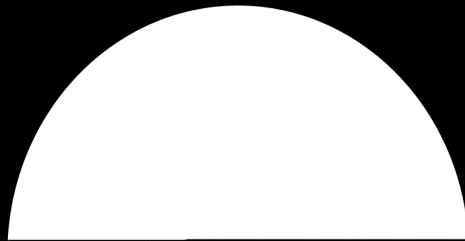
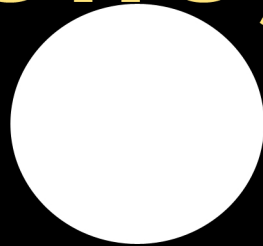


**Nevada State
College**



**Undergraduate Oral
History Project**

Oral History of Daniel David Walker Jr.

An Interview

Conducted by

Elan Andruss

December 7, 2010

Nevada State College Undergraduate Oral History Project

Produced by:

Nevada State College Undergraduate Oral History Project
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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*.

Daniel Walker

Oral History of Daniel David Walker Jr.

An Interview Conducted by Elan Andruss on December 7, 2010

Biography

Daniel David Walker Jr. was born in 1923, in Decatur, Alabama. He moved with his family to Henderson in the summer of 1951, and worked at Stauffer Chemical before transferring to Titanium Metals Corporation.

Despite not having an engineering degree, Walker was a research chemist for his company and set up laboratories to create quality control programs from the quarry stage up to the final products.

His wife, Renee, bought a store and called it “Renee’s Tally-Ho.” They were able to build up several businesses in Boulder City, North Las Vegas, and Las Vegas, and managed them for 15 years.

In this interview, Walker shares his story about his and Renee’s life in Henderson.

Daniel Walker

Narrator: Daniel Walker and Renee Walker

Interviewer: Elan Andruss

Interview Date: December 7, 2010

Location: Henderson, NV

Elan Andruss: But if I could just - I've got some questions and if you could maybe just help explain some...

Daniel Walker: You're going to have to yell at me.

Elan Andruss: So just could you state your name, your full name?

Daniel Walker: My name...?

Elan Andruss: Uh-huh

Daniel Walker: Daniel David Walker Jr.

Elan Andruss: And...

Daniel Walker: My dad was senior.

Renee Walker: He's been here since the fourth grade in school.

Elan Andruss: Right, you had mentioned that you moved here in the early 50s I think.

Renee Walker: Oh 40s.

Elan Andruss: 40s - what year do you...

Renee Walker: He met me in the 50s.

Elan Andruss: What year did you move to Henderson?

Renee Walker: We moved to Henderson in '51.

Daniel Walker: Well, when we got married, 1952, '51..

Renee Walker: '51

Daniel Walker: ...it wasn't long till we moved in, was it?

Renee Walker: Uh-uh, we moved to Henderson in the summer of '51.

Daniel Walker: I worked at [inaudible]. I worked at Stauffer Chemical and they offered employees the opportunity to buy some - one of the old outside houses, which we did on Silver Street in 1951.

Daniel Walker

Elan Andruss: Okay, and how long after did you continue working with - what was the name of the company?

Renee Walker: How long did you work at Stauffer?

Daniel Walker: Stauffer - I was working there when - oh yeah, okay - when we got married. Gee whiz! I don't remember the time; about a year. No, more than that, but after we got married only about a year.

Elan Andruss: And what did you do after you left Stauffer?

Daniel Walker: Well, Stauffer black balled me because I applied for a job at Titanium who was just starting up.

Elan Andruss: Right

Daniel Walker: And so I had a couple of small jobs after that....

Renee Walker: At a magnesium company...

Daniel Walker: One was the builder, the big builder out there.

Elan Andruss: Basic Magnesium...

Daniel Walker: No. It was a contracting company that was building or doing work for all the companies in the complex. And then I got a better job at the manganese company. I don't remember the name of it.

Elan Andruss: That's okay.

Daniel Walker: But I was hired as an engineer in their mining operation. Well, that lasted hardly maybe more than a month, was it?

Renee Walker: Oh no, it was quite awhile. It was about four or five months.

Daniel Walker: Anyway, I got an offer to go to work for a new company that just started up out there called US Lime...

