

AN INTERVIEW WITH
WAYNE LYTLE

**An Oral History conducted and edited by
Robert D. McCracken**

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PREFACE

The Lincoln County Town History Project (LCTHP) engages in interviewing people who can provide firsthand descriptions of the individuals, events, and places that give history its substance. The products of this research are the tapes of the interviews and their transcriptions.

In themselves, oral history interviews are not history. However, they often contain valuable primary source material, as useful in the process of historiography as the written sources to which historians have customarily turned. Verifying the accuracy of all of the statements made in the course of an interview would require more time and money than the LCTHP's operating budget permits. The program can vouch that the statements were made, but it cannot attest that they are free of error. Accordingly, oral histories should be read with the same prudence that the reader exercises when consulting government records, newspaper accounts, diaries, and other sources of historical information.

It is the policy of the LCTHP to produce transcripts that are as close to verbatim as possible, but some alteration of the text is generally both unavoidable and desirable. When human speech is captured in print the result can be a morass of tangled syntax, false starts, and incomplete sentences, sometimes verging on incoherency. The type font contains no symbols for the physical gestures and the diverse vocal modulations that are integral parts of communication through speech. Experience shows that totally verbatim transcripts are often largely unreadable and therefore a waste of the resources expended in their production.

While keeping alterations to a minimum the LCTHP will, in preparing a text:

- a. generally delete false starts, redundancies and the uhs, ahs and other noises with which speech is often sprinkled;
- b. occasionally compress language that would be confusing to the reader in unaltered form;
- c. rarely shift a portion of a transcript to place it in its proper context;
- d. enclose in [brackets] explanatory information or words that were not uttered but have been added to render the text intelligible; and
- e. make every effort to correctly spell the names of all individuals and places, recognizing that an occasional word may be misspelled because no authoritative source on its correct spelling was found.

***This is Robert McCracken talking to Wayne Lytle at his home near Alamo, Nevada, February 9, 1993.

CHAPTER ONE

- RM: Wayne, why don't we start with you telling me your name as it reads on your birth certificate?
- WL: My full name is Freeland Wayne Lytle. Freeland comes from my father; that was his first name, so they gave me the name Freeland and added Wayne to it.
- RM: And when and where were you born?
- WL: I was born on February the 25th, 1911, in Rose Valley, 12 miles east of Pioche.
- RM: And what was your father's full name?
- WL: Freeland Henry Lytle.
- RM: When and where was he born?
- WL: He was born in Eagle Valley, and I in Rose Valley.
- RM: Do you know his birthday?
- WL: Let's see. May the 15th, 18[80-something].
- RM: What was your mother's maiden name?
- WL: Mary Ann Jensen.
- RM: And when and where was she born?
- WL: She was born in the '80s, same as my father. She was born in central Utah, in Monroe.
- RM: Was your mother raised in Utah?
- WL: Yes.
- RM: How did your father meet her?
- WL: Well, to make it kind of humorous, he was living over here and he was a single man. She came looking for a husband. [Chuckles] She had a younger sister who had met Milton Hammond in Eagle Valley, and she came over to meet Milton and took my mother with her. My mother was looking for a schoolteaching job, so she taught school in Clover Valley for one year.
- RM: Where is Clover Valley?
- WL: It's east of Caliente, in the Beaver Dam area.
- RM: Where did you grow up?
- WL: I grew up right in Rose Valley.
- RM: Was your father a rancher?
- WL: Yes.
- RM: What did his ranch consist of?
- WL: His ranch consisted of about 80 acres of land that was mostly tillable he grew pasture and had cattle.

RM: Did he raise alfalfa, or what?

WL: Mostly wild hay. This wild hay was native to the area. The boys who bought his property plowed up that meadow. They thought they could show him how to raise hay.

RM: Is that right? And what did they plant alfalfa?

WL: No, they got some kind of seed they found advertised. They never got any crop.

RM: Did the wild hay come back?

WL: Not much. They did it well. They had it good and [cleared]; they were good mechanics.

RM: [Laughs] They weren't good farmers, though?

WL: No, they didn't know anything about a farm.

RM: When was the ranch sold?

WL: About 1960.

RM: Did you keep the ranch, or did it stay in the family?

WL: No, the McCrosky boys still own it. They managed to buy their grandfather's ranch in Rose Valley and put the 2 together and they raised a few cows.

RM: Were they the ones who tried to plow up the field?

WL: Yes.

RM: So you grew up in Rose Valley?

WL: Yes, until it came time for a college education.

RM: Tell me about growing up in the valley. What was it like?

WL: We had no electricity. And when I was young the only transportation we had was team and wagon. Along about 1920 the first Model T was brought into the area. My dad got a Model T Ford.

RM: Was his the first one?

WL: No, Billy Warren had the first one. But within a year or two all the ranchers got that transportation. Jim Hollinger bought a Dodge; he always wanted to be different.

RM: [Laughs] Is that right? But your dad bought a Model T. How did that work out on the local roads?

WL: Oh, it was a classic car for the roads. It had 2 forward gears low and high. And reverse, of course.

RM: Did it break down much?

WL: Yes, quite often.

RM: Did your dad learn to fix it?

WL: He did the best he could. He'd get somebody to help him. Here's an odd incident: We were going to central Utah to see my mother's sister in the Model T, and if you know where Cove Fort is, there's a long hill there; it's still there.

He was trying to go up that hill in high, and the Model T wouldn't do it. He was stopped and working on it, and old Bill Titts came along, "What's the problem, Freel?" (short for Freeland)

"She just won't take it in high, Bill."

"Well," Bill said, "put it down in the other gear, and see if it'll take it that way." [Laughter]

So he put it in the other gear and we made it over the summit.

RM: That's funny. Where in central Utah were you going?

WL: Marysville. My mother's sister was living there. As I said, my mother was born in Monroe, which is down there a way. They had moved to Grass Valley. She spent most of her life in Koosharem.

