Nevada Test Site Oral History Project
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Interview with Linda Smith

June 30, 2004
Las Vegas, Nevada

Interview Conducted By
Mary Palevsky

Oral history is a method of collecting historical information through recorded interviews conducted by an interviewer/researcher with an interviewee/narrator who possesses firsthand knowledge of historically significant events. The goal is to create an archive which adds relevant material to the existing historical record. Oral history recordings and transcripts are primary source material and do not represent the final, verified, or complete narrative of the events under discussion. Rather, oral history is a spoken remembrance or dialogue, reflecting the interviewee's memories, points of view and personal opinions about events in response to the interviewer's specific questions. Oral history interviews document each interviewee's personal engagement with the history in question. They are unique records, reflecting the particular meaning the interviewee draws from her/his individual life experience.

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[00:00:00] Begin Track 2, Disk 1.

Linda Smith: OK. Do you want me to say my name and rank and serial number? Actually, I was born in Inglewood, California—that is in southern California, in Los Angeles—in 1940. So it was before the war. And my father owned a wholesale candy business. And my mother was a stay-at-home mom, as most moms were in those days. And so I was pretty much raised in a middle class atmosphere in southern California until 1949. I have a younger sister who was born in Vallejo, California because during the war my father went to work for the war industry and gave up his business for a short period of time. He owned it with his brother. And in 1949, my mother and father and sister and I decided we would take a vacation to Las Vegas, Nevada to see my mother's older sister, who owned a motel in Whitney, Nevada.

Mary Palevsky*: Where's that?*

Whitney, Nevada is now east Las Vegas, and as you're going out Boulder Highway toward Henderson, it's one of those little communities that you pass before you really get to the Henderson area. And I'm not sure you could even distinguish it now as a separate political entity.

And as I said, my aunt and uncle owned the Whitney Motel, right on the highway. And my mother, sister, and I took the train, the only way to travel, from Los Angeles to see my Aunt Helen. Then my father was going to come and pick us up in a week because he was very busy with his work and he was driving up, then, to come get us and visit and then we would all go home together. The day he got to my aunt's house, he said he didn't feel well. By the way, he

was forty-one years old at the time. And by that evening, I can remember waking up and seeing them carry him out on a gurney, because he had had a major coronary thrombosis. [Pause] And he was in the Rose de Lima Hospital in Henderson. [Pause]

Do you want to stop?

[00:02:47] End Track 2, Disk 1.

[00:00:00] Begin Track 3, Disk 1.

He was in the hospital in an oxygen tent for about a week. And we thought he was probably doing better and went to the hospital to see him. And at that time children couldn't come into the hospital if somebody was in an intensive care situation. So we walked around to the back of the hospital and could *see* him through the screen, and he was there and he waved, and the very next day he died. And my mother was in her late thirties and, again, a woman who had really no profession at all other than homemaker. And she was a pretty accomplished pianist and could do some things like that, but certainly nothing that would carry her through raising a family. So after some pretty traumatic moments, months and even years, she decided that she would sell everything in southern California and move *to* Whitney, Nevada, a very tiny little town out in the desert.

Did you go back for a while?

So we went back long enough to get a few things done and sell the house, and it was going from a very metropolitan community to one of these very small desert towns.

What was your father's name?

Donald Lynn Mack.

And your mom?

Isabel Ethel Mack.

And then you have a sister?

And I have a sister, a younger sister.

And her name is?

Is Karen Helen Mack.

So I was nine, Karen was five, and my mother was in her late thirties with two children. Well, we moved to Whitney and lived, if you would believe this, in kind of a *very* small, you couldn't even call it an apartment, but it was part of the motel complex. But at least it had a kitchenette and it had a bedroom and it had a *living* area. And it was *winter* and it was *1949* and it was the *coldest* winter in the history of Nevada, probably. It was *so* cold, you couldn't believe it. I think actually—well, I *know* the temperatures were below ten degrees, and that is incredible for this country. And it was *bleak*, and it was a very traumatic change.