Elan Andruss: Right

Daniel Walker: US Lime was a Los Angeles company and they bought four kilns off the old BMI plant and converted them all to making lime. And they shipped limestone in from Sloan by truck and some by rail and then we occasionally would do some high calcium lime from Apex out there on the highway. And I've been with them 40-some years. They change hands four times, US Lime, Kletco [ph], then it was - I forget the name of the third one.

Elan Andruss: That's okay.

Daniel Walker

- Daniel Walker: Okay, and the last one Chemical Lime Company out of Texas.
- Elan Andruss: Alright, well once you were working as an engineer then during that time.
- Daniel Walker: Well, I didn't have an engineer's degree but I was doing engineering work.
- Elan Andruss: What sort of work did that involve? Or, if you...
- Daniel Walker: Well, it was a lime company.
- Renee Walker: He was a research chemist.
- Daniel Walker: Well, they were just starting up and they didn't have any laboratory at all hardly. So I organized and setup a laboratory for them. Then I proceeded to work out a quality control program from the quarry to the final product involving several tests at different stages.
- Elan Andruss: Right. Could you...
- Daniel Walker: And then I developed another - a process to make the system work better and it involved a pipeline running from the rear end of a kiln to the front of in which they popped - we popped kiln fluid gasses which were very rich in carbon dioxide through the front and created a mixture of the gasses and the lime. And thus retarded the reaction time of the lime so that in the process we were using was a hull. We mixed this flurry of lime and water, quick lime...
- Elan Andruss: Right
- Daniel Walker: Do you know what quick lime is?
- Elan Andruss: I'm not certain.
- Daniel Walker: Quick lime is calcium oxide.
- Elan Andruss: Okay
- Daniel Walker: It's - they used the kills to burn calcium [inaudible], the limestone, which was calcium carbonate from the quarries. They converted - we drove off the CO₂ and converted it to calcium oxide which when mixed with water it depended on the reaction rate of the lime. They could go all the way from explosive to several minutes.
- Elan Andruss: Wow!
- Daniel Walker: Yeah and we would mix the lime and CAO with water in the right proportions and pump it into a pressure vessel and they did that because our lime was about half percent magnesium oxide and it was a very poor reactor. It wouldn't react completely with the water under normal conditions. But you

Daniel Walker

put it in the pressure; the pressure wouldn't react at all. The problem was getting it, after we mixed the water with it, through the pump into the pressure vessels because it would explode in the pump. It would do that and shut the whole thing down and take them hours to clean it up.

Elan Andruss: Wow

Daniel Walker: So first of all, I developed an additive and I had to engineer the system to introduce the additive to the lime. And it would slow the reaction time down so it could go through...

Elan Andruss: The pump, right...

Daniel Walker: But it was cumbersome to handle and it was expensive. So the guy that they bought the company from Philadelphia suggested that we take fluid gasses and treat the quick lime.

Elan Andruss: Right

Daniel Walker: Well I did that in the laboratory and found that the more you expose the quick lime to the fluid gas the deader it became.

Elan Andruss: Right

Daniel Walker: But it didn't seem to bother the chemistry. Anyway, I designed a system to bring the fluid gasses to the front of the kiln, and pumped it, mixed it together, and we got the reaction rates from 45 seconds to a minute and a half which was plenty of time to get it through the pump. So they installed a system and they're still using it I guess. And the guy from - the guy that bought the company patent the process. So we paid - they paid him so much a ton after that to use it. So that's what - that's the engineering - we had other engineering experience too because to actually make the product you had to get it to the - in a bag and I designed a dust collecting system to clean up everything so that stuff - the hydrated lime didn't go in the bag we collected it and sent it back to the plant.

Elan Andruss: Right, wow. So during that time where were you? Were you still living in the - or where were you living?

Daniel Walker: We lived in a company house which we bought for a year probably.

Renee Walker: A year, year and a half...

Daniel Walker: Then I used my GI Bill and bought a house in Las Vegas.

Renee Walker: No, no...

Daniel Walker: North Las Vegas, and then...

Daniel Walker

Renee Walker: We bought the house on Basic Road....

Daniel Walker: Somebody - who was the contractor that built all the houses out there?

Renee Walker: I don't know but the house in...

