Some of the girls were awfully cute and some of them weren't so cute but, you know, they had—they were all local and they were sponsored by local businesses. Several times when Bud had the Gold Mine he sponsored a girl and then—in the beauty contest, and they'd—you'd buy their suit and provide a car.

Interviewer: *How did they pick a girl to sponsor? How did that happen?*

Kathy Franklin: Most of the time the girls just came in—well, I think, always—they would ask, or maybe your—in one case with Bud, it was his niece. And, you know, they'd probably go—the girls that had nerve enough to do it would just approach businesses and ask them if they would sponsor them, and I think that's how it happened most of the time. I can't—I never would have had the nerve to do something like that but a lot of the girls in school did. And we'd all go to the beauty contest and it was a big deal. The whole town would show up. You know, you'd have it at the auditorium.

Interviewer: *That's what I heard, a lot of people came.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, it was a—and we'd have it there and we'd have like the—a famous person on local TV maybe would be the emcee, and it was really fun. We enjoyed it a lot.

Interviewer: *It sounds like a good time.*

Kathy Franklin: It was.

Interviewer: *So do you think it's changed now in terms of—*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, yeah. They don't—I don't think they even have a beauty contest anymore.

Interviewer: *Well, they probably don't have the beauty contest anymore, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: Maybe that's too old-fashioned. Maybe they decided it was—I don't know why they don't have a beauty contest, but they don't. And I mean, Bud and I used to go to the

parades but we haven't gone in a long time. They used to even have it on TV. I don't know if they still do that or not, Channel 5, broadcast it live. But everything has changed. It's not a small town anymore. Although this half of Henderson feels more small town than Green Valley and on, but—and Sunset Road—but—

Interviewer: *I still get a sense of the real community spirit here in Henderson.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah. I think for me, the people that have lived here a long time probably still live, or most of them, live on this side of town. And, of course, the retirement communities, I don't know, maybe a lot of them moved to Anthem. But a lot of the people that came—I mean we went from, you know, it was I think maybe ten thousand people when I moved here, to whatever it is now, you know, almost three hundred thousand. And obviously, it's grown all the way to the West out to the 15 Freeway, practically, I think. So I think there's a lot of people that, they don't have any memory of these things. I don't—I bet there's a lot of people that have never even been in this part of Henderson that live in Henderson.

Interviewer: *I think that's possible, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: Unless they've maybe had to come to City Hall for a permit or something. But, you know, other than that I don't think they even know that. But I'm the same way with over on the other side of town.

Interviewer: *You don't go to the other part, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: Henderson—I don't go—I wouldn't know—if somebody told me a street they lived on in Anthem, I would have no idea where that was. So it's just different now, it's not really a small town.

Interviewer: *It really expanded.*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, yeah, yeah, it really did. I mean we used to be—when you lived—it used to be, in Las Vegas, they laughed at Henderson because of the factories and all the smoke, and when we were young it didn't smell very good in Henderson.

Interviewer: *Oh, really?*

Kathy Franklin: With all the smoke from the factories or whatever they were letting out.

Interviewer: *Was there like chlorine?*

Kathy Franklin: Yes, a lot of chlorine smell and kind of a sickly—I remember this kind of a sickly sweet smell. I don't know what it was.

Interviewer: *It wasn't like a paper mill?*

Kathy Franklin: No, they were all like, uh, you know, titanium or manganese. They were all chemical or metal companies.

Interviewer: *Right, so it didn't—at least you didn't have the paper mill smell. [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: No, I don't know what that smells like.

Interviewer: *Oh, gosh.*

Kathy Franklin: I don't think we did.

Interviewer: *Well, I got a whiff of that in Tennessee and it is—it's pretty bad.*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, see, I don't even know what that smells like. And Henderson had a white cloud a lot, you know, from the pollution from the factories and you'd tell somebody you lived in Henderson, they'd say, "Oh, you live in Henderson? Ew." Well now they'd like to live in Henderson because it's such a lovely city now. Then it was a town, it wasn't a city.

Interviewer: *Were you here when the leaves fell off all the trees because of the chlorine release? My gosh.*

Kathy Franklin: Yes, I was, from the chlorine. Yes, I was. Yes, everything, it killed everything down there, yes.

Interviewer: *I don't know how you all survived. [laughter]*

Kathy Franklin: [laughter] Yeah, I don't either when I think about it. I think they were trying to gas us all. I don't know how the people that worked in those plants survived.

Interviewer: *I know. When did Henderson's air quality start to clean up?*

Kathy Franklin: I think it probably—well, in fact, I know that my husband had a part in that because people complained about the smell, and so he and some of the other people on the council contacted some city in California about—they had used scrubbers or something. And so anyway, they approached the plants down there about doing something about cleaning up the air. And so after that, they evidently invested in some kinds of—I don't know, something—

Interviewer: *Like filters or something.*

Kathy Franklin: —that helped filter the air out so it didn't stink so bad and have so much smoke.

Interviewer: *So are they still doing the processes then but they have filters or something?*

Kathy Franklin: You know, I don't know how much of that down there is still—it's not—there used to be quite a few factories there that aren't there now. There was U.S. Lime, Titanium, Stauffer, Manganese plant out on Lake Mead by Lake Las Vegas and, I can't remember, there was, you know, probably five or six factories down there. I really don't know. I think Titanium still operates down there. But I don't know if any of the other ones do or not to tell you—I have a feeling they don't or you would hear about them.

Interviewer: *You would hear—you would think you would hear more, right?*

Kathy Franklin: The air is clean—a lot better than it was. You don't see it anymore.

Interviewer: *Yeah, it's beautiful here now.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, so—and then I think they moved out of town.

Interviewer: *They must have—so this must have happened in the early '90s?*

Kathy Franklin: I think, no, I would say probably it cleaned up a lot in the '60s and '70s.