RM: What else do you recall about life there in Rose Valley?

WL: The thing that scared me most of all was the flu epidemic of 1918. Lots of people got it and were very sick with it. My father was riding and he and Monsley Cook got it. (Cook was from Los Angeles; he wasn't a native here.) They got it and they put them in Jim Hollinger's old Dodge and brought them in from the range. Then they put them in our house in Rose Valley. They had to put them both in the same bed, I guess because we had no other room. And my mother decided to move me up to the Devlin Ranch while they got over the flu.

RM: She was afraid you would get it? A number of people died in the valley from it, didn't they?

WL: Yes. But I wouldn't stay at the Devlin Ranch. [Laughs]

RM: What did you do, then?

WL: She put me in another spot in the house and said, "You must live here." And I never got the flu.

RM: And she didn't get it either?

WL: No.

RM: How long were they sick with it?

WL: Oh, 6 weeks or so. It was a real deadly thing. Another thing that made it so serious at that time was that they didn't know how to treat pneumonia.

RM: So the flu didn't necessarily kill them, it was pneumonia?

WL: Yes. There were 2 boys in Pioche named Bowman, and I don't know where their parents were, but they were in the upper teen ages, big strong boys. They got the flu, and were living by themselves, and they got delirious and wandered out in the snow.

RM: And died? Is that right?

WL: When father and Monsley Cook had the flu they were lying out on Main Street in Pioche, both in the back end of the old Dodge with its steel paneled back. They had a canvas over it to kind of protect them from the weather. Old John Deck, the undertaker, came along and looked in. My dad said, "[Give me a] fresh chance." [Laughter]

RM: That's funny.

WL: And Lawrence said that he had his tape measure . . . [Laughter] I'll bet he did. Lawrence said old John was deaf as a post. He looked in and he looked at him and shook his head, "Tsk, tsk, tsk," and went walking on up the street. But they took them on out to Rose Valley and put them in that spare bed. My mother of course knew how to take care of a sick person and they both got well.

RM: It must have been terrifying for people then, wasn't it?

WL: Yes. If you got the flu you were in pretty bad shape.

RM: Did you go into Pioche much from Rose Valley?

WL: Oh, once a week.

RM: Yes. What was Pioche like in those days?

WL: Pioche has varied through the years. Right about the time when they had the flu I believe the mines were in pretty good shape. Then the Depression came along in the '30s and it went down to nothing but the courthouse for the only employment. In connection with that, my father always raised vegetables and sold fresh vegetables, if he could. He knew who was employed by the county, so his customers were county employees. He sold vegetables right along, clear through the Depression.

RM: What are some of the vegetables he grew?

WL: Sweet corn was number one, and carrots were an important item, and onions. And fruit, when he had it.

RM: Did you usually get a fruit crop there, or did it often freeze?

WL: It froze about 50 percent of the time. Potatoes were another important item. He sold those, and then he tried to grow enough potatoes and onions and carrots to feed us as a family. We always had what you call a cellar underground where the vegetables wouldn't freeze; we kept them that way.

RM: How many children were in your family?

WL: Just 2 my sister and I. My sister's a year and a half older than I am and she's still living.

RM: What's her name?

WL: Gladys Platt.

RM: Where does she live?

WL: In Panaca. She's, of course, 83 and she's getting quite feeble. I guess as feeble as I'll be when I get there. [Laughs]

RM: Did you go to school on your ranch in Rose Valley?

WL: Yes. By law, a ranch would supply a school. The local farmers usually got busy and built a building themselves, but the state, I guess through the county, furnished the money to hire a teacher. When we were going to school, a common practice was to get a local girl who was a high school graduate to be the teacher. My mother said, "We're not going to monkey around like that," so they sent to Minnesota and Wisconsin. [Chuckles] And just like Mother had been, the teachers were looking for a man. It worked every time; they got married every time they came.

RM: And your mother taught in Clover Valley, you said. How long did she teach there?

WL: Just one year.

RM: Did the teachers from Minnesota and Wisconsin marry local fellows when they came out?

WL: Yes, but one of them didn't; it broke her heart. She went home. The one that she wanted wouldn't marry her.

RM: Is that right? Who were some of the teachers who married and stayed there?

WL: Virginia Delmue Delmue's her married name. And Marjorie Cross and Miss Dalton (I can't remember her first name.) They were good teachers.

RM: They came out as young women, didn't they?

WL: Yes. They'd been raised at home all their lives, and this was a chance to break away.

RM: Did they live with your family on the ranch there?

WL: Yes, when we had a teacher who was unmarried, my mother made that extra room available and they stayed there.

RM: So you had 2 bedrooms, or 3?

WL: Two bedrooms, and they made another small one.

RM: Did that become the teacher's room?

WL: The teacher took the regular room; they put us kids in the small room.

RM: How did it work out having the teacher live with you?

WL: It worked out all right. The only problem I ever had was with Miss Cross, the one who didn't find the man. She got so she was moody and distracted. She didn't last the year through.

RM: Were these girls attractive?

WL: Yes and well educated.

RM: Besides you and your sister, who else went to school there?

WL: My uncle Les Lytle and his wife Ellen had a big family; they had 10 children, so they always kept 2 or 3 kids in school. The year that I got to be legally includable in the school I was in kindergarten, and they needed another student, so I went to school early.

RM: Did your uncle Les live on the same ranch, or did he have his own place?

WL: He had his own place.

RM: Was the school on your ranch?

WL: No, it was on his ranch.

RM: How far did you have to go to school?

WL: It wasn't too far a quarter-mile. The old building is still there. Two of the walls have fallen out and the old roof is tilted on, but it's still there. (It was 5 miles to the high school in Eagle Valley.)

RM: How did you heat it in the winter?

WL: With a wood-burning stove, just an ordinary old wood heater. It'd be as hot as a pistol next to the stove, and on the outside it'd be freezing to death.

RM: [Chuckles] Do you feel that you got a pretty good education?

