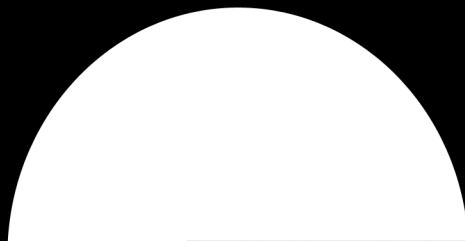
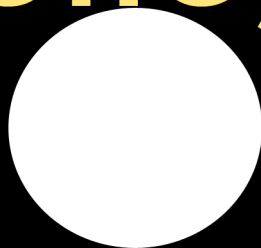


**Nevada State  
College**



**Undergraduate Oral  
History Project**

# Oral History of Derrill Price

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An Interview

Conducted by

Karen Schank

October 21, 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 and DyAnne Wagner

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Derrill Price

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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*.

## Derrill Price

An Interview Conducted by Karen Schank on October 21, 2010

### **Biography**

Derrill Price was born September 19, 1937 in St. George, Utah and began his life in southern Nevada on August 1, 1953 when his parents relocated to Henderson, Nevada. Mr. Price recounts daily life as a teen residing in Henderson during the 1950s, from \$1.00 movies at the theater, automobile racing at the Henderson Drag Strip, to the friendships he established while transitioning from his rural childhood into a “Hendersonite”.

During and after his high school years, Mr. Price worked at the Lehman and Lytle Service Station, then after serving a mission for the LDS Church, worked at Camp Mercury at the Nevada Test Site. He then began work for US Lime (Flintkote Company) and then returned to his roots in 1962 to attend barber school. Mr. Price worked for various barber shops around southern Nevada and eventual came to own his own, Gary & Derrill’s Plaza Barbershop.

Mr. Price concludes by recounting his experience on May 4, 1988 during the aftermath of the PEPCON explosion and the development of Henderson during his decade’s long residency, reflecting on his relationships with Henderson’s first families.

Derrill Price

Narrator: Derrill Price  
Interviewer: Karen Schank  
Interview Date: October 21, 2010  
Location: Nevada State College – Conference room

Karen Schank: This is Karen Schank I'm here with --

Derrill Price: Derrill Price, P-R-I-C-E and --

Karen Schank: It's October 21, 2010 at 5:00. We're in the conference room at Nevada State College. And where were you born and when were you born?

Derrill Price: I was born in St. George, Utah at McGregor Hospital in 1937, September 19.

Karen Schank: All right and where did you grow up?

Derrill Price: Panaca, Nevada.

Karen Schank: Tell me about growing up there?

Derrill Price: Panaca is the second oldest settlement in Nevada and it was settled by the Mormons and they thought they were in Utah and they paid taxes to the state of Utah until it was determined that they were actually in Nevada and the state of Nevada sued the state of Utah to get the tax money back. But it was called Meadow Valley and there are natural warm springs with water, the whole valley all the way down to Callahan [Caliente] which is 13 miles, where there's another hot spring and it seems like there's a kind of whole section, whole chain of hot springs across Nevada. But Panaca has a bit one and that find drinking water and irrigation water and Mormon's settled that in 1864. And one of the older towns would be Genoa and that was settled by the Mormon's also.

Karen Schank: And what kind of activities did you do as a child?

Derrill Price: Well my father loved horses and cattle and we always had horses and a few cows around and I rode horses for fun, where we couldn't go on a horse we went on foot and I've been all over that Panaca valley it seems like on foot or on horseback. Just going to school, regular activities, Panaca Grammar School and Lincoln County High School. And they had Panaca, Callahan [Caliente] and Pioche that would all come to Panaca to go to school there. And it was called Lincoln County High School.

Karen Schank: And when did you move to Henderson?