And coupled with that, I went from a pretty sophisticated school where I had been—at that point in southern California, you were either in high fourth, middle fourth, or low fourth, depending on your ability to progress, and I was high fourth and I was getting a lot of encouragement from my parents toward educational accomplishments. We wound up in a two-room schoolhouse in Whitney, Nevada, which to this day I wish it were here, but I think the building is gone, but it was four grades in one room. And we went from grades one through eight. And it was an incredible experience. You were sitting in rows and you were listening to each of the classes, starting with first grade through the fourth grade. And so when I came, they decided that perhaps I should be in a little higher grade, so they tested and decided *I* should be in the sixth grade, so I moved from one room to another room, actually. I mean I had skipped the fifth grade. And after you get used to it, it was kind of fun because you'd be amazed what you learn when you're in the sixth grade and the *eighth* grade is being taught. All those wonderful

things. And the teachers that we had were outstanding. We had a lady who had never been married, and she was an *excellent* teacher and I was very pleased with her.

What was her name?

Gosh, it was Miss Wilson, and I can't remember her first name.

If you remember it, we can put it in.

Yes, and I just can't remember her first name. But it was Wilson.

Well, who ever knew their grammar school and high school teachers' first names? A lot of times, it was just Miss Wilson or Mr. Smith.

[00:05:00] Oh, yes, it's a blur. Yes, you're right.

And the friends that I made in that community are friends still to this day, those that are still here, because we were like a *very*, very tight knit family. One of my best friends, her father was a business owner in the community, and he was divorced, so Dorothy didn't really have a mother. This would be not the usual situation. So she had this what seemed to be a very large home all to herself. Well, we became fast friends and to this day we're fast friends, and we almost lived together, you know, it was one of those situations where you're very, very close.

Another very close friend is a lady who is now a county commissioner [Clark County, NV], Mary Kincaid [Chauncey]. Her family had moved to Whitney and lived in a very similar situation to the motel situation that I described. And they had several children, I can't remember how many, and Mary was the oldest and a very lovely young lady, and we became very good friends, too.

So we were all very close. And we would listen to the radio, I mean all the things that you can't believe now—*I Love a Mystery*, oh, I mean *every* week we would sit around that radio and listen to that.

And so it was a special time. Also traumatic, though, because my mother—I don't think she ever fully recovered from the death of my father. And I became the adult in the family, probably the adult *male* in the family, if you want to know the truth. And so she relied heavily on me and yet, as I look back, she was an *incredibly* self-sufficient person, even though she *never* thought of herself as self-sufficient. And the skills that she had, she mastered. She was a good communicator, a good writer. She was a poet, a natural poet, which I did not inherit *one drop* of that talent.

But given those writing skills, she decided that she would see if she could write a column for the newly emerging *Las Vegas Sun* that would talk about Whitney. *Whitney Winds*, I think she called it. I don't know. It was something rather poetic. And she talked to the *Las Vegas Sun*. There was a connection there somewhere and I'm not even sure how that happened. But they said, yes, that'd be a good idea.

So she started a weekly column, and then before long it became obvious that she was doing well and they wanted her to move to Henderson, Nevada, the industrial community down the road, at that time population twelve thousand. That would've been in the early fifties. That would've been in 1952 or '53. And so *she* decided that she would go to Henderson and buy a home, one of those *very* small, old town site homes. It was old even then because those were built during the war, actually.

Town site?

Yes, the town site houses were actually built as a temporary dwelling for industrial workers who were coming in during World War II for Titanium Metals, Inc.

That's the big BMI, is that right?

Yes, Basic Magnesium Incorporated. And of course, at that time the BMI complex was not in the incorporated city of Henderson, if you will. Actually, Henderson wasn't yet incorporated but the town was in a county governance. And you only *had* these older wood town site homes, little square boxes. You didn't have the newer stucco homes that were built a little later. And we bought a [house]—if it was eight or nine hundred square feet, I would be surprised. Two bedrooms, living room. But it seemed pretty good after Whitney, Nevada.

And she started her career with the *Las Vegas Sun* as the Henderson correspondent to the *Las Vegas Sun*. Well, that meant that she was *very* much involved in the evolution of that town, **[00:10:00]** of that community. And it was attending town board meetings at first, because the town board was the political entity under the county, and then there was a decision to incorporate, a *very* political decision that was *highly* controversial. And the first mayor of the town was a doctor from Boulder City, Nevada, James French. A very dashing man, by the way. And the city council was elected, obviously there to support him, too. And she attended those council meetings and, Mary, I attended every one that she attended because I was sort of her support base. So I saw that all evolve, you know, and there was so much controversy and so much—

What was the controversy, Linda, that it—?

