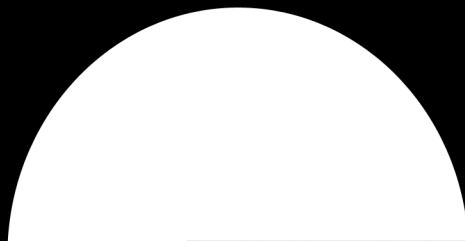
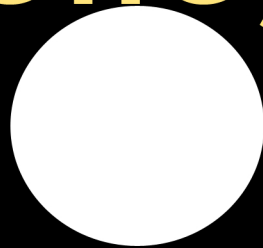


**Nevada State
College**



**Undergraduate Oral
History Project**

Oral History of Ellen Stoddard

An Interview

Conducted by

Karen Schank

October 18, 2010

Nevada State College Undergraduate Oral History Project

Produced by:

Nevada State College Undergraduate Oral History Project

Department of History, Nevada State College 89002

Directors: Peter La Chapelle, Ph.D. and Kate Hahn

Project Manager: Melissa S. Stoner

Project Assistants: Noelle Cruz

Any element within, including without limitation, text, logos, graphics, images, photographs, multimedia features, or other likeness or including materials may be republished, reposted, retransmitted, or redistributed without the prior consent of Nevada State College. Nevada State College and Nevada State College Libraries requests acknowledgement whether the use is oral, web or in print. Commercial use of any portion in this material requires permission. For further information please contact Nevada State College Library:

<http://nsc.edu/2744.asp>

Ellen Stoddard

The recorded interview and transcript have been made possible with the support of the Nevada State Library and Archives and the generosity of the Institute of Museum and Library Services through the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA). The collaboration between the Nevada State College department of Humanities and the Library provided a unique opportunity for undergraduate students and project staff to work together with community members from the City of Henderson to acquire a series of first-person narratives.

The transcript received minimal editing to preserve the conversational style and content of the narrator.

This interview is from the series *Bridging the Past: Henderson through Oral History*.

Ellen Stoddard

Oral History of Ellen Stoddard

An Interview done by Karen Schank on October 18, 2010

Biography

Ellen Stoddard was born in Chicago, Illinois, on May 29, 1940. She married Donald R. Stoddard of Tucson, Arizona in November 11, 1958. Together they moved to Henderson in 1967, where he began working at Southwest Gas. They lived in Carver Park with their children.

Stoddard has been very involved in the community since she's lived here. She used her Spanish knowledge to translate church literature from English to Spanish and was employed by the Cooperative Extension of the University of Nevada, Reno, to expand a nutrition education program in Henderson. As part of this program, she taught several children's clubs how to cook and learn how to use commodities at home. Stoddard was also one of the first nurse's aides in Clark County. Stoddard became a Sergeant of Arms of the American War Mothers and was instrumental in helping to see that the completion of the Henderson's Veterans Memorial Wall, the only memorial of its kind in Southern Nevada.

Ellen Stoddard

Narrator: Ellen Stoddard
Interviewer: Karen Schank
Interview Date: October 18, 2010
Location: Henderson, Nevada

Karen Schank: It looks like it is working now. This is Karen Schenk. We are here with Ellen Stoddard. We are in the senior center located in Henderson, our new building on a race track it is October the 18th, at almost 11 o'clock. Ellen, would you say your name, Ellen, and spell your last name?

Ellen Stoddard: Ellen Stoddard, s t o d d a r d.

Karen Schank: Great. Where and when were you born?

Interviewee: I was born over in Chicago, Illinois in 1940. My folks lived in the Edgewater district at that time. It was predominately a Swedish area.

Karen Schank: Do you have some – a childhood memory that you would like to share and growing up in that area?

Interviewee: No, but when my folks took me to church, they said I waved my hands with the choir director. I enjoyed music very early. Then my father worked for agriculture research service. We moved to Long Island, New York. He was inspecting the ships as they came in the Harbor at Ellis Island.

Karen Schank: What year was that?

Ellen Stoddard: He was also inspecting the ships there. That would be in '41 and '42.

Karen Schank: What was he inspecting them for?

Ellen Stoddard: Well, his – since his agriculture research, he wanted to make sure they did not bring any insects, or bugs, or plants, or things that would carry harmful things to the United States, a quarantine type thing.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: Which is not hardly – it is not as well taken care of these days, it does not look like.

Karen Schank: No. But did he work with the immigrants at Ellis Island?

Ellen Stoddard: Well, they would pass through, I would believe. I know later on, he worked at the border in Nogales, Arizona. He said his schoolteacher went across to Mexico and then came back. That had an apple in her purse and forgot to tell

Ellen Stoddard

them. Yeah. There were little incidents like that. They have to check to make sure there is and nothing brought into the United States that would harm our plants and food crops here.

Karen Schank: When did you move to Henderson?

Ellen Stoddard: In 1967.

Karen Schank: What brought you here?

Ellen Stoddard: My husband started to work for Southwest Gas in the personnel department.

Karen Schank: Where did you live when you moved here?

Ellen Stoddard: In Carver Park. That was an area probably set up for the people that had worked at the – at all of the businesses along the area where Titanium (Metal) is and all of that [inaudible] because Henderson is the industrial capital of the southwest.

Karen Schank: What was Carver Park like when you moved into it?

Ellen Stoddard: It was a mixture of people of different nationalities. Mostly, I had at the time four children. One was born in Boulder City at the hospital there in '67. Yeah, and right next to it they had an air raid shelter.

Karen Schank: Next to Carver Park?

Ellen Stoddard: Yes.

Karen Schank: Really?