Derrill Price

- Derrill Price: August 1, 1953; I thought it was the end of the world. It was hot and miserable and I missed all my friends back in Panaca and Pioche and Callahan [Caliente] and I run a few people down here and who had also had to move because the reason we came is the mines had closed. And my father went to barber school and become a barber and his brother owned a barbershop on the air base [Nellis] and he'd come down here and work for him for a price until he could pass the exam, the barber exam for the state of Nevada. When you're on a military base you don't even need a barber license and so he was able to work out there currently and he worked for a little while in Boulder City and got a chance to come down here and work at the Basic Barber Shop and was running next to the drug store at that time. The drug store there and a little bar on the other side of -- a little niche back in there.
- Karen Schank: What street was that?
- Derrill Price: I'm not sure if it was Panama or I'd have to go back and look.
- Karen Schank: It's okay.
- Derrill Price: Where the Rainbow Club is now if you just went almost straight past it there's the drug store -- what used to be the drug store on the corner and then just north of that door is where dad's barbershop was. And he -- he quite enjoyed barbering and it was inside in the winter and cool in the summer and he thought he had died and gone to heaven.
- Karen Schank: Did he go to barber school here in Henderson?
- Derrill Price: No he went to Salt Lake City Barber College.
- Karen Schank: Okay. Where did you live when you moved here to Henderson?
- Derrill Price: The first place we moved into Townsite house on Oklahoma Drive and it was two bedroom, one bath and I have two brothers and two sisters. And the sisters had one bedroom and then my little brother slept on the couch and my older brother and I slept in the carport because there wasn't room in the house for us. We were there two or three months and then dad got a chance to buy a house on Republic Street and in the olden days that was known as Mormon Road because almost everybody on that street was LDS anyway. Marlin Walker was there and -- and all of the other Bruce Little and Gene McAllister and Katie McAllister and Lan Rose (ph) and what have you and almost everybody up and down that street. And the chapel just over the fence for us, we just had to walk around the corner. But then we didn't -- it wasn't finished when we moved here and we held church where the convention center is now and that was the basic high school on the corner of Atlantic and Water Street. And we would go in and set up the chairs and set up tables and have a church service and take everything back down and put it away for school on Monday.

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Karen Schank: Where -- was that in the gym?

Derrill Price: Yes. We rented the gymnasium and then we had part of the classrooms for our Sunday school classrooms also; it was fairly primitive for us. Not a good time.

Karen Schank: Tell me about Victory Village and Carver Park area?

Derrill Price: They were apartments, Victory Village each -- each apartment had four units in it and each unit had four apartments, let's put it that way. And there were it must have been 125 units in Victory Village; I don't know how many in Carver Park. And the first one I rented when I first got married in 1960 was a one bedroom, one bath and that's all any of them had except some of the bigger ones had two bedrooms and a bath and it was run by Clark County Housing and rent for my one bedroom apartment was \$32.50 and it saved my life. I was working for \$1.26 an hour for US Lime Products and they owned the plant here in Henderson and they had one at Sloan, one at Blue Diamond, and one in a little town called Peach Springs, Arizona and they had the place at Apex also. And at that time I don't know who owns everything right now -

Karen Schank: What did you do for them?

Derrill Price: I took care of the office, I kept track of all of the hours the men worked and fixed the payroll for them and wrote the checks for them and did everything except sign them. And George Rodriguez is who I was working for and he'd been with US Lime for years and years and was the boss out at Sloan. And he has since died and his family -- I don't -- he had a boy and girl and I lost track of them.

Karen Schank: What kind of business is US Lime?

Derrill Price: US Lime is -- it was owned by the Flintkote Company and they made wall board and they sold what they called chap for driveways and US Lime makes a product for -- to put in concrete to make it stick and harden and the lime goes into the cement and helps solidify and chemical type. And it's just -- there's so much lime in this country that it's amazing. And they've done well and Apex and Blue Diamond; I don't know if Blue Diamond is still working, the little town is still there. I don't know. I think they make a wall board like in the olden days they used to plaster the walls with a lime product and now they just have sheets of 8 and 12 foot sections of plaster board and it's a much nicer product and easier to work with and goes on the walls better.

Karen Schank: How long did you work for?