Daniel Walker: Some big housing company came in and built several hundred homes, brand new homes, plastered, stucco, paved the streets, and sold homes to the people that wanted them. We bought one of those. The other two houses we rented. So we moved back to Henderson maybe two or three years after we moved out. So that was in...

Renee Walker: Honey, we moved back there [inaudible] a little backwards.

Daniel Walker: Do what?

Renee Walker: We bought that house on Basic Road in Henderson...

Daniel Walker: Right

Renee Walker: ...and we lived - we stayed there for a while and then we moved to Spear Street in North Las Vegas when Debbie was born.

Daniel Walker: Okay

Renee Walker: And then we did stay there more than a year.

Daniel Walker: Okay. Then we had three houses there to live in.

Interviewer: Right. During that time what was - or how do you think - or do I guess - what was it like to live in Henderson at that time? And it seems, I'm sure that it is very different, but...

Renee Walker: We knew everybody.

Daniel Walker: What'd they call us?

Renee Walker: They had one...

Daniel Walker: Hooverville...

Renee Walker: Hooverville...

Daniel Walker: We lived in Hooverville. [Laughing]

Renee Walker: People in Las Vegas called Henderson, Hooverville and it was - we were considered second class citizens if we lived in Henderson.

Elan Andruss: Oh wow. Is that mainly because it was company towns...

Daniel Walker

[Crosstalk]

Renee Walker: Company towns...

Elan Andruss: ...company employees.

Renee Walker: Yeah.

Daniel Walker: Well, we knew about everybody in Henderson and...

Renee Walker: And the only church we had at that time was we used the auditorium of the schoolhouse. There was no church.

Daniel Walker: Yeah, then we built a chapel on Ocean Street. And I don't know we would...

Renee Walker: Then the Catholic Church built one there.

Daniel Walker: Huh?

Renee Walker: Then the Catholic Church came in and built over on the other side of the highway.

Daniel Walker: Well, I would say we were very happy. We had all we needed. They had a - we had a church dance every Friday night and we'd go to that and we had all kinds of functions. We'd play softball. We had a softball team. They had dances. They had church dinners. And [inaudible]

Renee Walker: Yeah, but that doesn't matter. That's not history. That's church stuff.

Elan Andruss: Well, that's interesting too especially because it seems like there wasn't anything...

Daniel Walker: You're not yelling...

Elan Andruss: It seems like there wasn't anything established at that time.

Renee Walker: I brought the store there in 1962 and called it Renee's Tally-ho and we lived - we had the stores for about 15 years and built up to six of them. And we had...

Elan Andruss: Stores...

Renee Walker: Women's dress shops.

Elan Andruss: Okay

Renee Walker: And we had two, the curio store and the thrift shop in Boulder City and one in North Las Vegas and one on Maryland Parkway and one on West

Daniel Walker

Charleston and one on East Charleston. We sold those in '75 but Henderson had grown...

Elan Andruss: Quite a bit by then...

Renee Walker: Yeah, really grown by then. It has always been a bedroom community of Las Vegas.

Elan Andruss: Right, but you were mentioning your involvement in the church community, and I think that's interesting because at the time there wasn't an established church community. It was...

Daniel Walker: Oh yeah there was.

Elan Andruss: Oh it was.

Daniel Walker: We had a mayor and city council and they had a police force, fire force, they had - the fire department was not voluntary. It was all paid. I'm not sure...

Renee Walker: Because of the company.

Daniel Walker: The companies, the six companies down there - were there six companies, Titanium, Stauffer, West [inaudible] - four companies paid for a fire department that would take care of the city and factories.

Elan Andruss: Oh okay.

Daniel Walker: So we were a pretty well established community.

Renee Walker: And [inaudible] Callahan was a teacher in Henderson when our kids were...

Daniel Walker: Yeah, we had a good school system all the way up to high school. Our kids all graduated from the high school there.

Elan Andruss: And which high school was that?

Renee Walker: Basic...

Daniel Walker: Basic High School...

Elan Andruss: My father is teaching at Basic High School right now.

Daniel Walker: Your father - I don't think I know him.

Elan Andruss: John Andruss...

Renee Walker: You met him at the service.

Daniel Walker: I may have met him, yeah.