Ellen Stoddard: It was just taken out just about a year or two ago.

Karen Schank: Really, and tell me about it. Tell me what it looked like.

Ellen Stoddard: It was a – it had a little entrance. It was a little bit above ground. But you could go under in that – underground and be protected in case of air raids, or bombs, and things like that.

Karen Schank: How many people would fit in it?

Ellen Stoddard: I did not really explore that part of it that much at that time. But we just knew that it was there.

Karen Schank: Where was it located near? In Carver Park?

Ellen Stoddard

Ellen Stoddard: No, it is just off of Lake Mead. Yeah, it was in that area, yeah, right. Across the street was Victor Village. That is the area where the Walmart is built now in that parking lot. There were a lot of mulberry trees that grew. You could eat the fresh fruit all of the time.

Karen Schank: You mentioned that you had gone to the hospital in Boulder City to have your children. Why did you go that far? I mean, was not there – wasn't Rose de Lima right there?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. But Rose de Lima was there, but my doctor was in Boulder City. If you wanted to go to an overnight pharmacy, you had to go up on – to the White pharmacy on the corner of Main Street in Las Vegas, and St. Louis. The first fast food place I remember was Arby's on Charleston. The first fast food place in Clark County that I know of that had playground facilities was in Boulder City. It was McDonald's. We did not have – in Henderson we did not have overnight pharmacies or anything – any not too many facilities.

There were about 18,000 population when I came. Since that road was just a bunch of dips. Every time it rained, water would run all across it. You could hardly get through. A lot of the roads that we took in those were dirt back roads. One time I even got two flat tires behind an area just off of Lake Mead and behind where the Albertson's is on the corner there. Just behind there, a cow's horn stuck into both tires on the right side of my vehicle. It was just – it was just very behind the housing area. It is still pretty much vacant in that area now. But I believe it runs through it. Henderson might have incorporated it a little bit now. Because they are trying to clean up things and so forth. There definitely was a white cloud of smoke about every Friday night. Titanium would clean out smokestacks. We would just be white in the area.

Karen Schank: Really? Was there a smell to it, or?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. It would choke the people that lived in the Pittman area. It smelled a little bit too rubber and sort of a stinging sensation. The fluvial drain ran down there at, down across the road near where Jokers Wild now from the plants in that area, and on down to the lake.

Karen Schank: What did?

Ellen Stoddard: The fluvial drain, just a fluvial drain that washed off when they were cleaning up things. It would just run across the land there.

Karen Schank: From titanium to [inaudible].

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: All of the other plants, they were – there was at a state stove and several other

Ellen Stoddard

ones that have since moved to near Cedar City, Utah, due to a terrible blast we had in this area, too.

Karen Schank: Yes.

Ellen Stoddard: We have...

Karen Schank: Were you in [inaudible]? Were you in Henderson during the PEPCON blast?

Ellen Stoddard: No.

Karen Schank: In the '80s?

Ellen Stoddard: No.

Karen Schank: Do you remember the PEPCON?

Ellen Stoddard: Only the windows at my house were blown out. Some steel workers from California came over and replaced it with like plywood boards. Yeah, I was in Mexico at the time. It was during the [inaudible].

Karen Schank: Okay. You had mentioned that Carver Park had immigrants. Or had different races living together.

Ellen Stoddard: Yes.

Karen Schank: When you moved there? How did they get along and did they mingle well, or?

Ellen Stoddard: Yes, several ladies threw Tupperware parties and things like that. They were also like child evangelism meetings and things for the kids to get together. All races were mixed.

Karen Schank: Kind of bible study type, is that what you mean – evangelism?

Ellen Stoddard: Child evangelism did like plow grass [?] stories or flash card stories that they told the kids that were bible related most of the time. But sometimes they would be teaching things that would help you to be a better person.

Karen Schank: Who sponsored those?

Ellen Stoddard: The Child Evangelism Fellowship, I do not know where it came out of.

Karen Schank: Was it a church group?

Ellen Stoddard: No, it is an interdenominational type of organization. Yeah. I heard one thing,

Ellen Stoddard

but I never actually saw it. The St. Peters Catholic Church that is on Boulder Highway. It had a tunnel that went under the highway over so the people from the housing area from what a homestead is, the town side area – could go to church without it crossing the highway. They had an underground tunnel. A lot of things have changed. They have – at one time during the years what Rosa de Lima decided they should have some other literature and things in Spanish. I helped them to translate that. They had a rough draft done by someone without too much education what and that used street language instead of correct Spanish and English. I helped them edit their translation to get ready for the incoming population that came to service the hotels and so forth in the area.

Karen Schank: What year was that?

Ellen Stoddard: Probably about '85 or so.

Karen Schank: Okay. Where did you learn to speak Spanish and read Spanish?

Ellen Stoddard: On the border of Old Mexico, except because I graduated from high school there. But Betty Scott at teleclass in Clark County Community College that I took conversational Spanish. Then I had a professor at UNLV from Argentina. I kept as a hobby learning Spanish. Because I wanted to find out what someone was saying about me. Or, if they were talking about me. I was interested in what is happening around. I think it has been interesting through the years even if you go up to Las Vegas. I used to enjoy taking tourists to the Mint – the glass elevator that went outside the Mint and clear up to the top. You would hear German spoke and several other languages many times.

Karen Schank: Did you do tours for – as a business, or?

Ellen Stoddard: No, but I did work for the Cooperative Extension service for a couple of years. I was paid by the University of Nevada, Reno, and expanded through the nutrition education program in Henderson. I had about six different children's clubs and taught them how to cook and learn how to use the commodities at home. Because commodities were given out to people in this space. We had a variety of people. I had it at the Pittman Women's club--it was one of the places--and at the Episcopal Church, and at the Boy's Club, and at the Civic Center in Henderson.