Derrill Price: Maybe a year, year and a half and my wife and I decided to move to Lander, Wyoming and I went to work for US Steel; they put in a low grade tack iron for Atlantic City [Wyoming] which is right on top of South Pass [Wyoming]

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8,200 feet. And I worked there for two years and then went to barber school in Salt Lake City in 1962.

Karen Schank: Why did you end up going to barber school?

Derrill Price: My dad had what they called nervous hypertension. I always thought that he had a heart attack but they said it didn't affect his heart. The blood wouldn't pump out of his legs and when he would stand and all the blood would go into his legs and then he'd get lightheaded and fall down. Anyway, Dr. Miller come in and saved his life one day and he come to get a haircut and called an ambulance and got dad to the hospital and found out was wrong with him. But they didn't think he'd ever work again and they asked me to go to barber school and that's how I got into barbering now and I'd probably still live in Langer, Wyoming. But I lived in Langer several times and Las Vegas and Henderson and generally I stick to this area; home means Nevada. I just love it down here.

Karen Schank: And tell me about the tunnel that went under Boulder Highway?

Derrill Price: In the olden days they had a tunnel for the children who lived in Victory Village and Carver Park and they could walk underneath and come over here and go to school. They didn't have I think they have [inaudible] on the other side of the highway now and probably some more that I don't know about. They all had to come across the highway and a lot of the kids, they didn't have buses and stuff to bring them and the kids would all walk to school. And so they would come through that tunnel under the Boulder Highway, rather than go across and get run over. Flash floods continued to come through and flooding was a problem in this area and finally they went above town and built a big flood controlled dyke and channeled the water east and along Heather Street and now the city is so big that hardly anybody even knows where Heather was but this big channel you'd go east across the highway and they channeled the water down towards the swampy area and close to Lake Mead and stopped a lot. I've seen floods come through Victory Village and fill car radiators three-fourths of the way up with mud and sand and sticks and dirt the radiators would have to be taken off and cleaned with high pressure cleaning or replaced to get the cars to go, run. And these floods eventually filled that tunnel up and they -- instead of digging it out well then they bussed the children across the highway so they could get to school.

Karen Schank: What year was that?

Derrill Price: 53, 54, 55, 56; I worked for Lehman and Lytle Service Station in 55 and 56 and I remember helping try to clean the radiators that were filled with sand. You'd have to take them out and then we would spray high pressure water through from the back side and sometimes that would bend the bands on the radiator and then the radiator would have to be replaced. So we would take water brush and scrub it on the front part and then spray it through the back



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part and hope we didn't ruin the radiator. So I remember helping Glenn Lehman do that?

Karen Schank: Was that a yearly task or --

Derrill Price: Sometimes more than once a year because the floods -- if you get a good rain storm back here well it put a lot of water down through there and until you been in one you just don't understand what I'm talking about. But one main Water Street they had a reason because I've seen it run knee deep right down Water Street. It really runs -- they've got flood control in Henderson area and Las Vegas and retention centers and have big reservoirs where they'd catch the water and hold it until it evaporates or they can let it out easy and not flood the whole town. Burkholder High School [Middle School] that was the new Basic High School that I went to when I was a senior and I don't know if I was the first graduating class or the second; I was one of them and I went half year as a junior. Half a year as a junior right here on Water Street and Basic; Water Street between Basic and Atlantic and that was the high school. And right where the old Gibson Library is, kitty corner to where we are right now that was a tennis court and basketball court, open air, and I was playing basketball in PE and dislocated my shoulder reaching for a basketball. Just a little memory of my discomfort; that's how I got to meet Dr. Miller. He took me down to the clinic. We didn't have a big hospital like they've got now. Now we got more than one hospital and thousands of people here. It seemed to me like the population of Henderson when we moved was between 8,000 and 10,000; I may be a little bit off. But it was pretty close to that population; now it's -- they tell me in the neighborhood of 300,000 give or take a little. Anyway Dr. Miller was the one that took care of -- put my shoulder back in the socket for me; it was gentle. I always liked him after that. He became our family doctor and a good friend.

Karen Schank: What hospital was that?