Interviewer: *Oh, okay, okay, so it was already starting to.*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, yeah, yeah, yes, I think so, because it was—it was pretty bad, you know. I guess it was one of those things that was pretty bad, but since it's—you just get to the point where I suppose at the paper mill, they just get—it's there and you can't do anything about it, so you don't think about it anymore.

Interviewer: *They wish people didn't think about it.*

Kathy Franklin: Maybe that's just—yeah, wishful, yeah, but it's been a long time.

Interviewer: *What do you enjoy most about having lived in Henderson?*

Kathy Franklin: Well, I don't know. I can't really point to one thing. To me, it's home. I feel safe in Henderson. I have wonderful friends in Henderson. I can't think of anything I don't like about living in Henderson. If I had to move someplace else, I don't know where it would be. I always say if I can't have a beautiful home on a bluff by the ocean, then I don't want to move anywhere. [laughter] I like it here. I like the people and I just like everything about Henderson and I have no desire to live anyplace else. To me it's home. Henderson is home.

Interviewer: *I think a lot of people feel that way.*

Kathy Franklin: It's a place to call home, right.

Interviewer: *Yeah, yeah, it's really true.*

Kathy Franklin: I never wanted to live in Las Vegas. My mom and dad moved to Las Vegas when I was, I don't know, twenty, and I thought, you know, I could go visit them. But I never had any desire to move in there.

Interviewer: *It's a different style of life.*

Kathy Franklin: It is, and it's nice in Henderson.

Interviewer: *Yeah, relaxed.*

Kathy Franklin: Yes, yeah, there's nothing fancy about Henderson, that's for sure. Well, maybe it is a little bit. There's some very lovely neighborhoods now.

Interviewer: *There are, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: Really lovely neighborhoods.

Interviewer: *Kathy, what else would you like to share about your experience in Henderson that we haven't talked about?*

Kathy Franklin: I really can't think of anything. I think we've pretty much covered everything.

Interviewer: *We talked about a lot of things.*

Kathy Franklin: Yes.

Interviewer: *Ed, do you have any?*

Ed Feldman: *I don't if you want to talk anything about like, what were some like the family outing kind of things that you'd do?*

Kathy Franklin: That I did when I was young or with my own family?

Ed Feldman: *From both.*

Kathy Franklin: Well, I think—well, I'm thinking when I was young, we went to Mount Charleston a lot with my mom and dad and, you know, cooked out. They had a motor home, so

they'd drive it up there and we'd all go up and barbecue. We'd go to the lake and go swimming. We'd go to the Valley of Fire and have picnics and run around up there. And I wish I did all those things with my own kids. We'd go to Rogers Springs out on the North Shore Road. I loved to go out there. And we'd all—everywhere we went, we took a picnic. We'd go down on the river, like to Nelson or Cottonwood Cove or Willow Beach. I think that's about all we'd—you know, we'd—of course, Fourth of July, you'd go to the park with all the fireworks and barbecue and—but, you know, when you think about it, there's about three roads out of Henderson [laughter]. They're not a—you can go East, West, or South, and North takes you into Las Vegas, so it's not like we had a lot of little farm roads to go tootle around on or anything.

Interviewer: *Did you ever get to ride horses when you were a kid?*

Kathy Franklin: No. I mean I did go horseback riding, but like at a stable. You know, you go rent the horse.

Interviewer: *Well, exactly, you did some of that?*

Kathy Franklin: Well, a little bit. I was always afraid of horses a little bit. My friend, you know, they used to have the corrals down in Pittman. And I had a friend that her father and mom and she rode horses and they kept horses down there. But I was always—I was scared of them.

They just were so big.

Interviewer: *They're big, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: I didn't know how to ride a horse and I always had visions of either it running away or I'm going to fall off or both so, no.

Interviewer: *That would always happen to me so—*

Kathy Franklin: [laughter] Oh, so I was wise not to ride?

Interviewer: *Well, I'm probably still dumb enough to get back on the horse.*

Kathy Franklin: Well, I, no, I never, I never, you know, was around horses. I've always been a city girl and so never been around a farm or anything like that. My grandparents were city people and my parents, so I don't have any memories of being on the family farm and the cows and horses. I thought milk just came in the bottle.

Interviewer: *When your Dad was managing the bank, did they ever have celebrations at the bank or do you remember any events they had?*

Kathy Franklin: Not really. I was, you know, his job was his job and I didn't go there really for any reason, you know.

Interviewer: *You didn't hang out at the bank?*

Kathy Franklin: I'm sure they had lots of things happening that my mom and dad went to, but my brother and I didn't go and I don't remember attending anything. He moved into Las Vegas about six or eight years after we moved here, and after that, you know, they lived in Las Vegas, so I, you know, really no. I never went to anything at the bank. I'm sure they did have like every other business, a potluck or something.

Interviewer: *I don't know if they did or not, you know.*

Kathy Franklin: I don't know. I don't know if they—well, my Mom always said, "Oh, Daddy loves it when the girls have a potluck and he can have that for lunch." So evidently they did.

Interviewer: *They must have, yeah.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah, he said that was always good food.

Interviewer: *Yep, I bet it was too.*

Kathy Franklin: Yeah. [laughter]

Interviewer: *Well, I think that's all the questions that I have for you, Kathy, unless there's something else you want to add.*

Kathy Franklin: I can't think of anything.

Interviewer: *It's been wonderful talking with you this morning.*

Kathy Franklin: Well, thank you. Can you edit this down to about ten minutes?

Interviewer: *I think that's a tall order. I think there's much more than ten minutes worth of good information here, so thank you.*

Kathy Franklin: Oh, oh well, I hope so. I hope so. Thank you, thank you.