Karen Schank: But what year was that?

Ellen Stoddard: In the late '70s.

Karen Schank: The late '70s? Was this to facilitate workers? You had mentioned workers that came in to work with the hotels. Was that in Las Vegas, the hotels in Las Vegas?

Ellen Stoddard

Ellen Stoddard: Yes, I think even Railroad Pass did not put a hotel in for ages. We had a couple of little type hotels down on Water Street below Pacific. There was a barbershop with them. Also the, on Pacific and Water Street was where the original library that I remember was. They had story hours for children. I think the story hours for children that the library has is one of the only things that has continued to almost the same because they still have story hours for children there.

I lived in the Pittman area for a while. That is – would be a northern part of Henderson, sort of like because it was later incorporated into Henderson. It had the same zip-codes for a while. But Channel 5 was down there right on the corner. There was a program like Mickey Mouse that I would take my children to at 5 o'clock in the afternoon.

Karen Schank: At Channel 5?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. It was right on the corner of [inaudible] and on Boulder Highway. It was like that. Clark County was more like our stomping grounds. You could not do a lot of things right in Henderson. But we had –

Karen Schank: Yeah.

Ellen Stoddard: You know a few things. In the Pittman area there was a grocery store where they got their things direct, from Utah, from crops and animals, and things. Then you could go directly to the butcher and get your – what you needed. Then on Lake Mead there was another market called Tops Market out towards, it would be driving towards Lake Mead itself. If someone went deer hunting or something, they had lockers that people could store their meat in. It was like a small town atmosphere. A lot of people knew you from all sections of town.

Karen Schank: The Carver Park that you mentioned before, did they have a recreation leader, or center, or something to that community? [inaudible] Johnson, does that ring a bell?

Ellen Stoddard: I believe that there was, yes. As soon as – as soon as I could, I bought a home and did not live in that area anymore. Because it was a rental type. But it was, with a large family, it was hard to find places to stay when we first came. That was where we stayed.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. But I probably [inaudible], but the Tupperware parties and so forth that I went to in that area where in different people's homes.

Ellen Stoddard

Karen Schank: Individually run?

Ellen Stoddard: I remember that. It seemed in those years a lot of people had quite a few children.

Karen Schank: What was the average family size? What was normal or what was common?

Ellen Stoddard: I do not know. I know several families that had nine children and some six, and five, and four and like that. But people had quite a few it seemed like to me anyways. I am the oldest of eight. I know that helped my mother with those children. I know that it is quite a chore.

Karen Schank: Yes. Were there – were there ever civil rights problems with the races [inaudible] that you recall in Henderson?

Ellen Stoddard: My grand awakening to that type of thing was in 1958 when I went to my husband to [inaudible] air force base. Then when we went downtown, there were drinking fountain. One said white and one said colored. Well, I thought I wonder if Kool-Aid comes out of this one. I had no idea that it was meant for black people. Because in the service, they were fairly mixed and always well groomed. I – we never knew anything. The small town in Arizona that I grew up in had 7,000 when I moved there in '48; and across the Border in Mexico it was 30,000.

There was only one, a black person in our high school. The whole high school, it had about 500. But right here in Clark County, when I was working for the school district, Bob Seals was the principal at Whitney when I was there. We were in, and not sort of a barrack, old barracks that were taken off of the base; tit down there. Our school had its own cat to keep track of the rats. That and our principal had to go to six different schools. He went to Good Springs. There were, I think seven students there. Then he went to Mt. Charleston, which had 12 students. We had close to 90 at times in our school, and kindergarten through fifth grade.

Karen Schank: Whitney was in Henderson, is that right?

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: No, it is East Las Vegas.

Karen Schank: Yeah, East Las Vegas.

Ellen Stoddard: But there – it was not. I do not think it was incorporated as a city. It was a city sort of like it was called Whitney at a time. It was –

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard

Ellen Stoddard: It was on the way to Las Vegas. It is actually about on the corner of Missouri and Boulder Highway now. It is probably an area, in that area there were some people that lived from off the base of Nellis, but in there. Then there were some Cuban influence, too.

Karen Schank: Is just that where your children went to school in Whitney?

Ellen Stoddard: No.

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: That is where you worked?

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: No, [inaudible] – that has been in my first full-time school job.

Karen Schank: What year was that?

Ellen Stoddard: That is a good question.

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: [inaudible]. Was it after your children were grown?

Ellen Stoddard: Well, I do not believe so. I went back to school when my son was in first grade. I went to Clark County Community College on Main Street. Since I had five children and I was having a hard time to pay for my school, the faculty took up a collection. I won the first faculty scholarship that was ever given at Clark County Community College, which is, I think since turned into say CSN.

Karen Schank: Yes. [inaudible].

Ellen Stoddard: Finally they did and built the Cheyenne Campus and I went to some classes up there as well as some classes in the education facility at St. Peters. I took some literature and, like I said, Spanish classes out in Henderson.

Karen Schank: Okay. You were going to school to be a teacher. Is that right?

Ellen Stoddard: No. I majored in psychology and minored in English.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: But when it came down to looking for a job, I did not want to just give tests to

Ellen Stoddard

kids all of the time. Like, that was most psychology and it seems like it was doing with the school district. I went and I worked at a variety of jobs at the school district. They would just call me up. I need you to do this. Or, I need you to do that. They did not have any nurses aides in the schools. George Harris – George Harris School had a lot of children that needed medications given or something done for them during the noon hour when the kids were out to play. Things like that and the office staff wanted to take a break. Since the nurse was just a visiting nurse, I was the first. I would say one of the first, if not the first nurse's aide or first aid assistant in Clark County.