Derrill Price: Rose De Lima

Karen Schank: Oh so Rose De Lima --

Derrill Price: Yeah I always called it "Dilemma"; it's Rose De Lima; it was the closest and the best we had at the time and as far as I know it still is.

Karen Schank: What did you do for fun as children in Henderson?

Derrill Price: They had a movie theater that was on Army Street and for less than \$1.00 you could go to the movies on Saturday afternoon and watch shows, and eat popcorn and hold hands with your girlfriend if you could be so lucky. There was movies -- I didn't know what television was until we moved down here and mom and dad bought a black and white TV. In the old days when TV went off it -- it had like Iron Cross in the middle of the spring or snow and you didn't have television 24 hours a day like today. It would go off maybe at

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1:00 or 2:00 something like that and then there'd just be a light on the screen, no sense watching it. We watched television, my dad still had his horses and we had fast cars; I thought we did. My brother Gary [Price] he was always looking for a quicker car and he bought my first car for me and he bought it from Neil Twitchell's brother, his name was Lee Twitchell and it was a 1939 two-door sedan, Chevrolet. And they had put a GMC motor in it and it was a real old car and I drove it for quite a few years and then Gary bought an old Cadillac and gave it to me -- he bought that from LQ Roundy, Larry Q. Roundy; and Larry has since died. Some of the Twitchell's have died. Neil Twitchell is still -- he was the principal of the high school here.

Karen Schank: Burkholder?

Derrill Price: Not Burkholder, it was -- I can't think of the name. That's what happens when you get old. But it's right behind the 7-11; right on Basic Road. And they just built a new one but Neil Twitchell was the principal in this one here. And all my kids went there and some of my grandkids and now some of my great grandkids are going there. Anyway I wound up with a 38 Cadillac. My brother he drove new Plymouths, and Dodges and --

Karen Schank: You mentioned a drag strip.

Derrill Price: Oh we had that right down by the Hyundai car dealership is now there was a Henderson Drag Strip and it went right straight east and it was a ¼ mile with about ½ a mile shut down. Some of the rails that we brought in had to have parachutes to slow them down or they'd run off into the desert and then they had a return road that would come back. My dad road his horse out in front of a couple of them one time and he just touched that horse with his spurs and jumped it across and everybody was screaming, they thought he was going to get killed. They had newspaper reporters down there interviewing him. But he didn't understand those rails were going 180 miles an hour and cover ¼ mile pretty quick. Norm Walker, he's an old timer from around here, he moved here about the same time I did, maybe a little sooner and he -- he drove the Pete Findlay Oldsmobile Special, Pete Findlay was his uncle and supplied the motor and they build the rail and did quite a lot of -- it went 180 miles an hour in 8 ½ seconds or something like that and that was quick in those days. Had a lot of fun there. I took my grandmother there and they had what we call the weenie roaster, it was a jet dragster but a jet engine on four wheels and they'd crank it up and take off. All you could see was the flame shooting out of the back of it and my grandmother stood there and was watching. And then I got in trouble with my mom over that because she didn't think I should take grandma to the drag races on Sunday.

Karen Schank: So was that a city sponsored drag racing?

Derrill Price: You know it might have had some city help; I just don't know. I really don't.

Karen Schank: You mentioned your dad was the president of the horse --

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Derrill Price: The Henderson Saddle Association; he was the first president when they organized the club. And what happened is there was a bunch of folks that had horses and cows and what have you and they had some corrals down below town and the flies got so bad that people in Carver Park got to complaining about flies and it was just below Carver Park maybe quarter mile, but anyway the city went down there and burned all the corrals down. And so they organized the saddle club and leased the land that's four miles from dad's house on Republic Street to where the city corrals are and the Henderson Saddle Association and they're still there and the people would buy a corral space and then they'd have to dig their own post holes and put up their own fences and everything. They went in there and built the arena and dad was the first president as I remember and he has a grandson that still has the corrals down there and still ropes and does quite well roping, Richard Price, Jr. That's my brothers, my little brother's oldest son.

Karen Schank: You mentioned that you worked at a Camp Mercury?