WL: Yes.

RM: How long did you go to that school?

WL: For 8 years. Then they needed a high school, and Harold Brinley had been a teacher in Panaca. Henry Lee was a school board member and Mr. Brinley was going to flunk Henry's boy if Henry's boy didn't get in to do his work. Henry said, "If you flunk him, I'll fire you." He flunked him, and he fired him. So we got Brinley as our teacher in Eagle Valley; there were only 6 of us the first year. And boy, was he a teacher.

RM: So you had a high school in Eagle Valley?

WL: Yes. That old building is still sitting there; they made them build a building.

RM: What year did they start that high school?

WL: Right around 1920. They had it going before I went to it.

RM: And there was just one teacher?

WL: Yes.

RM: Did you go there all 4 years of high school?

WL: No, just 2. For some reason, they couldn't teach all 4 years of high school there, though Brinley could have taught it. Anyway, he taught us 2. Just to show you how well he taught, they had a county fair and they had an educational division where children entered their work drawing, mostly. The 6 of us took more prizes than the entire high school in Panaca.

RM: Is that right? What did you do for your second 2 years of high school?

WL: We went to Panaca for the third year and Mr. Brinley, with whom we were friendly, coaxed us to go to another school to finish our high school. So my sister and I went to Cedar City and our cousin Mike went to Salt Lake City.

RM: Who did you go live with in Panaca?

WL: With Clyde and Amy Mathews. Amy was our cousin.

RM: And who did you live with in Cedar?

WL: We lived with the Porters. They were just a family in town that took my sister and me for room and board. My mother always said that was a shame, to pay for our living for that last year when we had a high school there at home, but Harold Brinley convinced us that we should go to a better school.

RM: Do you think he was right?

WL: I think so. The high school then was the branch agricultural college. The college didn't have enough enrollment, so they took [students] clear through high school.

RM: Oh, is that right? That was good, wasn't it?

WL: Oh, yes.

RM: What do you recall about Panaca at that time?

WL: It was much like it is right now. There's one difference: As they've grown more sophisticated, they have covered their entire water system within the town in pipes, and that ruined the fruit crop; it froze.

RM: Is that right? Because that water gave just enough heat to keep it from freezing?

WL: Yes, it kept it alive.

RM: I'll be darned. So they don't get as many fruit crops now in Panaca?

WL: I don't think they do. They raise some fruit, but they used to raise fruit in great quantities all the time, and when they enclosed the water they really cut it. I don't know whether any child ever drowned in a ditch or not. Of course, that would be a real impetus to cover it.

RM: Were they open ditches when you were there?

WL: Yes. On a cold morning you could see the steam rising.

RM: Did the ditches freeze at all in the winter?

WL: Not from that spring. That spring is still there.

RM: Yes, I've seen it. Did your dad have a tough time making a living on the farm?

WL: Yes. He didn't have enough cattle of his own to keep him busy all the time so he rode for Billy Warren part time, and Billy paid him a little bit. He did build up about 150 head of cattle, and in the winter of 1915 they lost all but 5.

RM: Oh! That must have been a bad winter.

WL: Yes, there were 3 feet of snow on the dry lake. He lost all but 5. He never would run a cow out during wintertime after that; never again.

RM: What lake was the dry lake?

WL: As you cross going from here to Caliente, you look out to your left as you're going to Caliente and you see a big flat upper Delamar Dry Lake. When it rains hard and the water runs there's usually a pond in there.

RM: Where did your dad run his cattle?

WL: Everybody ran them anywhere. When Roosevelt became president they passed quite extensive legislation and [people were given allotted rangeland]. The sheep are what ruined it. They brought the sheep over from Cedar City, and there was no law to regulate them. After they passed that law they got rid of the sheep. And it's taken a long while for that range to come back. We've had devastating floods up there just because that range wouldn't hold the water.

RM: When did they bring those sheep in?

WL: It was way back in the 1920s. I can remember at night before we went to bed you'd look up to the northwest, up on the hill, and there'd be a big "fire" dust from a herd of sheep. You looked to the south and there was another fire; looked to the east, another fire . . . You could see them from Rose Valley. They crowded in all over.

RM: So they really ruined the range for the cattlemen and there was nothing you could do about it, was there?

WL: There was nothing. They ran them on the dry lake, too.

CHAPTER TWO

- RM: We were talking about the sheep, and how they really damaged the range there. What did your father do when he lost all those cattle in 1915?
- WL: He had to get by as best he could; he raised what he could on the ranch. It was real tough times for them.
- RM: That's devastating, to lose that many of your herd. How could he grow enough hay to feed them in the winter?
- WL: He saved his hay very carefully and made it do.
- RM: But he never left them out on the range after that in the winter?
- WL: Not after that.
- RM: Did the other ranchers leave theirs out?
- WL: Yes, most of them stuck with it and left theirs out through the winter.
- RM: Did they lose a lot of cattle in 1915 also?
- WL: Oh, yes. Thousands were lost. We had another winter like that along about 1935, I believe, and the cattle died again. But he didn't have any out there. Incidentally, I heard a report on the radio that was just a lot of poppycock. The announcer said cattle in southern Nevada were starving to death and dying. He said, "They have used airplanes to bring hay to them." They did. But he said the cattle will be in a herd and the bale will drop and they will raise their heads and bawl, and you can hear them rushing to that feed. Those cattle didn't have life enough to rush to that feed.
- RM: And the snow was deep, wasn't it? [Chuckles]
- WL: Yes. That was a whole bunch of poppycock.
- RM: In some cases they couldn't get to the feed, could they?
- WL: No. They actually killed a cow by dropping a bale of hay on her.
- RM: After you graduated from high school, what did you do?
- WL: I had been going to high school in Cedar City so I stayed on and went to the 2 years of college [they offered there.] At the end of the first year an old man by the name of Karl Myers came walking into Rose Valley. He said, "I'm a musician. I want to chop wood and teach your children." He was going to teach piano and violin. We took lessons from him for about a year and he said, "They must have better. There's more than I can give them." They asked him where that was and he said, "In Boston, Massachusetts." [Chuckles]
- RM: Is that right? Did anybody go back there?
- WL: My sister and I and a cousin went to Boston.
- WL: Is that right? How did you take lessons from him if you were going to school in Cedar City?
- WL: He taught us mostly during the summer. But he had one problem. He claimed to be a graduate of the Fletcher Brad Conservatory, but I don't think he was. I think he lied, because he always taught us too difficult; he used pieces on the violin and piano that were way over our heads. When we got back to Boston they listened to us play and rated us all elementary beginners.
- RM: What conservatory did you go to in Boston?