Karen Schank: Okay. For the Whitney school?

Ellen Stoddard: No, the George Harris.

Karen Schank: George –

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: It is located off of Sandhill and not too far from the strip.

Karen Schank: Okay. Where were you living during that time.

Ellen Stoddard: Always in Henderson.

Karen Schank: Always in Henderson? Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. [inaudible].

Karen Schank: You traveled to work?

Ellen Stoddard: Well, yes but we traveled to go to [inaudible]. Like I said, Henderson did not have a whole lot of things except the one thing I liked about Henderson in those days was the downtown area. They had a women's shop where you could get personal fittings and find the right kind of clothes for you at Pauline's. They had that Dailies Shoe Store. A lot of – of course, my dentist was even – his building was behind the El Dorado on the second floor. It was a – it was an interesting time. More that you could just feel right at home in Henderson itself. We had – it had quite a few different parades and things.

I was active in the parades and watching my daughter walk up and twirling a thing she had gotten. She was going to Robert Taylor at that time. I think that school, it had a different name before. But it was close to the big Victory Village gym and Carver Park area. But my children also went this CT Sewell school. At that time that school had my son's fourth grade teacher – commuted from Pahrump every day to school. People did not think about traveling quite a few – quite a ways, I believe in those areas – in those days.

Ellen Stoddard

One – there was not any Green Valley High School either.

The Warm Springs Road, a little bit off of Boulder Highway just people came and dumped all kind of things they did not want. Big hunks of concrete and all kind of things right about on the corner of Gibson and Warm Springs. It would be where CarMax is now. It used to be just a dumping site. They would just – people would just dump whatever they thought. They thought it was a desert and no one would care what they put there. Anyway, we kept on going down Warm Springs and near where Green Valley High School is now. There was like a warm springs. You could see cougar footprints.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: They came down there to get some water to drink. See, it was sort of like a springs.

Karen Schank: How long were the springs? How far did it flow?

Ellen Stoddard: There, and no it was not. It was just barely. But there is a pit and marsh that was there. It is still there. Mostly some of the things have been channeled into an arroyo with the concrete things. That they have named a street Arroyo Grande. That is what made arroyo.

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: Made an [inaudible].

Ellen Stoddard: It made them. Probably maybe even to this day. I know Water Street was a river when it rained. Arroyo Grande might almost be that, too. Because it is sort of a hill. It comes down towards where Green Valley High School sits now.

Karen Schank: Was it and was there like a meadow, or what was it?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. There was grass growing and tall we call it Tules (toolies), I guess or something.

Karen Schank: Really?

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: You could see the [inaudible].

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: [Inaudible].

Ellen Stoddard

Ellen Stoddard: Another place just off of as you just came from Boulder Highway. It should not be in where the – more than about half a mile. We saw quite a few red fox. They would run up in through there at oftentimes. You could – I do not know exactly the time of day it would be special that you could actually see them. But even now, if you go to Sunset Park and just behind Sunset Park. They still have dirt roads. You can see quail and, valleys of quail and also roadrunners run through there.

Most of – most of Clark County had several different little meadows because of the warm springs, the geothermal activity. Railroad Pass, in particular if you went in the women's bathroom and tried to wash your hands with cold water, it never would. They always came out hot. They, evidentially had their water supply from the geothermal well behind their building in those passing days.

It and when it was sort of like a stop for the trucks from different areas, and bringing in cutters, and so forth.

Karen Schank: Right.

Ellen Stoddard: This time of year, is it is like Halloween time. At school, we mostly celebrated Nevada Day. The most I would want to dress up like Helen Stewart. I would put a long dress and a bonnet on many times and enjoy thinking about it. Another way we could experience living history here. I participated in several years was to – is [inaudible] in Boulder City. Usually around the first or second week in September, they bring people from all different parts of the United States that are interested in what has happened in the past. They make it come to life [inaudible].

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: It is like a storytelling? Is that [inaudible]?

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. They are some that it is open to children and then some for adults. They just make history come to life. I am quite sure they still do it.

Karen Schank: Do they?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. Boulder City is an interesting town.

Karen Schank: It sounds like it. Let us see. You had mentioned that there was a sign that said coloreds only and colored – yeah, and whites only on drinking fountain?

Ellen Stoddard

Ellen Stoddard: But that was in Fort Worth, Texas.

Karen Schank: Yeah. That what I was – wondered where it was.

Ellen Stoddard: I think that here I did not notice it myself.

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: Maybe it is because I do not know. My father did want me to marry somebody that had blue eyes. He made that clear what and when we were growing up. Because he – there were five girls and three boys in our family. We are mostly from Swedish ancestors. He did not think that we should mix marry or anything like that. But I do not think anybody was so-called; no, I know we were not stuck up. Because there was a flood at the college that my dad was teaching botany at Iowa State College for a while during the '40s. There was a black family from Texas. Their father was a professor, too. Their whole family moved in with us. My parents were never – When their house was flooded and they could not live there, they came and stayed with us for a while. I think my parents were never – taught us prejudice, I do not think.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: I do not – I do not remember noticing it too much in Henderson proper either. Because one of my cooking classes was at the Boys Club. They did have probably at least a third of black people were at the Boys Club. I believe it is still located the same place I worked at on Drake and Henderson. They seemed to get fairly. They had strict rules as far as that goes, all of the Boys Clubs. I do not know, my children were active in Scouts, too. Although, I do not think my son's scout trip did have any black people in it. We did not have a real large group of them in Henderson at first.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: I think a lot of the population of Henderson was originally made up of the – a lot of Mexicans and so forth from New Mexico and that came over to work in the war effort.