Derrill Price: Yes.

Karen Schank: That was in Las Vegas, right?

Derrill Price: Right, that's in Nevada Test Site

Karen Schank: Okay.

Derrill Price: Met a lot of people here worked at.

Karen Schank: What year was that that you worked there?

Derrill Price: 1956, 57 and then I went on a mission for the Mormon church and then when I come home I went back out there and worked for six months maybe until I got married and then I wanted to be closer to Henderson. And that's a 65 mile trip every day back and forth and so I got the job with US Line in Sloan and that's only 12 or 14 miles, something like that.

Karen Schank: What did you do for them at the Mercury Camp?

Derrill Price: Okay they had a housing office and a lot of people at work would go out there and stay all week and they had the trailers to stay in and they had housing. And the housing would have double bunks on the sides and would hold four to eight people in each room and I worked in the housing department and helped take care of the bed checks. If you went and nobody was there -- I mean if the bed hadn't been slept in then you knew nobody had stayed there; so then they didn't get charged. So they'd either gone home for the night or something but the charge was like \$1.50 a night or some very small amount. I worked for a man named Jim Holcomb and he ran the

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housing and the one at Area 51 and I never did have to go up there. I just stayed at Mercury.

Karen Schank: Did they have food too?

Derrill Price: Yeah they had a cafeteria and you could go and eat and they had a BX and you could play pool and watch television and what have you.

Karen Schank: You mentioned that there were tests done?

Derrill Price: Open air testing; yes. I remember Jim coming in and saying, "Shut the air lock, shut the air the wind changed" and it was blowing the fallout from the big cloud down over Camp Mercury. We had no air for that day, the whole day, and they didn't want to suck it in and blow it on us, you know through the air conditioners. Most of the air conditioning or a lot of it was swamp cooler at the time. And -- but then some refrigeration yeah. I remember being in bed and I can feel the ground roll, if you could watch it. It just kind of rolled towards you when the bomb went off and it went in every direction, but the ground felt like it was rolling up under you and probably actually was, but it would roll towards you and you could feel it coming and then it would hit hard and then roll off. It felt not unlike an earthquake. I went through several earthquakes and one in Montana, it was a bad one and it felt a lot like -- I thought it was a bomb coming; it shook me out of bed and the bombs had a little different after effect. They didn't quite have the shaky ground feeling that an earthquake does. Once it hit then it was gone. But I lived in Panaca and we watched the open air testing in the early 50's and the cloud that come across, the fallout, across eastern Nevada and southern Utah and St. George and through that way, Bunkerville, Nevada and Mesquite and things like that. It would dust the highway with a light dusting of snow -- you could drive a car down and see the car tracks in the fall out in Panaca.

Karen Schank: Just the whole ground in the town?

Derrill Price: The -- a lot of people died of Leukemia and different cancers. My mother died of lung cancer and stuff; they said it was caused from something else. She never smoked, she never was around and smoker or any -- and she did work at Titanium metals [TiMet], but it didn't -- there was no polluting of the air where she worked in the lab.

Karen Schank: What did she do for them?

Derrill Price: She checked -- they would send samples to her and she would check for the purity of the titanium; however they checked I don't know. But she could -- she had a what they call a [inaudible] twist. She would -- when we were kids she would can food and stuff and we couldn't open them she -- you'd have to take a knife and run it under the lid and run hot water on it and stuff to get the lid off. Anyway, they told her "you tighten those lids as hard as you can" and she said, "You don't mean that do you"? They said, "Yes we do". They had

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to get special pliers to open it after she tightened it. I don't know why she had that grip but she -- she tightened it down for them and they said, "Not quite so tight Mrs. Price".

Karen Schank: How long did she work for them?

Derrill Price: Seemed like 10-12 years, something like that.

Karen Schank: What year did she start?

Derrill Price: We always had to struggle for money. And we come down here in '53 and it wasn't long after that when she went to work. When she left it was a hard time to get used to not having her paycheck, very steady and -- but it was hard on her. She worked all three shifts, day, swing -- of course she had days and tough to raise a family and work shift work and be a mother you know.