WL: The New England Conservatory of Music. It's still there. It's a state-run school; an ordinary conservatory wouldn't have taken us, you know.

RM: How long did you stay there?

WL: One year. Then the old Depression struck.

WL: So you went there in '29? Did you study anything besides music, or was it just music?

WL: We took one class in geography of some kind, but all the rest was music. When we got back here we went back to the University of Nevada, and they couldn't take that credit because they didn't teach it. That credit sat there unused for years and years. I had gone to a professor and he had mapped me out a course to graduate, and I had followed it diligently. In the meantime, he was forced to retire and I had the card listing it for me, but he had not signed the card. Dr. Brown in Reno said [he couldn't accept a] card without a signature on it.

Then one of the other professors said, "Take it to court. They'll accept it."

I said, "I won't go to court; they'll treat me like a white man." I was going to go to Utah.

"Oh, sit down and get your shirt on." [Chuckles] And I changed courses. This was in the summer. I changed my courses in my registration so I would still qualify to graduate. So I changed my major from music to English and graduated with a major in English and a minor in music.

RM: What instruments did you study in Boston?

WL: Violin and piano. Everybody who went there studied piano. They always said, "You're going to take piano; what else?"

RM: Is that right? Did you get pretty good?

WL: Not very good. Well, we got so we could perform credibly, I guess, but I couldn't now. My wife was ill for several years and I didn't put the bow to my violin; I've been trying to get it back, but . . .

RM: How could your father afford to send you back there?

WL: Well, it was right in a time of good income, just before '29.

RM: What was it like, for country kids to go back to Boston?

WL: We got along well. They had a good school in the New England Conservatory. They listened to you and rated you, where you were, and were honest about it, and they taught you at that level. If the Depression hadn't come we'd have gone on with a career, but when the Depression came that stopped us.

RM: So after that you came back to the University of Nevada?

WL: I had to get a job some place away from the ranch, so I got the necessary credits and qualified and taught school for 30 years.

RM: Where did you teach?

WL: I taught in Preston, Nevada, to begin with. That's south of Ely, near Lund. I taught there for 2 years and then I taught at Pioche for about 10 years. I got to the point where I was teaching students whose parents I had taught so I told my wife, "I've got to move." We moved to Las Vegas and they put me into teaching elementary music for 10 years.

RM: What year did you start at Preston?

WL: It was 1937.

RM: How did you like Preston?

WL: Oh, I liked it. They were nice people.

RM: Do you remember what it paid?

WL: The annual salary was \$1125.

RM: Was it tough to live on that?

WL: No, I didn't think so.

RM: Were you single then?

WL: No.

RM: Who did you marry?

WL: Justine Jones. Her father had come to Rose Valley to teach, and that's how I met her.

RM: Is that right? So you were married when you went to Reno?

WL: Yes. When I got enough credit to have a certificate I was married.
[Tape is turned off for a while.]

RM: You're showing me a picture of your wife Justine Jones. Where was she from?

WL: Enterprise, Utah.

RM: Do you recall any highlights from teaching at Preston?

WL: They were having a Helldorado in Las Vegas, and I got a marching group together. I don't know where we got the money, but they found us a school bus and I took a marching group to Las Vegas and they marched in their Helldorado parade.

RM: Is that right? You weren't just teaching music; you were teaching a whole curriculum, weren't you?

WL: That's right.

RM: What grades were you teaching there?

WL: Preston was 5 through 8.

RM: And then you moved to Pioche?

WL: Yes. That was also grades 5 through 8, with music on the side.

RM: How did you like teaching in Pioche?

WL: I liked it.

RM: What do you recall about teaching there?

WL: I can remember it was right while the mines were running strong and they had a lot of employees and, as a result, a lot of children. In order to teach the rear end of a room, I had to go out the side door [chuckles] and go around that was how crowded it was; I had 35 kids in there.

RM: What year did you go to Pioche?

WL: In the late '30s; then World War II came along.

RM: Did you teach all through World War II?

WL: I laid out one year. I was just a little bit old to draft, and they said I'd do more good farming, for us to stay and work my father's farms. I tried that one year and then they needed a teacher in Rose Valley, so I taught in Rose Valley for 2 or 3 years.

RM: What was it like, going back to Rose Valley to teach? Was it a small classroom?

WL: Yes, just 5 or 6. And I taught my own children.

RM: And then you went back to Pioche?

WL: Yes, for a short time, and then to Las Vegas.

RM: And you were motivated to go to Las Vegas because you were teaching children of your first pupils? Why didn't you like that?

WL: That seemed like a little much, to teach a child and then have to teach his own children.

RM: Did it make you feel like you were getting old?

WL: Yes, getting along.

RM: How did you like teaching in Las Vegas?

WL: I enjoyed it; it taught me a lot. In these small schools and so on you're apt to get real localized and mixed up in everybody's affairs and everything. In Las Vegas you kind of walked away from that.

RM: What school did you teach in there?

WL: I was at Nellis Elementary for part of the time, and then they moved me into Las Vegas and my home school was Halley Hewetson. My job was to teach these instruments. And I had an odd experience the first year I started out I started giving accordion lessons, and that just took off. The music supervisor got me in the corner and said, "I didn't hire you to teach accordion. You teach band and orchestra instruments."