Well, it was primarily that Henderson would probably be better off as a county entity, being so small. And what would incorporation bring? It would bring more bureaucracy, it would bring more *taxation*, it would bring—of course, all of those things obviously would occur, but the *size*, and of course, Vegas at that time probably had fifty-five or sixty thousand people, I would guess. And we were pretty much distanced from that. So one of the things that they did was charter a master planning activity, and they hired a *very*, very sophisticated master planning firm from

southern California and brought them in. And that was also controversial because here we are spending money on this thing called master planning. What does this mean? I still have that first master plan. I think I told you that. And as I look back and read that, I cannot *believe* how prescient they were, because right at that point they were saying, Henderson, you need to go out and annex. You need to annex, annex, annex. You need to get the plants, the BMI complex, in the city limits so you have a tax base. *Then* you need to start thinking about things like resort areas that you can develop yourselves, like Lake Las Vegas. I mean they actually described a concept in that document that did not materialize until thirty or forty years later.

That's really amazing.

It is. And Henderson, then, was on that track. And of course, my mother was *right* there. And of course, also, she was very involved in covering the youth activities. I was writing a column for the *Sun* at that point, too, because I was at Basic High. Actually, when I went there—yes, when we went there, I was a freshman in high school, and I was in a high school that no longer exists now. But then during my freshman year, our high school moved to a *new* building, which wasn't too far from where I lived. We walked to school, you know. There again, it was a very close knit community, even though it was much larger, from my standpoint I mean, I was used to Whitney. I think there were four or five hundred kids in the school. That was quite large to me.

And the beauty of Henderson was the egalitarianism of Henderson, because everybody was pretty much on the same economic level. They worked for the plants. You had a true blue collar community. You didn't have the haves and the have-nots. And you did at Las Vegas High School.

That was going to be my question. So there would have been more of a social stratification at Las Vegas High?

Indeed. Oh, *very, very severe* social stratification at Las Vegas High School.

I just don't know. What were the sort of categories of people that would—?

Well, casino owners. And we would kind of chuckle and talk about the kids in Vegas that would drive their cars to school, and some of them would drive their very *expensive* cars to school. I mean *we* didn't have, *none* of us, and I mean we didn't *ever* have an issue at Basic. You hoofed it, I mean, or you rode your bike. Very blue collar and, as I said, very lacking in the issue of social strata. And it affects your dress, obviously. We were concerned about what we wore, obviously, but you didn't have *us* going to the very *expensive* stores. We just did Sears or whatever you do. But we *loved* cashmere sweaters. Oh, my gosh, we loved them.

Yes, that was the era.

[00:15:00] Oh, bat-wing sleeved cashmere sweaters.

Bat-wing sleeved?

Oh, yes.

What? The ones that—oh, right, absolutely.

And, you know, you'll see pictures of us in the yearbook with our little rabbit fur collars with—oh, we were darling.

I'm sure you were.

I think I was telling you that it is amazing in that kind of a community that there are so many people who did well, politically, in the state, or financially. Especially out of the class that I was in. I was in the class of 1957 and, of course, [U.S.] Senator [Harry] Reid, I think I told you he was in that class. He and his brother moved to Henderson from Searchlight, Nevada when Harry was a sophomore. And his parents had decided that they had to get them out of Searchlight in order for them to be able to function, because traveling back and forth to a high school would've

been almost impossible from Searchlight at that time. You'd have been traveling most of your life. And I think that's still a problem in some of the rural Nevada areas. I'm sure it is, as I had just finished a trip across Highway 50 and seen Austin, Nevada and Eureka. I mean golly. That's kind of the situation you would have in Searchlight.

Wow, I'll have to do that.

Oh, yes, you must do that. You must do that. In fact, as an aside, I saw Senator Reid last night at a political function here in town, a small one that was put on at the home of a friend, and he still looks like he can't believe he's in his position. He looks like he's pinching himself all the time. Excuse me. But I mean it's like, `How did I get here?` And I can remember that look, that kind of deer-in-the-headlight look, when he came to that high school. And Larry, too, his younger brother. I mean it was like, `Here we are.` And of course, he had a *wonderful* personality from the standpoint of being very—he wasn't what I would call an extrovert. In fact, just the reverse. He might be a little introvertish. But very warm, very much a person who had—you could tell that his core values were very much aligned with the 1950s culture and he was sure of himself, but not terribly egocentric, I mean, and he fit in beautifully. He had a *wonderful* sense of humor. *Wonderful* sense of humor. So he became popular very quickly. And we were all involved in the student government, a lot of us, you know, again, the egalitarian thing, I guess. You didn't really have the stratification that you have, so we were all pretty close friends. And he became *very*, very close to Mike O'Callaghan, who wound up being the governor of the state of Nevada, who was a teacher that had come to Henderson right after he had graduated from University of Idaho at Moscow *and* had *already* served in Korea and lost his leg. So he was probably in his mid-to-late twenties, Governor O'Callaghan, when he came to teach us. And *that* is where we learned Politics 101.