Karen Schank: During the World War II?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. We had Cruz, a mayor in Henderson, too.

Karen Schank: What –?

Ellen Stoddard: Boy our mayors down through the years have been really interesting as I have

Ellen Stoddard

– I was even elected as a Republican caucus from my neighborhood in recent years. When we had the caucus out here at Green Valley High School.

Karen Schank: The last election?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah, the main one, yeah.

Karen Schank: Is that McCain and Obama, or was it before that?

Ellen Stoddard: No, that was when.

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: That was it?

Ellen Stoddard: That is the first time we did caucuses.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. But anyway, we – There has been some opposition that I think the city offices – to putting churches in some neighborhoods that they did. People thought that they could drive to church or something. That would be [inaudible]. But other than that, I do not think that Henderson has suffered too much. I think they have been quite careful in hiring multilingual and multicultural people for the city.

Karen Schank: Okay. You mentioned the political leader and the mayors that Henderson had. Or, is there one that you felt either guided Henderson's growth or advancement more than others? Or, did a particularly good job? Or that you were particularly fond of as a citizen?

Ellen Stoddard: Well, actually one of our governors, Mike O'Callaghan was a history teacher out here in Henderson for a while before he went up there. Now, his name is on the Veterans Wall that we have here. I was instrumental in making that wall come to reality.

Karen Schank: Tell me about the wall.

Ellen Stoddard: It was – I was Sergeant of Arms at the American War Mothers. Maria Johnson has her likeness up there by the memorial now. My husband's name is on the war wall, too. But the people that had served in Vietnam, they got their names on the wall before they died, at least. But the other ones did – the other ones, mostly they have been putting them on now. The active Veterans organizations now seem to be out Nellis in Boulder City as the mothers passed away. We have lost two this past year, our American War Mothers. Because there originally was for the mothers that had children in the service

Ellen Stoddard

during World War II. You can imagine the day it was. But when they saw how sad I was when my son was away in the Marine Corps. Then my other son was in a nuclear submarine, they said you should join our club, too.

I was what they call a Blue Star Mother because both of my boys were and did come back from the service. But if you would be a Gold Star Mother, if your son was killed in the service. At the Veterans cemetery in Boulder City, they do still honor and hold special services. We do here in Henderson, too. We have several Veterans organizations that – for the, mainly for the men folk. But they have auxiliaries for the women and the different Veterans organizations.

They have branched out because of a Green Valley. It too, warm – Warm Springs Road sunset [inaudible], they will – and there was actually Warm Springs among there in more places than one, I believe. Maybe as we lower the actual water table by overpopulation I would say, we have lost some of the beauty of our town.

Karen Schank: Those natural springs.

Ellen Stoddard: I believe so. Because there would be, if not completely capped, which is hard to do. Because they come – they come sometimes almost bubbling up in different areas of Clark County. That is what it was called, the Meadows of Clark County. I think that is what Las Vegas means, sort of like. Yeah, it was really interesting. When I worked with 4-H, we had our – a lot of our things. Sometimes the Boy Scouts too would go over by the Cashman where the Cashman Field area is now. Behind there was a park that we used.

Karen Schank: The Old Mormon Fort?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah, in that area.

Karen Schank: Tell me about it. Tell me about what you saw there when you went there.

Ellen Stoddard: Well, mostly what we enjoyed. What we enjoyed was that there was some shade, I think. Also, I think that is –

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: What provided the shade?

Ellen Stoddard: Many of the trees were – I should have paid more attention to the types of trees that we had. But I know the one area that was near where the old showboat was. They were cottonwood trees. I cannot remember because they do not have as many of those trees there in that area where the old Mormon fort was. Now –

Ellen Stoddard

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: But there were lots of them when you went there?

Ellen Stoddard: Yes. I am not sure. I know some of our Henderson trees have been chopped down and replaced because they thought that there was a Dutch Elm disease. Because Boulder Highway had a whole lot of Elm trees growing along the side of it. That sheltered the neighborhoods from the noise and of the highway going by. They decided that City Hall and planting a lot of new trees was better than trying to maintain the old ones. I guess –

Karen Schank: Tell me – tell me some more about the old fort. What did you – what did you go and see when you went to that area in Las Vegas by Cashman Field?

Ellen Stoddard: Like I said, usually I was in charge of a large group of children. I did not – I did not have too much time. Where I really enjoyed living history in Clark County is at Spring Mountain Ranch, too, itself because some of the – My maiden name was Wilson. There were some workers there at the Spring Mountain Ranch. But they – and you tour the different rooms where the old movie stars would stay on a vacation and so forth. Bonnie Springs also is a place I like to go horseback riding and take well, tourists to see their animals and things. I believe they do have a buffalo there and some of our wild animals.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: They have cut. The park on the other side of Boulder City has trees. They have to put a wrap of like chicken wire around so that mountain goats do not eat all of them. That the big horn sheep, they are, I guess. They actually are a state animal. We should appreciate them. When I was going to UNLV, I took geology. We took a lot of field trips around Clark County. There is Rainbow Canyon, we visited out by and near Sunrise Mountain. On the other side where the Lake Mead from the North Las Vegas goes around, it starts going around to the lake. We visited Frenchman's Mountain, too.