RM: Really? Why didn't they want you teaching it, if it was popular?

WL: I don't know. It was such a popular instrument in the commercial orchestras. But I said, "Let me teach the year out on it."

And he said, "All right. And you've got to throw out most of those accordion students and teach violin and piano and . . ."

RM: Were you teaching only music in Las Vegas?

WL: For just one year I taught classes half a day and then music half a day, and after that I taught music full time.

RM: So you made a switch from teaching a whole curriculum to teaching music in Las Vegas. Did you like that?

WL: Yes. And a funny thing developed. I was short on money, of course, like we always were. But I could give private piano lessons after school, [chuckles] so when I finished at the end of the 10 years in Las Vegas, I had 30 private students outside school. I could bring the bunch I was teaching and put on a concert myself.

RM: [Chuckles] What did private lessons cost in those days?

WL: The figure that I remember is \$2 per half-hour.

RM: So you were in Las Vegas from the late '40s on?

WL: Yes.

RM: That was when Las Vegas was really starting to grow, wasn't it?

WL: Yes. If you went over on the Strip, you could see the influence of the clubs and all the gambling and everything. But the only time I ever went over there was when somebody came to town and wanted us to take them. If they wanted to take us and pay our way, we'd go. [Laughs] I never did try to play on the Strip. There were some teachers who did that they taught school and played on the Strip too.

RM: Why didn't you do it?

WL: Like one fellow said, it's a good way to kill yourself teaching all day and then staying up all night.

WL: And by then you probably had a family, didn't you?

WL: We had 5 children.

RM: Why don't you mention their names, in terms of the oldest first?

WL: Farrel Wayne is the oldest; Eldon Grey is the second; Noel is the third. Juleen Kay is the fourth and Larry Kim is the fifth.

RM: When was the first one born?

WL: About 1935 within a year after we were married.

RM: Do they all live in the area, or are they pretty well scattered?

WL: Larry lives here, Eldon lives in Rose Valley now, Noel lives in California and Juleen lives in Panaca. Juleen and her husband went clear to Canada as a part of their experience, but they finally got a job in Panaca.

RM: So you've got most of your family pretty close here. That's great. What stands out most in your mind about your career as a teacher?

WL: Oh, meeting one of my students who's grown up who's grown up to the point when I don't even know him anymore and having him hunt me out and greet me.

RM: What was it like in Las Vegas, working with the school system?

WL: You had to look ahead for 6 months and order the supplies you thought you were going to need to have on hand. They were very cynical about you wanting to run over to the store and buy something today; you had to order in advance and have it on hand.

RM: Did teaching in Vegas pay very well?

WL: Yes. I figured that I increased my retirement salary \$100 a month by teaching those 10 years in Las Vegas.

RM: How long have you lived here in the Pahrangat Valley?

WL: About 4 years now; since 1987. My wife was ill when I moved down here. We were living in Rose Valley and I couldn't get the necessary help to look after her; we had family down here so I came down.

RM: Had you gone to Rose Valley from Vegas?

WL: Yes.

RM: When did you leave Vegas?

WL: In about 1973.

RM: Did you move back to the ranch, or what?

WL: Yes, we moved back to the ranch. When I first retired we stayed on in Las Vegas for 5 years and I became an agent for New York Life Insurance.

RM: How did that go?

WL: That went all right; I liked it all right. But my wife's health was getting worse it got to the point where when I left home in the morning, I had to make sure that the doors were locked, because she wasn't quite trustworthy.

RM: Did she have Alzheimer's? That's tough, isn't it?

WL: Yes, it's . . . just gradually slipping away.

RM: What do you recall about the ranching business that your father was in? You never were in it, were you?

WL: Well, not for more than a year. It just seemed like a losing business. We had another unfortunate thing happen: My sister married a man by the name of Jim Lees from Provo, and he was a miner. They were living in Pioche and he was working in the mines, and he got seriously injured in a mine accident, but the state industrial commission would not take him up. They just refused.

RM: Is that right? Why?

WL: I don't know. I never did meet the guy who was in charge of it, but they shut him down. So we had to support them on the ranch in addition to the rest of us and the only thing for me to do was to get out.

RM: And that would've been in the '30s, before you went to the University of Nevada?

WL: Yes.

RM: Had she married him right after you got back from Boston?

WL: Quite soon afterwards.

RM: Was he ever able to go back to work?

WL: Yes, he got over it and he got a good job for the Lincoln County Power District. He was killed climbing a pole.

RM: What do you recall about your father? What kind of a man was he?

WL: He was an honest, hard-working man who would do anything in the world for his family. And he was a good worker; a hard worker. He had one habit he used tobacco. He would chew and spit in the house and my mother made such a fuss about it that he finally chewed it outside the house and smoked a pipe in the house. [Laughs]

He got thrown off a mower and had a stroke and he went to a chiropractor and the chiropractor said, "The first thing we must do here is get rid of that stuff." So he quit using tobacco. He never did completely recover, but . . .

RM: Did the chiropractor help him?

WL: Yes, as much as anybody else would have.

RM: What do you recall about Rose Valley and Eagle Valley and so on?

WL: Our way of getting to Eagle Valley was on bicycle. The 3 of us my sister, my cousin and I rode bicycles 5 miles to high school in Eagle Valley. (We rode horses too.)

RM: What did you do when the weather was bad?

WL: We stayed with Uncle Billy and Aunt Maggie [Warren]. Then about the middle of the second year, one morning we were late getting off on our bicycles and my uncle Les said, "Oh, take the old Ford." We never walked the road again. [Laughter] My cousin Mike was a good mechanic and he could keep that Ford going.

RM: And you knew how to drive it?

WL: Yes.

RM: [Chuckles] I'll be darned.

WL: Believe it or not we drove a 1924 Buick to Boston.

RM: And kept it there?