Karen Schank: Was that the old BMI [Basic Magnesium Incorporated] plant; is that where titanium was?

Derrill Price: Yeah.

Karen Schank: Okay were there tunnels under the titanium plant?

Derrill Price: I don't know, I don't know.

Karen Schank: Did you know of any bomb shelters that in the World War II era?

Derrill Price: In the 1962 when Kennedy gave them the ultimatum to get the missiles out of Cuba or they were going to have trouble with the United States. I've always admired him because he stood up on his hind legs and told them "Do this or else this is going to happen". And they backed down and got the missiles out. But from Cuba they could hit almost any city in the country in the United States and Salt Lake City was one of them -- I was in barber school when that little situation arose. I remember people leaving the barber school and going home and started digging their bomb shelters, fall out shelters. The only one I knew of was in what we call Desert Hills there now and when I was a kid it was just sad, blow sand and we'd go over there and get truckloads of that sand and then put it down and plant logs on top of it because it was easy to fertilize and take care and work with a rake and stuff. We had so much caliche not so very far under the ground here that it's tough to raise anything; so we'd go get that sand and they had a housing project come in there and they built all those houses in there and one of them was a fellow named Greg Wovenstein (ph) and he lives in Pahrump now. Anyway he's the only one I knew that had a fall out shelter or a bomb shelter. He had it pretty well stocked.

Karen Schank: Let's see. Do you remember the PEPCON [Pacific Engineering and Production Company of Nevada] blast?

Derrill Price: Yes very well. I was working for a barber named Jessie Griffin at Tropicana at Paradise and one of the other barbers Todd Kouba (ph) and I went to Wendy's for lunch and the thing blew and I said, "That sounds like Joe Owens service station blew up" because Joe was just down about a mile and I thought it had to be something closer because anyway -- the first one went off and then shortly after that the other one and it was really bad. And the windows on the Wendy's restaurant actually bowed in until they almost touched me. I was sitting by that window and it's a wonder it didn't blow it in. Anyway it didn't; it blew the door of the house I was living in on Basic Road, the front door was blown off and the windows on the part of the house were all blown and blast went straight across the room and stuck in the shards of glass stuck out of the wall about six inches. If somebody would have been in there they would have been cut up bad; it just happened that nobody was home. My wife was working down the street for Jim Jenson Realty and one of the fellows in the office had been in the Air Force career man and when the bomb went off he kind of ducked and when the second one went off he was under the desk. And he --because he knew "You don't mess around". If something is happening get you some protection. We come home and you couldn't get to Henderson and you couldn't get out. They had the whole road stopped up and our children were in school right up here and they brought bus load -- busses in and loaded them all up and took them to Boulder City, to a school in Boulder City and in order to get there my daughter and I had to go down Tropicana and around -- around the stadium [Sam Boyd Stadium]and through the Henderson Saddle Association, passed that and then I was in Henderson; then I was all right. You couldn't get in from Boulder Highway or any other -- we just went out around the road blocks and it was just an oversight on the part of the officials and when we found out where the kids were -- had been taken we went to Boulder City and picked them up. And then to get home they wouldn't let us in on the Lake Road. We had to go out around Sunrise Mountain and come down Nellis and we come back to Tropicana and went out around the stadium again and cut back in the same way and come home. When I got home my brother who lived here had gone to my house to see if there was any damage and actually put my door back up and nailed it shut and put boards over the windows and nailed them on. And they were across the street; never got any damage but it seemed like that wave come right over his house and right through mine. Anyway we really got some bad -- we had to replace windows and doors --

Karen Schank: So the officials actually blocked entrances into Henderson?

Derrill Price: Well they -- the story when it first happened that it was a toxic cloud and that it was drifting over Henderson and they didn't want people -- they'd let you out but they wouldn't let you in. And once you got out you couldn't get back in without some finagling and the first report was that there were hundreds of people killed and actually there was two. I think one was a fellow in a wheelchair and the other was the guy that went back to help. And I could be mistaken but I think that's all. PEPCON, I saw pictures of that and the

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ground roll just like an atomic bomb from up on Black Mountain-a guy was taking pictures and you can see the ground roll from his pictures. It was on television later.