Really.

Oh, wow. And to this day, I often wonder. I *come* from a family that was politically pretty involved, and I say "involved," they were in the Democratic Party. My aunt was a national committee person for the Democratic Party. And so I was kind of raised, in a sense, with politics, although nobody ever *ran* for anything. But he brought an inspiration to us about what it really means to be involved, and he would actually *get* us involved, you know, we would actually be *doing* things. There was something, and I think to this day there is, the *Las Vegas Sun* sponsored a youth forum. And as high school students you would participate in it and you would deal with weighty community and county issues. And we were all involved in that. Harry was involved, I was involved, all of us, you know, and we loved it, and Mike was our mentor in that regard. And I think that's where Harry learned his love for the political. Plus, he [Mike O'Callaghan] taught him how to be a boxer, because he was a boxer. And he [Harry Reid] wound up being a very talented boxer, as a matter of fact.

[00:20:00] *I didn't know that.*

Well, I don't know how many people know that. I may be giving away a secret.

So that involvement in high school, as I said, there were a lot of people in that class that turned out to be very successful. I ascribe a lot of that to Mike, just from the standpoint of having—you know, you're very fortunate, aren't you, when you run into someone like that. *And I think in a small community like that, an individual that provides the student the opportunity for intense engagement over time can make a huge difference in people's lives.* *Huge* difference. And if you're fortunate enough to have your path cross, and today I'm not sure even if the—I think the odds are less. First of all, in Nevada at that point in time, Nevada was small enough that you could *know* Pat McCarran, Senator Pat McCarran. My aunt interacted with

him. I always think about Bob Broadbent. We *loved* Bob Broadbent. He was a druggist in Boulder City and he became a county commissioner and then, you know, he wound up—as a matter of fact, ironically he wound up as an assistant secretary for interior when I was with [the U.S. Department of the] Interior. And he was my boss. So I mean these are the people that truly made Nevada. Literally.

Yes. Made modern Nevada, for sure.

Absolutely. Modern Nevada. Absolutely. You would have get-togethers and all of the politicians would be there and they'd literally have their shirtsleeves. I mean nothing phony. They were part of the scene.

So that was a very *good* feeling that I always had about being there. I loved it. I mean we all loved it. And my mother was just in heaven because she found her footing. She was respected in the community. *Very* compassionate woman. I don't think she ever wound up with a level of complete self-assurance, but that's she gained confidence as the years passed.

Well, it occurs to me when you say that, it's a matter of the era, too. She was a pioneer in so many ways that you don't have enough people around you to get that self-assurance because you're doing something pioneering. You don't have other women around you who are also doing those things, so you're going—

Totally. Right. You don't. And I have often wondered how I *never* felt in my *whole life*, I never felt that I was *less* professional or diminished in any sense because I was a female. And you know, I *suppose* a lot of it's because of her.

There's no question.

And I know you have a similar situation. I have never, ever suffered from that, I don't know if it's a syndrome, but I mean this thing that says, `Because I am a woman, I have to do something different.` There was *never* that sense.

What's interesting about that, really *interesting about that, Linda, is that she, from what you're saying,* did *have maybe not a strong sense. But just her doing what she did was meaningful to you in a way that you didn't have [that sense of diminishment].*

You said it very well. Very well.

And that's just so interesting.

And as I analyze it—yes, because probably if you were able to read her mind, she would have *not* been very confident, but it's remarkable what she was able to do. And well known in the community. I mean to this day, Harry Reid probably would say to me—well, he's said to me on many occasions, `I *loved* Isabel.` Everybody said it. I mean, `I *loved* Isabel.` But he knew her better than he knew me, her daughter that went to school with him.

Because of her columns or because of who she was in the community?

Because they interacted, and they interacted after I left home, too, and that's probably a major part of the reason. Because when I left, I wasn't in Henderson that much, and Harry, of course, was very much involved in not only Henderson politics but Clark County politics, and so his path was probably a little more local than mine.