WL: We sold it there. It would never make it in Boston.

RM: What was it like, driving to Boston in those days?

WL: It was a hard job. The first oiled road we struck was Laramie, Wyoming.

RM: Oh, my goodness.

WL: There was no oil in Salt Lake.

RM: Was it a rough road?

WL: Where they weren't reconstructing it it was just an ordinary dirt, rough road.

RM: Didn't it just beat the car to pieces?

WL: It just about did. But we got that old Buick on the oiled road and stepped it up and burned out a bearing. [Laughter]

RM: What did you do then?

WL: We had to get it fixed at a garage in Laramie. Luckily, we took it to somebody who knew how to fix it.

The next difficult time we had with that car was in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. There's a long, downhill grade to the bottom, down into the area of Pittsburgh, and our brake missed. We had a collision in Pittsburgh and my cousin was driving. I jumped out and he said, "I'll drive, you argue." [Laughter]

The other car was an old guy with a chauffeur (he had a Buick, too) and he said, "What are you doing here in Pittsburgh in an old automobile like that?"

I said, "We're trying to get out."

He said, "Well, you won't get out until you fix this and pay for it."

I said, "OK."

Just then a cop came up. He said, "Sonny, what's the problem?"

I said, "We've got it all arranged; we're going to fix it."

"Good," he said, "get out of here. You've got the whole downtown blocked up." And we didn't have a driver's license. In those days they didn't require licenses in Nevada. But if he had asked for our licenses we'd have been in trouble.

CHAPTER THREE

- RM: So you had this wreck in Pittsburgh . . .
- WL: Yes, and the man kept having his chauffeur take a left turn where it said no left turn. He finally had him take another left turn where it said no left turn and Mike said, "The hell with him," so he went that way and we went our way. He was leaning out his car about 3 feet when we disappeared. [Laughter] Then we stopped and had it fixed.
- RM: Was it badly damaged?
- WL: No. It didn't damage the other guy's car much, either. So as soon as we got out of Pittsburgh we got it fixed. And the person who fixed it got a piece of paper and drew us a route so we could reach Boston without going through New York City. We went through Hartford, Connecticut, and several big cities in Massachusetts, but they were none of them as big as New York. So we made it.
- Just before we got into Boston, it got dark. We didn't drive in the dark, so we got a room where it said rooms to let. We stayed overnight and the next morning we couldn't get our car started. There was a kid our age who had a car. In order to get us out of the way, he just drove around us on his lawn to get out of the yard and avoid helping us. Many people have that attitude, you know.
- But we got it started and made it to Boston. We had a picture of the New England Conservatory and we said, "There it is, Mike, there it is." So Mike drove over there and it was the Museum of Fine Arts. And the old Buick died. The battery died dead, dead, dead. We had to rent a battery before we could move it. Then we got busy and found a place to rent. After about a week it was obvious that we couldn't keep that Buick economically; they'd charge us \$3 a week or so to store it. We figured out that during the winter we'd buy our Buick back 2 or 3 times. We sold it for \$20. [Chuckles]
- RM: Twenty dollars! What did you pay for it?
- WL: A hundred and fifty.
- RM: Of course, that was a lot of money then, wasn't it?
- WL: Yes. And to go back we bought what they call a Flint. It ran well and once we got home we sold it for enough to make up for what we lost on the Buick. But it had one problem: It had been driven on the oiled roads all its life, and as soon as we hit the gravel roads, the tires went. We had to re-equip the Flint with tires in Salt Lake City; that was the only place that had the right size. When we got it to Pioche, we couldn't afford to keep it so we sold it to the mechanic at the Pioche Mines. And that stupid fool filled it full of kerosene and ran it! [Chuckles]
- RM: Would it run?
- WL: It would run 50 miles or so.
- RM: And then that was it the motor was ruined?
- WL: That was it. And he was the head mechanic at Pioche Mines. I couldn't see how anybody could be that stupid.
- RM: What kind of accommodations did you have in Boston?
- WL: We had an upstairs flat. We had one bedroom for my sister and one for my cousin and me. Our landlady lived downstairs but she never did bother us any. She was the dumbest . . . she was raised in the city and she didn't . . . anyway, we got along.
- RM: Going back to the conservatory kind of set the tone of your life, didn't it, because you had a career as a music teacher.
- WL: Yes, it changed my life. If I hadn't gone back there I never would have taught music.

RM: What did all of you think about leaving the valley to go back to Boston? That was a big step.

WL: Oh, we were kids; we were excited about it. I'm sure our parents weren't that excited, but anyway they agreed to foot the bill.

RM: Was it paved road all the way from Laramie to Boston?

WL: Oh, yes.

RM: Was it a regular 2-lane highway?

WL: Yes. And in Iowa, especially, they had laid concrete and put brick on top of it. That was the roughest darn road you ever saw.

RM: I'll be darned. Were there motels all along the way?

WL: Yes, even then. And we took about the same road back as we took over there, and we stopped at about the same motels we'd stopped on the way over. Except on the way back we didn't stop as often. It took us 15 days to drive back to Boston.

RM: Of course, you had that breakdown, didn't you?

WL: Yes, but we just stayed in Laramie overnight. But we made it back in about 5 days and nights.

RM: Did they have restaurants along the highway in those days?

WL: Yes. And we had one odd experience: We had traveler's checks, which we used all the time. We stopped at one restaurant and ate, and some foreign fellow ran the restaurant, and he wouldn't accept the traveler's checks. So we were in trouble; we didn't know what we were going to do. There was a guy standing there listening to the whole thing and he said, "Oh, hell, I'll take your traveler's checks. Here. Sign it and I'll give you the cash." He said, "This dumb thing here don't know nothing."

RM: I'll be darned. Was the country just made up of a lot of little towns all the way back?

WL: Yes. Of course now the towns would be spread far and wide. We did discover a route to avoid Chicago. By the time we got that deep into it, we didn't want to see Chicago. We didn't want to see New York, either. But we did go through New York on the way back.