Karen Schank: What effects did that have on Henderson?

Derrill Price: That had the effect that if they rang that siren and said “evacuate” people got up in the night and didn’t stop and get too well dressed you know, I mean they left. Now Stauffer Chemical had a little leak and they come up the street and they said, “Evacuate” and I went to Boulder City. I took all my family and left. The gas that they -- that had escaped from the chemical come up through and killed all the leaves off half of my trees. One half had green leaves and the other half had brown, but it just come right past the house and took half of that tree.

Karen Schank: Where’s your home at?

Derrill Price: It was then on Basic Road, 222 at that time. Anyway that’s the effect it had and to this day if I hear a loud noise I investigate and I’m ready to go. I don’t -- I don’t mess around anymore because -- but now PEPCON is way out past the Apex. They store all of that out there and I think Harry Reid got that done for them.

Karen Schank: You mentioned that the children -- they bussed to Boulder City --

Derrill Price: That was because they didn’t know if that fall out from the -- they thought that it was a toxic cloud and they thought it was coming this way instead it floated off down towards Nellis.

Karen Schank: How did you find out where they sent your children?

Derrill Price: I snuck in the back way and went to the school and they had people there saying, “All the children are safe and they’re in Boulder City.” And if you want to pick them up go over there and get them; so that’s what we did. But they wouldn’t let you back in.

Karen Schank: What differences do you see in Henderson today – the past? [Inaudible]

Derrill Price: When we come down here in Henderson not hardly anyone had fences around their property and as a young man, 15 or 16 years old. I would walk from Republic Street down to Army Street and go to the movies and I would cut through people’s yards. And nowadays it’s unheard of, everybody has a fenced yard and no one trusts anyone and you don’t -- you don’t walk through people’s yards without a pit bull after you or something of that nature and that was one of the things -- Henderson had a small town feel more so than Las Vegas. And you seem to know almost everyone in my school. I knew who Norm Tract (ph) was and Fred Nye and Herbie Nye and just Norm Walker and Shirley Walker and all of the kids that we went to high school

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with, Barbara Rhodes and Barbara -- her name wasn't Rhodes then. That's what happens when you get older, you can't remember. Anyway, we had a lot of friends we made friends easy in those days and they seemed to be good friends, Ernie Martinez, good friend of mine. He used to poke fun at my southern Utah drawl -- anyway I had a lot of fun and didn't realize how time -- my cousin Ron McAllister was here and he had been here a little while before me, several months and knew people and introduced me to people and he introduced me to Harry Reid I see Harry and he always says, "Hi Derrill, how ya doin'?" I've always liked Harry. It's just --

Karen Schank: How did you first meet him?

Derrill Price: Right down the street is Texas Street and he lived on Texas Street and would go to school, high school; he was in the same year as my cousin Ron McAllister and I was a year ahead of both of them. And he was just going down to Texas Street to go home and he was with my cousin and I stopped to talk to my cousin and he introduced me; he called him Pinky in those days, he had little a pink face. You go to Searchlight and ask who Pinky was and told me Harry Reid. Anyway he's a nice guy and I always liked him. It was just one of the guys that I met in high school here --

Karen Schank: How did he end up in Henderson?

Derrill Price: How did he?

Karen Schank: Mm-hmm.

Derrill Price: He lives in Searchlight and went to school in Henderson high school and they didn't have buses that from Search Light. He would hitch hike sometimes people would bring him up and he'd stay here during the week and then go home to Search Light or his folks would come and get him. It was --

Karen Schank: Who did he live with?

Derrill Price: I don't know. I know he was acquainted with Marlin Walker who was one of the teachers, taught Spanish and several other subjects. But Marlin was a great guy for young people and very influential in a lot of lives. If you want to talk to somebody that knows Henderson a little talk to Marlin Walker. He's one of the better people in the whole nation and I mean that sincerely.