Because when we graduated from high school, I had a scholarship. And the other thing that was interesting is I don't know if they still do, and I think they still do have, Girls' and **[00:25:00]** Boys' State. That was another interesting exercise, where you elect members of the *junior* class, a girl and a boy, to be the school's representative at a what they call Girls'—well, boys go to Boys' State, girls go to Girls' State. And you set up a government. You sleep in a

gym. And *all* these schools are present, and you actually set up a replica of the federal government. You have an executive branch. You have a legislative branch. And again, the whole political thing. And you have the actual politicians coming in and lecturing you, and you run your little country. And here we all were, you know, working.

So you did that.

Oh, yes, it seemed like I was always—because I was the tallest, I'm sure—*elected* to everything. And it's all so interesting in that in my yearbook, Harry was voted the Most Humorous. I was voted the Most Likely to Succeed. And other classmate, Russ Williams, was voted for the male Most Likely to Succeed. And Harry, being the most humorous, and of course, he's the one that has outshone everyone. And I reminded him of that last night, and he just grinned. He was a person that you never would have thought would've been driven, but as it turned out, he was the most driven of us all. Interesting.

It is interesting, and you sometimes don't see those things at the teenage level, and they don't even manifest themselves.

Didn't at all. No. No, it was just good old [Harry], you know. So that was interesting.

But I had a scholarship, then, to go to the University of Nevada, Reno. Again, it was a journalism scholarship. A couple of scholarships, actually. And I attended the University of Nevada, Reno for a year, majoring in journalism. And because my mother's situation was so concerning, I just felt like I needed to be near her, and going back and forth, and it was tough to come up with the expenses without—

How did you get back and forth?

Bus. Greyhound bus, coming from Reno to Henderson.

So that must've taken a good part of the day.

Oh, ten hours, I would guess, and it stopped at *every little town* to dump the mail, and of course, there weren't that many towns but I mean you're talking Tonopah and, you know, the whole route. I did that many times. Many times. Decided I wanted to be closer to home and I decided that I would probably go to Nevada Southern [now University of Nevada, Las Vegas] then on a part-time basis. And as it turned out, that meant I *had* to give up my scholarship. And I debated on whether to do that or not, and then I got a call from a gentleman by the name of Royce Feour. And I'm telling you this story because it is kind of interesting.

Royce went to Las Vegas High School. He was a senior the year I was a senior. Royce was the alternate to my scholarship. And Royce called me and he said, Linda, if you've decided to go to Las Vegas, he said, I *really* want to go to Reno, and would you consider—let's just talk about you giving up the scholarship, and he was being very nice about it. And I said, Well, Royce, that makes sense. It really does, knowing that he wanted to go so badly. So he went to the University of Nevada, Reno and graduated with a degree in journalism, and he just retired the other day from the *Las Vegas Review-Journal* as the best-known boxing sports writer *on the planet*. We're talking *on the planet.*

Really. See, this is a universe I know nothing about. Journalism and boxing.

I know nothing about it either. But here he is. I mean he specialized in that and he's gone *global*. And it turns out that he is the brother of a lady I worked with and is a dear friend of mine for years and years. I mean just coincidentally. And at that time, I didn't know Joanne at all. She was his older sister. And Joanne worked with me at the Atomic Energy Commission [AEC] and DOE **[00:30:00]** [Department of Energy] for many years. And we have often talked about that. We're so pleased that Royce, had that money. Of course, he would've found a way. Knowing Royce, he would've found a way.

Sure. But the fact is, that's how it happened.

But the fact is, that's how it happened.

But anyway, I did start at Nevada Southern [now UNLV] part-time and I also decided *I* wanted to go to work. And I lived at home in Henderson.

Did you have a major at UNLV or you were just taking courses?

Journalism. And I kept that major, for a while anyway. And so I decided I would start the job-hunting process. And then I remembered that I had taken a typing test, when I was a junior in high school, for federal civil service. At that time, they had come around to schools and they were giving clerical tests. Well, I knew I would *never* be able to pass a shorthand test. So I took the typing test and I did very well on that, of course. And it turned out I was on a register. I had no idea what that meant.

Had they come around because of the test site? They were looking for—the AEC or just the feds?

No, this was just the feds. It was not AEC, and I'll talk a little bit about that, but AEC was excepted service, so it was a little different entry process.