RM: Did you like Boston?

WL: Yes. There was one thing about Boston that I didn't agree with: Their businesses were always patterning things after New York City. It seemed like what New York did, Boston would do. And I always thought Boston was city enough to do its own thing. I don't know whether they still do that or not.

We had a friend who had a Model T Ford a good one and he'd take us for rides on Sunday. And invariably he'd get in a traffic jam. [Chuckles]

RM: The cities weren't as big then, were they, as they are now?

WL: No, but Boston had a million people then. They've built facilities to handle the cars now. When we were there if you got in your car because you needed to go downtown to go to a store, 50 percent of the time you'd be in a traffic jam that would last for hours and hours. They had subways then too, but the subway of course couldn't handle all the traffic. They bragged that they hauled 2 million a day on their subway.

RM: That's interesting. How did World War II affect Pioche?

WL: It made it grow in population.

RM: Did you used to go from Rose Valley over to Pioche to go to movies or anything?

WL: Well, yes. We went to the theater when we could. But the thing that I wanted to see most of all were the dances. They had a dance every week, and if I couldn't get to that dance, I'd be literally sick.

RM: You always went to the dances?

WL: I always went to the dances. We didn't drink, just had a good time.

RM: Tell me about the dances.

WL: The Wilcox brothers ran the orchestra Frank and Carlisle. Frank played the piano and Carlisle played the saxophone, and they'd get 2 or 3 to help them out. We danced in Thompson's hall and he always had a program with at least 30 spaces on it, so as soon as you got to that dance you'd get your spaces filled up. You'd never take one girl and dance with her all night. You'd take her and dance with her once, and about every other dance you'd dance with her again, and you'd try to get her for the last dance, if she was still with you. [Chuckles]

RM: Then you'd take her home?

WL: You'd take her home. But it was a ball, so you danced with different people all night. When we went to dances later and saw people sit and dance with the same partner all night that would just give us a backache.

RM: The dances were well attended there, weren't they?

WL: Yes.

RM: And I've been told they were held on the second floor of Thompson's hall?

WL: Right.

RM: I've heard people say it seemed like the building was going to cave in when they were dancing.

WL: [Chuckles] Right. If you weren't dancing, and would sit at the side, you'd wonder, "Are we going to make it tonight?"

RM: What dances did they do?

WL: The waltz was about 25 percent of it, and the foxtrot; whatever . . .

RM: Did you ever play in a dance band?

WL: No. I never did have a desire to try to play the saxophone.

RM: Oh, they wouldn't take a violin in the band?

WL: No, not in a dance band.

RM: Not even a fiddle?

WL: Not even a fiddle.

RM: What about the piano?

WL: Well, my sister didn't want to get tied up in a band; there were a whole bunch of sharks there. She wouldn't have been safe with them, even in those days.

RM: You mean the other musicians?

WL: Yes.

RM: Were the musicians kind of a shifty bunch?

WL: They were a constant bunch in terms of their population, but many of them drank. One kid in Las Vegas got in a band when he was in the army and he said, "When we started playing at a dance there were several fellows there who were better musicians than I was. But," he said, "by the time it ended I was one of the best. [Laughter] Only sober one on the floor."

RM: The others probably thought they sounded good, but . . . [Laughs] Do you recall other things about Pioche?

WL: They made the statement that 30 men died in Pioche with their boots on before they ever had a natural funeral.

RM: Yes, I've heard Pioche was a tough town when it was founded. Was it tough when you were growing up in that area?

WL: We never did run into it in the dances.

RM: What was the charge to go to a dance?

WL: I think it was a dollar; I'm not sure.

RM: Did the men wear a suit?

WL: Well, or dress trousers and a sports coat.

RM: Did men wear hats to the dances in those days?

WL: They didn't wear hats to the dances.

RM: Men wore hats in those days, though, didn't they?

WL: Yes, they did.

RM: What did the women wear?

WL: Regular ball dresses. They were important social occasions.

RM: Did you take a girl to the dance, or did you just pick up with one there, or how did that work?

WL: Well, in Pioche I'd try to take a girl. When I went to college over in Cedar City I'd always try to pick up with one.

RM: Did most of the fellows take a girl to the dance in Pioche?

WL: Yes.

RM: And were you expected to take her home?

WL: That's right.

RM: Were you expected to buy her dinner or anything?

WL: There was never any time for that, but once in a while we would take them to the drug store and buy an ice cream. It was mostly dancing.

RM: Were there wallflowers who never got their ticket filled up?

WL: Yes. I had a funny experience in Cedar City. There was a girl there who took classic dancing in the school, but she was cross-eyed. She was a pretty girl, but she was cross-eyed, and she was unpopular at the dances because

of those crossed eyes. I was going to school by myself over there, and I made myself a project that I was going to take her to the dance and get her danced with. After about 3 dances like that, she quit me. [Laughs] She became too popular.

RM: Oh, she quit you!

WL: I didn't care. I wasn't stuck on her or anything. But I wanted to make it my project to get that girl to dancing, and she could dance. She was pretty if you didn't look at her face. [Chuckles]

RM: What year did your wife's family come into the valley?

WL: They hired her father to teach about '26 or along in there. My mother wasn't going to get a local person to teach her kids, but as soon as we got out of the school, then she didn't care. So they got my wife's father.

RM: He wasn't local, was he?

WL: He was from Enterprise; that's pretty local.

RM: So you knew your wife for quite a while before you got married.

WL: Oh, yes. She was in the fifth grade when they moved to Rose Valley. We liked each other and actually started going together when I was in high school. We broke up for a while once I got to going to college, but I finally got around to the same one again. Boy, she was a pretty girl.

RM: Yes, she was. Are there any stories or anything you'd like to tell?