Daniel Walker

Renee Walker: Yeah

Daniel Walker: He was teaching at Basic High...

Elan Andruss: He teaches at Basic currently.

Daniel Walker: Good for him.

Renee Walker: Yeah, our grandkids go there, yeah.

Daniel Walker: All our kids, and [inaudible] graduated from there.

Renee Walker: I went back to school because [inaudible] and I graduated from Basic High in '61 or '62.

Daniel Walker: Our school was very involved in the sports, football, basketball, and one year we were state championship for the basketball.

Elan Andruss: Wow! So all of this, all of these things sort of worked and were built out...

Daniel Walker: Listen; there is a book - do you got it?

Elan Andruss: I'm not sure. I don't think so.

Daniel Walker: About the history of Henderson.

Elan Andruss: Uh-huh

Daniel Walker: I had one but I don't know. I think Corey took it.

Renee Walker: Marlan Walker would probably have one because he was a school teacher there for years and very active in the church and he...

Daniel Walker: He wasn't related.

Elan Andruss: Okay, because there's off of college on the freeway near where I live there's a school, Marlan Walker [Marlan J. Walker Elementary School]...

Daniel Walker: Yeah

Elan Andruss: It's an elementary school now.

Renee Walker: Yeah.

Daniel Walker: Well, he still lives in Henderson.

Renee Walker: Okay

Daniel Walker

Elan Andruss: Well, gee, thanks so much. I really appreciate the opportunity to get to talk to you guys.

Daniel Walker: If you get that book it'll really show you pictures and it'll tell you all about how it started and...

Renee Walker: And at one time the church, when we first went there they met in that gymnasium, then we built a chapel on Ocean Street, then they built the chapel over on Julia [ph] Street, and finally we had at one time four Walker Bishops and none of them were related. [Laughter]

Elan Andruss: Well, it seems like a bit of a small town but...

Renee Walker: It was at that time. It was very - we were very close and everybody helped each other.

Elan Andruss: And this was - so then would you say that the company life and the company employees were sort of tied to the church.

Renee Walker: Yeah, they all interacted.

Elan Andruss: Okay.

Daniel Walker: You can probably get that book at the library.

Elan Andruss: Probably.

Renee Walker: The church on Pacific Street, was that the Episcopalian church?

Daniel Walker: What?

Renee Walker: The church on Pacific, was that the Episcopalian church?

Daniel Walker: I don't know.

Renee Walker: I think it was. But we all kind of worked together. It wasn't as though we were...

Elan Andruss: Against each other...

Renee Walker: Yeah, we supported one another.

Elan Andruss: That's really great. Henderson, as I am sure that there is no need to tell you, has changed a lot. And so it's really - it's...

Renee Walker: Every seven years a city changes.

Elan Andruss: Right.

Daniel Walker

Renee Walker: And where the activities used to be centered around where the old Basic High School was then I think it's a middle school now.

Daniel Walker: Do you work?

Elan Andruss: I do.

Daniel Walker: What do you do?

Elan Andruss: I work at a - I work for my school. I write...

Daniel Walker: Who?

Elan Andruss: I work for my school, Nevada State College. I write for their website.

Daniel Walker: Do they let you work without your haircut?

Elan Andruss: Yeah, they do and I just got my - I was just hired by CCSD to be a substitute teacher.

Daniel Walker: CCSD....

Elan Andruss: Clark County School District...

Daniel Walker: Clark County what...

Elan Andruss: Clark County School District.

Daniel Walker: Oh

Elan Andruss: So now I'll be able to substitute teach in classrooms too.

Renee Walker: Our granddaughter is - she graduated in Fine Arts or something like that and she's taking courses so she can go teach because her Art degree isn't [inaudible].

Elan Andruss: It's a good path because...

Daniel Walker: You're an artist, huh?

Elan Andruss: No, no, no. Both of my parents teach high school art but it skipped a generation because I can't draw at all or paint really. But I like to write and I think that that's good.

Renee Walker: Well, that's good, yeah. That's a good occupation. Are you going to write a novel?

Elan Andruss: We'll see. That's quite an undertaking and I'm not quite sure if I'm up to it yet but maybe once I have more free time.