Then we went out to Blue Diamond and on the way to Blue Diamond and toured a hill there that we could see the different outcroppings and things like that. The [inaudible]. I would like to [inaudible] association of [inaudible] for a long time. We took field trips to the different mines around the area. There is a Gypsum mine and up to Mountain Pass. That is on the way to California. You do not mind that some of those people that work in mines still live in Henderson. Well, that is when you have a school that had – that has a demonstration that other students from Clark County can come out and see. It is in the downtown area of Henderson.

Ellen Stoddard

Karen Schank: What is that called?

Ellen Stoddard: Gordon McCaw.

Karen Schank: Gordon McCaw, all right. That is part of the school?

Ellen Stoddard: Yes.

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: Is that an elementary?

Ellen Stoddard: That is a school of mines.

Karen Schank: An elementary school?

Ellen Stoddard: Yes, it is an elementary school of mines.

Karen Schank: Okay.

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: My children did mainly go to that school, I believe. Because of the – my residence is in the town side area.

Karen Schank: What kind of minerals did they mine in Henderson?

Ellen Stoddard: Well, I know one thing. I do not have the minerals rights at my own house. I think that they mainly, the people that I knew that did prospecting and mining out around Henderson proper was up near where the National Guard armory was up on the hill not too far from Black Mountain. I know I talk about all of the dirt roads and things about. When I was going to UNLV, I had a son in his teen years. He turned the radio up to loud size. To study quietly, I just went up there and bottomed myself out on a sand wash. Because I thought it was a road and it was not a road. It was a wash instead. But I think in the dry times that many times creeks and so forth were used as washes. The biggest cave mine that I saw was up in that area. It has only recently been closed. They were – there are quite a few – there are quite a few people that like to go in caves. In fact, in Henderson there was a man that lived in a cave at the lake. He would just come in once a month to check his mail when the post office was downtown in Henderson.

Karen Schank: What was his name?

Ellen Stoddard: I knew of –

Ellen Stoddard
[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: Did you know his name?

Ellen Stoddard: No, I [inaudible]. I never did hear his stories. I did hear some mining stories from some of the other men that went as far as Chloride and between here and Mountain Pass, prospecting for things and so forth.

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: California –

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah.

Karen Schank: Do you want to tell us one of your – and one of those stories?

Ellen Stoddard: Well, I think that some of the – some of the people that did mining and prospecting around who were and mainly did it for a hobby. Because one of them I know was a construction worker in town who helped to build quite a few walls and foundations for homes in the Henderson area. He went out and homesteaded through the Bureau of Land Management. You could have a mine.

Karen Schank: How does that work?

Ellen Stoddard: You would work on your claim. Then you would report to the Bureau of Land Management down in Eldorado Canyon. There was gold mining at one time. But the leftovers from the mine were not really monitored too well. I helped prospecting and carrying black ore up from a mine, a 20-acre mine claiming in Eldorado Canyon.

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: Is that near Hoover Dam?

Ellen Stoddard: No. It is on the way to Searchlight.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: Before Nelson, the turn off to Nelson.

Karen Schank: [inaudible].

Ellen Stoddard: There are quite a few caves and things like that around the Nelson area, too, and mining and things that they have – Usually are posted there. They do not want anybody there. You do not – you do not normally tell [inaudible] too

Ellen Stoddard

many people where your mining [inaudible] is around the area, the way I caught it anyway. Some people I knew and then I had some friends that did some rock hound type work. They went out hiking and would give me samples of where they went out hiking. I know – I was kind of upset with my boys sometimes. They will hike from Henderson clear out to the lake. They will wear their tennis shoes out just walking their dogs. That is not bad.

Now, my youngest son went as a person with a scout troop. We would go ahead of his scout troop to find places for them to camp out at Mt. Charleston. He [inaudible], and well, I guess he was not trying to [inaudible], but he was like assistant scout master. We would go up there hiking and look for places where it would be good to camp out for them, the rest of the troop at later times. I have enjoyed a lot of outdoor activities. In fact, the bat – a bat cave I was in back over. It is more or less behind – between Railroad Pass and the present B mountain. Although they have the old B mountain over behind Burkholder or in, and near Black Mountain there. Because the high school [inaudible]. Actually, the wife of one of our high school principals originally in Henderson, Mrs. Estes comes here often to eat. I have spoken with her several times. I asked her about going to some of the warm springs around here to bathe in. She said her and her husband enjoyed just going boating and fishing on a lake. But she said when they introduce stripers to the lake, they ate up the trout. I do not know, I guess there has been a lot of – a lot of history in our area that as far as the mine, I have really enjoyed visiting in some of the mines and looking. But I have always been careful if you are going to go in to take a string with you. We can follow back out and not to go down scary ladders or things like that. But they have since tucked up most of the original mining claims in the area so that people cannot investigate them now and fenced them off. Because it is too hazardous.

Karen Schank: Yeah.

Ellen Stoddard: There are some nice people that are interested in around some mining claims. That are interested in animals still having proper water to drink. They are down towards Nelson and out in Eldorado Canyon. I know that they are maintained. Maybe the Bureau of Land Management does it. I am not sure. I am happy to make the animals have a place to go back and take a drink. I love animals. One time when I was – we were driving by – near Blue Diamond. We were going to go off over to Red Rock Canyon. I had my granddaughter with me. It started getting cold. I wanted to put on some more clothes. I think [inaudible] and paper bag, and I was sitting on the tip of the car. I started putting on pants over my regular clothes to keep me warm and with a jacket. Upright to the window of the car came those wild burros peeking about. But I was still [inaudible] because it made a noise. I guess people used to feed the wild burros that were down in that area.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard

Ellen Stoddard: But at the mine, I actually worked as a burro. I mean, I helped carry five gallon buckets of ore out of the mine down in Eldorado Canyon.