WL: I could tell a story about my dad. He had ridden on the range and had eaten outside cooking all his life. After he got married, he wanted to have a meal in the house, cooked. That was the one thing he wanted. [Laughs] One day we were getting all ready to go on an Easter picnic, I think it was. My mother was busy fixing things for it and he was watching the whole procedure. He said, "After you get it all ready, Mother, just put a little bit on a little plate here; set it on a corner of the table for me. I just love to eat in the house." [Laughs]

RM: [Laughs] Oh, that's funny. Was your family Mormon?

WL: No. My wife is Mormon and when I married her I had to join the Mormon Church; I was 21 years old when I joined.

RM: Were most of the people in Rose Valley Mormons?

WL: No. My uncle Les's wife, Ellen, was a Mormon, but she never went to church.

RM: Were there more Mormons up in Eagle Valley?

WL: Yes, there was quite a group of sisters who were Mormons. They held their own Relief Society, but they couldn't hold a meeting that had to be supervised by the priesthood. [Chuckles] And Lorraine Hollinger, who's my age, went to church and got the Melchizedec priesthood and then they could hold their meeting and have Lorraine bless the sacrament for them.

RM: How many families were living in Rose Valley when you grew up there?

WL: Four. Speaking of Mormons, my grandmother was born and raised in Denmark. She made up her mind to come to the United States, and the only chance she had was to be financed by a Mormon — he brought her as a wife. But after she got here she discovered she was his second wife. She had one child from him, but she quit him and she quit the Mormon Church and she would not let her children go near the Mormon Church.

RM: Is that right? He didn't tell her that he had another wife?

WL: Evidently not.

RM: Was he over there on a mission?

WL: I believe so.

RM: That would be a big shock, wouldn't it?

WL: Yes, it would. She married another man, by the name of Jensen, who was a Mormon, but she didn't let him have anything to do with the church. She had one child from the first marriage, and she raised 5 more children in the second marriage.

RM: So the second marriage was your grandparents?

WL: Yes.

RM: Did the church play a big role in life in Eagle Valley?

WL: No. The men wouldn't support the women, so it was all a women's operation. They did their best. The men all used tobacco and they wouldn't have anything to do with the church. But as they grew older, some of them wanted to come into the church.

RM: And you joined after you married your wife?

WL: Before I married her if she got married, she got married in the temple. I had to qualify before I could marry her in the temple.

RM: Where did you get married?

WL: In the St. George temple. Since I retired from teaching I worked in the St. George temple once a week for 7 years. But I got to the point now where I don't remember well, so I haven't kept up my service there.

CHAPTER FOUR

WL: Rose Valley got its name because when the white man first settled there, the whole bottom of the valley was covered with wild roses. They grew where the water ran and they grew in profusion. But in order to make the valley worthwhile to farm, those roses had to be plowed up. So at the present time, the only place you find roses is on the fence lines.

RM: I'll bet they're beautiful.

WL: Well, a wild rose doesn't have as much beauty as the tamed rose.

RM: Did anybody ever collect the rose hips for Vitamin C or anything like that?

WL: Yes, I'm sure my sister tried it.

RM: Did the other valleys there, like Eagle Valley, have the roses too?

WL: Not in such profusion as Rose Valley.

RM: Tell me about the quicksilver [we were discussing off the tape].

WL: In the early days, before cyanide was developed, the only way to get silver out of the ore was to crush the ore and mix it with quicksilver, and the silver got going into the quicksilver. They had to be taken out of the ore together, and by the process of heat and refining the silver would be reclaimed. And much of that quicksilver got away. They didn't have welding torches to meld the [material] through it then, so much of the quicksilver just ran into the ground. Well, the boys and I discovered that we could get that quicksilver out by digging it out, putting it in buckets and washing it. From a bucket full of gravel and quicksilver we'd come out with a bucket full of quicksilver.

One summer when I was teaching in Preston my brother-in-law, Jim Lees, and I and our families went to Hamilton and we spent the whole summer digging that quicksilver out from the old mill sites and washing it.

RM: How deep did you have to go?

WL: From 2 feet to 5 feet.

RM: How did you know where to dig?

WL: We learned how the mills were laid out. After you've been around those mills for a little bit you can even tell where quicksilver was lost.

RM: How much would you get from a mill?

WL: We got 7 flasks from the Greunmyer mill in Hamilton. Those were worth \$175 apiece, so we made good money. We got a little bit from other mills, too. The only thing that would keep you from digging any deeper was the water we always ran into water. Well, the milling process needed to be done around water.

RM: I'll be darned. Did you do any other mills in any other places?

WL: Oh, yes. We were also in Dry Valley, right below Rose Valley. Some other fellows got a contract on that and they dug out tons of quicksilver.

RM: Is that right? They lost that much of it in the early days?

WL: They did.

RM: What years did you do that?

WL: It was along about 1940. Quicksilver became very valuable during World War II, you see.

RM: And you could figure out the way the mill was laid out and where to dig?

WL: If not, you could take a shovel and dig around a little bit and find it.

RM: Was there a lot of quicksilver, or did you have to get a lot of dirt to get any?

WL: You had to get dirt with it.

RM: How did you separate it then?

WL: With water. You'd just get an outfit with water and a flume and work away.

RM: How long would it take you to get a flask?

WL: When it got good, you could get a flask within 2 or 3 days.

RM: Then you would sell it?

WL: Yes. We found a druggist in Ely who would buy it. [Chuckles] I took in 3 or 4 flasks 2 or 3 different times there. He said, "I'm going to quit the drug business. Here, take hold of my hand and show me the way." [Laughs] Of course, he was just joking.

ADDENDUM

Wayne Lytle's son Larry adds:

An interesting story that is included in my father's history is about riding in the back of the buckboard from Rose Valley to Eagle Valley to visit his Grandmother Lytle. He would get a pile of rocks by him so that when the little Indian kids would run out from their wickiups and throw rocks at him, he would have his ready to throw back.

Many Indians died in the 1918 flu epidemic. Those that were left moved to the Moapa Indian Reservation.