Daniel Walker

Renee Walker: Yeah. Are you pretty busy?

Elan Andruss: Yes, I take full course load at Nevada State College and work and then now will be substitute teaching too.

Renee Walker: Are you living at home?

Elan Andruss: Uh-huh

Renee Walker: And do you have any siblings?

Elan Andruss: Yes, I have - well, my older, my older half brother Jason.

Renee Walker: Yeah, we know Jason.

Elan Andruss: Uh-huh and I have a younger sister.

Daniel Walker: Well, who is the boy that...

Renee Walker: That's Jason.

Daniel Walker: Jason, what's he doing nowadays?

Elan Andruss: I think that he is - I think he's working for a group that provides support to people who are blind. So provides them with things to help them get throughout the day. I think it's a charity organization but I'm not exactly sure.

Renee Walker: He lived mostly with Margaret didn't he?

Elan Andruss: Growing up, I believe so, yeah.

Renee Walker: Yeah, I thought he did.

Daniel Walker: She adopted him. She adopted Jason.

Renee Walker: Did she?

Daniel Walker: Yeah.

Renee Walker: I didn't know that.

Elan Andruss: I didn't know either. A lot of my mom's life is kind of her own business I guess but...

Renee Walker: Well, when Margaret lived in North Las Vegas and we had little kids and she had little kids we used to go out and visit and we were quite close. And then when we moved to Henderson I don't know, we just sort of grew apart, you

Daniel Walker

know, and we didn't stay close. And it always kind of broke my heart because...

Daniel Walker: Well, there were four sisters weren't there?

Elan Andruss: Uh-huh.

Daniel Walker: Yeah

Renee Walker: Yeah, there was Linda Hope, and Robin, and Donna and Carol Jo. Yeah, we went to Carol Jo's wedding at the church here on the corner of Eastern.

Daniel Walker: Yeah.

Renee Walker: Jimmy was still alive then - Dan Strucker, Margaret's brother.

Elan Andruss: I was - for one of my projects I was doing for one of my courses it was we had to give a presentation on our genealogy and so I mentioned it to my mom and dad and they came down with folders of names and lists of people.

Daniel Walker: You did? You still got them.

Elan Andruss: Well, it wasn't a lot because the one that mom had, my mom Donna had, was a descendent list that Carol Jo had made. So it had her and Margaret...

Renee Walker: [inaudible]

[Crosstalk]

Daniel Walker: Do you have anything on Bob Potter?

Elan Andruss: Bob Potter - I don't - I didn't get anything on that line, no.

Daniel Walker: He would be your grandpa.

Elan Andruss: Yeah. That would be Donna's father.

Renee Walker: Uh-huh.

Elan Andruss: Okay. Up until very recently...

Daniel Walker: You didn't know him then...

Elan Andruss: No, never.

Daniel Walker: Of course, he died quite a while ago.

Elan Andruss: Yeah, before I was born I believe.

Daniel Walker

Renee Walker: Oh absolutely, way before you were born.

Elan Andruss: Do you remember what year or when about?

Renee Walker: No, I remember when Margaret him, she wore a red dress.

Elan Andruss: She looked so pretty.

Renee Walker: Yeah, she was married to that - what's his name, started with an F.

Daniel Walker: Huh?

Renee Walker: What was Margaret's first husband's name?

Daniel Walker: Bob somebody...

Renee Walker: No, it wasn't Bob. He used to cook potatoes in little tiny square with lots of pepper. You remember the dumbest things when you're old.

Elan Andruss: That's okay.

Renee Walker: Dan and I are 87 now. I'm 87 and a half and he's just 87. Now and then our minds go completely. But Linda is by Margaret's first husband and then the three girls are Bob's.

Elan Andruss: Right.

Renee Walker: Yeah, we were quite close to them when we were first married but I don't know.

Elan Andruss: Well, you just drifted apart I suppose.

Renee Walker: Yeah, yep.

Elan Andruss: Life gets in the way.

Renee Walker: It's kind of sad you know because families should be together. When I saw Margaret's, all of Margaret's grandkids at her service I thought how sad it is that my kids don't know her kids.