So I got a notice. I told them I was interested. I was on the register, and I had a call from the Bureau of Reclamation [BOR] in Boulder City, Nevada. So I went up and interviewed and, by gosh, I was hired as a GS-2 at the Bureau of Reclamation. And I was *just* as happy as I could be. So that was really the beginning of the federal thing. I had, when I was a junior or senior in high school, worked at Nellis Air Force Base for the summer, you know, in one of those temporary assignments where you go out maybe for a couple of months and they're hiring high school kids, and those were kind of fun experiences but nothing too serious.

But anyway, I was at the Bureau of Reclamation and I was working for a lady I just loved. She was a GS-5 secretary, which was a *very* high grade.

That's what I was going to ask. That's a high grade for a secretary, is that right?

Well, it was then. I mean absolutely.

I'm just learning this whole part of the universe, these different grades.

Well, yes, those are obviously all clerical grades. She obviously ran the whole thing. I mean Ina Liebespeck ran the world. She's still there, I think. And she worked for one of the directors and I worked for her. She guarded me. I mean she was *so* good to me. And she was *very* good about teaching *all* the important things that you needed to know about the Bureau of Reclamation and its ways of doing business. And it was probably less than a year when they had a *huge* reduction of force at the bureau, probably had a pretty big budget cut, and of course, I was the *first* to say bye-bye. I mean I was "RIF-ed." Reduction in force. And she cried. I remember [laughter] I don't want to see you go, but we'll get you back. We'll get you back. Well, little did she know she would get me back.

RIF is reduction in force.

Reduction in force. So then, I was at Nellis Air Force Base, which was an even better place to be. And I was working on the flight line as a person who was doing technical orders.

What is that?

Technical orders are—by the way, that was probably a job that has served me well my whole life. Tech orders tell you how to do things, they're manuals. And so you had *libraries* of these manuals. How to fly a plane. How to fix a ground cooling unit. And I had them memorized. Boy, I could've told you the TO [technical order] number of just about anything. And again, I was working for a sergeant that was just great. Earl McWhorter. He was just absolutely wonderful.

So just let me understand this. People come to you for *this information?*

[00:35:00] Yes. Yes. And you keep up the base technical order file. And the pilots would come in and they'd be looking for Tech Order F-101 or whatever. At that time, there were F-101s, jet fighter aircraft.

OK. OK, and then you would get that for them.

And you would get that for them, or you would help them research things, and you kept all the files up. It was like being in a little library. So that was kind of fun. And you were right next to the test pilot activity, so you got to see all those test pilots come in and out. And you got to hear their radio transmissions, which was even more fun. And they were flying, at that time, F-100s, which are now so obsolete, I doubt if *any* exist on the planet. And they were moving in the Republic F-105s, which were the *big* new fighter jets, those were *very* fierce-looking airplanes.

And so I worked on the flight line for quite a while, but then I had a chance to be promoted to an even better job, and that was with the base public relations office, so I could do a little writing and exercise some of my journalistic skills that I thought I had. And so that was great, too, being in the public relations arena. And I worked in *that* office for quite a while.

And then I met a young man who was working for the airlines, and that's when—it was probably nine months of dating him and we were married.

And what year was that, Linda?

That was 1960.

So 1960. And your husband's name, you told me before, but—

Ted. Theodore George. And he worked for Bonanza Airlines, which was a very well-known *regional* carrier in Nevada, and they were the first all-jet powered airline in America, by the way.

Really!

Prop jets. F-27s. And it was a great little airline. So we were married and decided, to save money, we would live in Henderson and rented this *very small* apartment in Victory Village, which no longer exists. And I worked at Nellis for quite a while. And he was working for the airlines, and he was drafted into the Army at that time. It would've been 1962, and that was before Vietnam, but at least the beginning of Vietnam. I mean there were some things going—Dien Bien Phu, of course, had happened in the late fifties, I believe, didn't it? It was around 1957 or '58. So there was some involvement. We were really concerned that he might have to go to the Far East.

As it turned out, he had scored really well on all of his aptitude tests, so they sent him to a stenography school in Fort Benjamin Harrison in Indiana. Indianapolis. So I decided I would go with him. And so I resigned from my position at Nellis and went with him. And he and I worked our way through stenography school for him. And it turned out they sent him to Germany. So I said to myself, I am going to Germany.

So the two of us went to Germany, and I had a job with the federal government in Germany, in Stuttgart, working for an intelligence unit, the 513th INTC Group in Stuttgart, which was researching the backgrounds of people who were either emigrating or needing visas of some kind from Germany.