Karen Schank: You mentioned you worked on the mayor's campaign; what mayor was that?

Derrill Price: Hafen and Jim Gibson friends with both of them and then a few years ago the [inaudible] and got in the mess with the county commissioners and some of them went to jail and I used Andy Hafen as an example and them as a spectacle. I taught a Sunday school class and I said if you want to pattern your life after somebody good you go see Andy Hafen. And you pattern your life after him; I'm not telling you that he walks on water, but I'm telling you



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that he keeps his word, that he's honest to a fault and that's how I feel about him. And when he ran for mayor he only won by 45 or 50 votes and the other fellow that ran for mayor was a good guy too and a lot of people really liked him. But I've been up and down the street and campaigned for him, I know that my family and my friends voted for Andy Hafen [inaudible]. That's just a comforting feeling but I know he does a good job. If you want something done you talk to him and then it's taken care of. Anyway --

Karen Schank: Sounds like a small town.

Derrill Price: Jim Gibson, I knew his father. [Inaudible] James Gibson was above reproach, he was really a good guy. When PEPCON blew up it nearly killed him. The thoughts of those two men being killed, it weighed heavily on him; it was a bad thing for the family you know? They owned it --

Karen Schank: The Gibson's owned PEPCON? Is there anything else that you'd like to tell me about Henderson that I've --

Derrill Price: I remember when there was a few boardwalks instead of sidewalks and where the elder auto club is now we have a vacant lot and when they built the first building there it was known as the Royal Club. There was Van Valey's and Vernays' Dress Shop and Van Valey's was a men's shop you know?

Karen Schank: Was this on Basic?

Derrill Price: No it was down on Pacific. Where the bank is now was where the post office was Selma Bartlett was the president of the bank and a little gray haired lady that ran things with an iron hand, she was good. I think they even named a school after her. I remember when there was no lawn then on the corner and it was all bull head stickers and I mean they looked like a bull head and those two -- you walked through there and they tracked with you a long ways. They'd puncture your tires on bicycles and they'd give you a flat if you were bare footed. I mean you stopped and pulled them out, bull head stickers. Henderson has come a long way. They've improved a lot. The only thing that I find any fault with is Water Street and -- put the palm trees in and took away a little parking and you put a partition down the middle and then they decided they made a mistake so they took the partition out. But all in all Henderson is a great place. It's got good schools and friendly atmosphere and the olden days the Henderson Fire Department and police station was all one thing and it was --

Karen Schank: One building?

Derrill Price: Mm-hmm they were in the same building and they tell a story about a policeman practice and then fast drawn (ph) he would pull his gun and aim at the clock and pull the trigger but he had it unloaded and one of the guys asked him what kind of gun it was and he told him and he said let me look at it and he slipped a shell in it and that guy pulled the trigger and blew the

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clock off the wall. I'm pretty sure I got that story straight. My brother and I run the barbershop on the corner of Army Street [Gary & Derrill's Plaza Barbershop] and across the street was the fire department and the police department and a fellow had a heart attack in our barbershop and fell on the floor and I run and grabbed hold of him and one of the other customers came and said, "What do you want me to do" and I said, "Hold him so he don't hurt himself anymore". And I run across the street. My brother was calling 911 and I run across the street and the fire department over there before he got the 911 call. Anyway you know when -- when you knew policeman by their first name like Gary Smith, he was officer here for years and years and Verl Smith and his son, his son wound up being a policeman -- a highway patrolman for the State of Nevada and things like you know, it was a small town -- it felt more like Panaca to me than it does now, all right? One thing about Panaca I went up there deer hunting and this fellow said you no good Clark County part time deer hunters up here killing all our deer and I said, "Murray what are you talking about. I was raised around the corner" and he said, "You're not from here no more". And that was the end of my love affair with Panaca. I've been a Hendersonite ever since, anyway that's about all I have.

Karen Schank: Thank you, I appreciate you taking time to tell me about Henderson, of what you remember.

Derrill Price: Thank you.

[End of audio]