Elan Andruss: Right, yeah. I was trying to think of who to do an interview with, who to talk to. And I mentioned to my mom I'm looking to try and find somebody who would be familiar with early Henderson history and do you know anybody that may be? She was like, well, your great uncle David Walker has been here for - and I only very sort of vaguely remembered who because we just have never you know.

Renee Walker: Uh-huh, never interacted, yeah. Well, Dan came to Las Vegas when he was in the fourth grade to the school. So he's been here a long time.

Daniel Walker

Elan Andruss: Right.

Renee Walker: And when I came to Las Vegas in 1950 you could walk on the streets at night at 2:00 in the morning and be perfectly safe. It has changed so much. You notice I locked the door when you...

Elan Andruss: Right. We...

Daniel Walker: Lawrence was his name.

Renee Walker: Yeah

Daniel Walker: But I don't remember his last name.

Renee Walker: Forvis [ph]

Daniel Walker: Yeah, Lawrence Forvis.

[Laughter]

Daniel Walker: We got along good with him because he had a great big brand new Buick.

Elan Andruss: Oh wow.

Daniel Walker: Yeah, wow is right. He'd loan it to me once in a while.

Renee Walker: You made points, huh?

Daniel Walker: Yeah. And I used to go up the hill there. It went pretty fast.

Elan Andruss: Well, if you get a car like that it's kind of meant to be...

Renee Walker: I had a Mercedes when my son was in high school. And after many years he told me that he ran it going a 145 miles an hour going to Boulder City. See, he doesn't tell you those things...

Daniel Walker: We won't forget the explosion, the day the explosion...

Elan Andruss: Oh, the PEPCON, right. That was in the late 80s I think, mid 80s.

Daniel Walker: I don't remember.

Elan Andruss: That was before I was born.

Daniel Walker: Yeah, that's about right.

Elan Andruss: Yeah, that was the rocket fuel plant, right.

Daniel Walker

Daniel Walker: Yeah. I knew all those guys down there, most all of them.

Elan Andruss: They had sort of carried over from working in the other factories...

[Crosstalk]

Elan Andruss: They were people that had been working in the other factories.

Daniel Walker: They what?

Renee Walker: They carried over from working in BMI.

Elan Andruss: Or, just in some of the other factories because it seems like after...

Daniel Walker: Well, the father, Fred Gibson is a guy and he worked for Western Electrochemical something and they made fluorite and perchlorate and he came up with a patent for the electrodes they used in the big, the electrochemical. They converted the potassium chlorate to potassium perchlorate and they had a system of separating. And they had a system of storage which they should not have had. That's what blew up.

Elan Andruss: Oh wow, so they were just doing things that they shouldn't have been.

Daniel Walker: Yeah, they sold - they shipped it to the government, all the perchlorates for their rocket program.

Elan Andruss: Right.

Renee Walker: But see BMI got started in World War II.

Elan Andruss: Right, for shell casings, things like that.

Renee Walker: And by the time they got the thing really built the war was over.

Elan Andruss: Right.

Renee Walker: So then they...

Daniel Walker: It was built right to make magnesium metal.

Elan Andruss: For the war effort, right.

Daniel Walker: Yeah, when [inaudible] bombs. When I went to work for US Lime the parking area south of their plant was full of stacks of bars of magnesium.

Elan Andruss: Wow

Daniel Walker

Daniel Walker: Yeah, they eventually got rid of them. But that's the way - that's where they made it. They had a British outfit, British process. And they electrolyzed salt, sodium chloride.

Elan Andruss: Right

Renee Walker: Did we give you anything you wanted?

Elan Andruss: Yeah, plenty. Thank you so much. I appreciate it. I really appreciate you taking out your time and I hope that it hasn't been too much of an intrusion or anything.

Renee Walker: Oh heavens no. You're family.

Daniel Walker: What?

Elan Andruss: I hope I haven't been of any intrusion and I really...

Daniel Walker: No, no, no...

Elan Andruss: ...appreciate you giving your time.

Daniel Walker: There's only one thing left and that's - if you sell this article we get a percentage.

Elan Andruss: I'll remember don't worry.

Renee Walker: Dan hasn't worked in 15 years.

Elan Andruss: It's okay. I'm sure the county library will pay a lot for it.

Daniel Walker: Oh yeah, I'm sure they will.

[End of audio]