Karen Schank: What was in the ore?

Ellen Stoddard: We had it assayed up in town and it had more platinum content than it did gold. I guess a lot of the bygone days could find gold easier than they can now. But it is still around at some of the ports and so forth. You will find the veins and so forth in this area.

I probably could – I probably could find where some of the mines are still located. But since they brought the water tunnel from Lake Mead up in the back of Henderson, it is really [inaudible] for mountains up there. Access is not accessible to their river mountain range of mountains. Because of – they have to make sure no one contaminates or, whether ore does some kind of [inaudible] for that reason. I do not know. I can remember that it is three mine facings definitely in the Henderson area. But, I do not know. The man that I was speaking of that was in construction. I do not know, his name was Nat Monroe. He did have mining claims through the Bureau of Land Management.

Karen Schank: Did you attend the old senior center that they had here in – ?

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah.

Karen Schank: – Henderson?

Ellen Stoddard: Yes, like I said. When I was 35, I signed up to do RSVP type of work with the senior center that was mainly run by Edna [inaudible].

Karen Schank: Was that here in Henderson?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: It was in the civic center area where now they have the Henderson facility, downtown Henderson on the corner Atlantic and Water Street, I believe.

Karen Schank: Okay.

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard

Ellen Stoddard: [inaudible].

Karen Schank: Was it on Texas?

Ellen Stoddard: No.

Karen Schank: Was that the one on Texas?

Ellen Stoddard: The one on Texas was a community church. I went to the community church. Yeah, I saw it turn into a civic center.

Karen Schank: Did you?

Ellen Stoddard: I was already involved in working with seniors before that.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: Like I said, when I was 35, then I helped people from Rosa de Lima settle back into their homes after they got out of the hospital. That was directed from the senior center. It was located in the civic center of Henderson, which was on the corner of [inaudible]. I did go and visit there. I was fairly active in the senior center in Henderson proper. But since I was still working, I could only go maybe on the weekends or after school. The American War Mothers and, retired county or federal employees or something. I would type up a meeting there too, sometimes. Yeah. I typed that I would use it there and visit there sometimes in earlier.

Karen Schank: In the common, the community church one, is that where you?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. But I went to the community church for pie socials in the big hall that they used to feed the seniors later. I would like to show you, too, the plaque that was in front of the senior center at the other place. They, the people that helped to build that building, one of them is, his name is on the plaque. They transferred out in front of this building.

Karen Schank: I would love to see that.

Ellen Stoddard: His name is Gilbert Osborne. He was a geologist. He did work at titanium for a while. But he also did field work in Utah and around the area.

Karen Schank: Is he still around?

Ellen Stoddard: No, both he and his wife both died within ten days of each other in their 90s.

Karen Schank: You said he helped build the center?

Ellen Stoddard

Ellen Stoddard: No, the church itself –

Karen Schank: The church itself –

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah.

Karen Schank: Do you know? Can you tell me about that construction?

Ellen Stoddard: No, I was not. I think I was not in the area at that time.

Karen Schank: Was that –?

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: But I knew.

Karen Schank: Was that building use for something else before it became a church? Or, are you aware of that at all?

Ellen Stoddard: No, I do not think so.

Karen Schank: Okay.

Ellen Stoddard: I think it was built for that purpose. That is why it was sort of named the community church because they did not really have a lot of variety of churches in the area for people. It is in the town side area. It could have been originally and used some funding for it from federal funds. It could have been used because of the influx of people that had to come to run those war plants along there on the other side of Boulder highway.

Well, and what they call the PEPCON blast.

Karen Schank: That area?

Ellen Stoddard: A lot of new people did not really appreciate. Henderson was the industrial capital of the Southwest during those years. But some of them, boy, it is. I even said I do not think I will go to the library down there. They put our new library right down where if the titanium decided to make another blast. A blast or something because a lot of the facilities are so old. I do not think it is a good situation to be on that side of the Lake Mead, actually. But they put it there, I guess to take advantage of the area. It was usually called a titanium field. It was used for when there were carnivals in towns, and things like that before that area. It did not really have any buildings where that – where the library is built at, and open fields for playing ball and things like that for the children.

Ellen Stoddard

Karen Schank: Yeah. That was kind of a community event area?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. I would say so, yeah. They would and the old cars would part down there. Now, the old cars have to park right on the street when they have that old car convention.

Karen Schank: Was that a car show?

Ellen Stoddard: Well, yeah. Well, yes, that is what it – and they just had a few two weeks ago or so. Yeah, they parked. It was the third week in September, I believe it was that they had it there.

Karen Schank: All right. Is there anything else that you would like to tell me about Henderson about the past, or now, or of a comparison of the two?

Ellen Stoddard: Well, for me, I know a couple that lived right on the edge and near where the railroad track run quite often. They appreciated the wild area that their grandchildren and so forth could play and hunt lizards and so forth. Now, it is overrun with houses and so forth. I have felt a little bit sorry for a lot of the wild animals that live right here in town. I know the cougars and coyotes still come down and have a snack of people's pet cats or small dogs that they leave them outside. The hawks were circling around and probably getting the little chipmunks in this area of town. Just recently, you can see hawks pretty close. Well, the Foothill High School is called the Falcons. I believe it is probably because there are falcons. There are a lot of birds that come down to have a snack on little creatures we have.

Karen Schank: Definitely.

Ellen Stoddard: Another thing that I did quite often from here is go up about the 8th of November to the – near Mount Potosi and collect pinenuts. I like the idea of being able to live off of the desert. You can do it here. I like to eat some of the desert flowers and the desert plants. It can be done.

Karen Schank: But what are some of the food, flowers or plants that you eat, that are edible?

Ellen Stoddard: The flowers on the Joshua tree when they come down, the bells. They are edible.

Ellen Stoddard: They are – well, the century plant, they do not grow as much around here as – but they grow in some areas of Clark County. Mostly the Joshua trees are growing on the way up to Mt. Charleston. They have different elevations or different plants you will see.

Ellen Stoddard: If you want to. If you are hiking and you are stranded. Or your car breaks down somewhere a long way from nowhere, you should look for cat's-claw.

Ellen Stoddard

You will find it. Those bushes which are a tiny, tiny leaf plant with this spines on them or stickers like rose bushes, and so forth. That plant will seek water down low. You can find out. You could probably dig and find some water close to where you will see one of those, and what they call cat's-claw. It is pretty easy to see in this area.

Karen Schank: How did you collect the pine nuts from the pine trees?

Ellen Stoddard: Different ways and different years; and we talked to some of the old Mormon settlers that were here. They said the easiest way is to put a blanket on the ground and just shake it until they come down.

Karen Schank: Shake the tree?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. Because then sometimes the little pinion nuts will come out of the pinecones and fall down especially on the south side of the tree.

Karen Schank: Why on that side?

Ellen Stoddard: Because the sun will hit them. Yeah. Then Mount Potosi, spring mountain range, the altitude is higher. It is colder on the north side of the trees and so forth. The pinecones do not mature as fast. It is around November 8th. We have taken several assortments of different types of field trips to do that this time of year. You need clothes you might not want to use again. Because the pine sap can get on you when you come close to the trees. You are just trying to beat the squirrels or chipmunks to their source of food, too. But the people that have been here for a while realize you can also eat what grows around here naturally too. It is, I think this area – grows on people, too. I have taken my children and maybe some grandchildren and 4-H Club people to take pictures at Spring Mountain Ranch area, too. Because there is a creek that runs down in through there. It is very interesting. The hiking it, the Valley of Fire, we have an overabundance of things to do in this area that are not. People do not notice them all of the time. Just behind Pepco [Pepcon?] Road down where Sam Boyd Stadium was. There was a lot of goldfish in the creeks back there. Wild roosters and chickens would be down there, too.

Karen Schank: Really?

Ellen Stoddard: When I was working with the 4-H Club on Russell Road, we visited a goat farm there. I think a lot of them are getting chased farther out of town. The area of town near here called Section 27 was pretty much empty when I was first living here. They sold it off in five acre lots at one time. Then people had sheep, and horses, and things there. Now, that is where John Dooley Elementary School is located and also Summerlin is over in that area.

Karen Schank: Is that a school, too?

Ellen Stoddard

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: A school, yeah.

Karen Schank: Yeah.

Ellen Stoddard: Of course, Brown Junior High School was not even here, which is close to this facility. It was not here when I first came either just the downtown type facilities for schooling.

Karen Schank: You have seen the big growth in this area since you have been here.

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. I really thought that was interesting about how the principal went – had to go to six different schools because they had so little population in some of the rural areas.

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: All right, [inaudible].

Ellen Stoddard: I think maybe it has changed a little bit now. But one school or some schools in Boulder City, I think the principal works at two schools, one at each side of the road or something. They were – they work it out to try and stretch [inaudible]. Now, they probably have to pay for this –

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: – Clean up.

Ellen Stoddard: Let me see. I do not – I do not remember. But it and I think. I have known several families that have gone back to like to their roots where maybe they were from Tennessee or New York, or somewhere. They will go and they will stay a little while, but come right back to Henderson because of the beauty of the sunsets and the friendliness, and the ability of the people to get along with the [inaudible]. Then the close proximity to things to do besides gambling. There are some [inaudible]. Then there are jobs up on the strip. I do have a daughter now that works at Caesars Palace. But she was affected by the PEPCON blast, because she was studying paralegal and working in the Justice Building when the roof fall down, right, at the old downtown hall.

Karen Schank: But what happened, but when the blast?

Ellen Stoddard: Yeah. That the little bit, yeah.

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard

Karen Schank: Yeah.

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: Right on the corner of Basic and Water Street was the old City Hall about where the jail is now, I guess. The rest of the building fell in on her when she was doing some work with the Justice there.

Karen Schank: Was she injured?

Ellen Stoddard: No, I do not think that much. But she – but I think the lure of the money makes you go to the strip to work many times. She did not follow through with her legal training. Her third grade teacher will probably be here to eat lunch though, if you would like to speak to him. He has been in the area a real long time. I do not know if you have time before your next interview. But it is possibly he would speak to you, Mr. Hoff.

Karen Schank: Le Grand, is that [inaudible]? I think we have talked with him before.

Ellen Stoddard: Okay, he is really interesting.

Karen Schank: Is he?

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: It will –

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: Maybe he will.

Ellen Stoddard: We knew, [inaudible] –

[Crosstalk]

Karen Schank: [inaudible].

[Crosstalk]

Ellen Stoddard: I [inaudible] him since we had been in the area a real long time. That is for sure.

Karen Schank: Good.

Ellen Stoddard: I do not know if I forgot any of the animals, or lizards, or trees.

Ellen Stoddard

Karen Schank: Well, thank you so much. It has been a pleasure talking to you and seeing Henderson through your eyes. Thank you.

Ellen Stoddard: You are more than welcome. I hope I did not try to hide from you where the different mines were or are. But that is the way the miners actually work in those times. There are really sweet potatoes, too.

Karen Schank: Really, yeah, well, thank you.

[End of audio]