From east to west?

Yes. Yes. So you were getting into a lot of—at that time—a lot their histories involved their Nazi involvement or the various elements of the German army. And you would write up summary reports on these people to get them cleared to see if they could come to the United States.

Now, these are people who are refugees, or these are West Germans?

[00:40:00] These were mainly West Germans.

These are not East Germans. These are West Germans?

No, these are West Germans because at that time, of course, the wall had been built.

Right. So they're not people that are trying to escape.

No.

OK, but the question then becomes, so what kind of research do you do? How do you do this?

We were in the old Nazi, if you will, barracks in Stuttgart, and this 513th Intelligence Group was in this building. We had all of the old Nazi Party files, literally. I was using microfilm and microfiche, you know. You do a microfilm search and you would find *all* of these pieces of information about the German citizens, and you have to consider that before they would either grant a visa or grant any kind of an access, if you will. Isn't that amazing?

That is amazing. And I guess, well, obviously, that's something that didn't get destroyed during the war, so there it was.

Now, does it exist now? I have no idea. I doubt it. Well, I know they're not doing it now, but I mean at that time it was—

But what an archive.

What an archive. And it would be interesting to know, wouldn't it?

And so this is the early sixties.

Yes, it was '61.

So you're just still a very young woman.

Yes. Twenty-one.

Yes, it's amazing. Then your husband. Explain to me about stenography school. Now, what is it that he's going to be, that he does that?

Oh, OK. Well, you learn these skills, and he was an excellent typist. He just didn't have a clue how to do Gregg shorthand, which was not his forte anyway. But he wound up as the secretary to the—I want to say the G-2. Is that the intelligence officer? Yes, whatever the G-2 title is, for a base in Stuttgart. And he *knew* he wasn't going to be able to take shorthand, even though he'd learned it. I mean you go through one of these *really compressed courses*, and you can imagine. I mean Gregg shorthand takes a while. I don't know if you ever were exposed to it. I tried *not* to be exposed to it.

I was sort of on the cusp. I never had to do that.

Yes, well, that's probably true, right. But he had an additional problem in that—I'm a pretty good speller; he is not. Well, if you had a misspelled word in your transcription, they would call it a throw-out error and it would go *pop!* Like this.

The whole thing.

Yes. So all your timed products, if you will, could go in the trash can very easily. But he made it, thanks to me, because we practiced all those words that were hard words. We really had—but what he did wind up with is being the world's best typist, and when the colonel said, `Come in. Let's try your dictation skills`, Ted's going in like, you know, this big lanky guy going in like, `You've got to be kidding me.` And he just, at the end, he said, `Sir, I'm not going to be real good at this.` He says, `I don't care, as long as you can type.` So he just wound up being a very good typist.

Amazing!

Yes. And we lived in a little apartment in Stuttgart. It was quite nice. It was on the third floor of a three-story apartment building, right near the base. Beautiful country. Did a *lot* of traveling. It's the only time in my federal career that I *really, really* used *leave* like it was going out of style.

We did drive-it-yourself tours all over Europe, and we had friends come over, and saw it like you could never see it, you know, if you were just a tourist. And that was for eighteen months.

Let me ask you a question about just sort of the atmosphere. You're in Germany in the sixties and it's the Cold War. Are you, say, more conscious of the Soviet Union and the Cold War being there than you would've been here?

Oh, *absolutely*. Absolutely. Yes, the whole Cold War thing, and the *Berlin* experience, because we actually traveled in to West Berlin with some friends, and we were both cleared. I at least was **[00:45:00]** being cleared for top secret. Ted had a top secret. And our friend had a top secret. Although his wife didn't, it doesn't matter. But the uniformed services were told, if you do a tour into East Berlin, wear your uniform, because that was part of the agreement, obviously, among the countries that occupied. Right of entry for any of the other countries, and the uniform is the mark. So going in to East Berlin, Ted and John wore their uniforms, and I'm sitting here—

You could go into East Berlin?

On a bus tour. It was on a structured bus tour. And they changed drivers at Checkpoint Charlie. So the bus stops, the driver gets off, and I'm thinking, I will never see my mother again. I will be arrested in here. And then they *completely* searched that bus. They checked everybody on the bus. The East German *vopos* come in and do this. And then you're looking, of course, at the chain link fences, and you're looking at the East German *vopos* who are—

Vopos?

The East German police. *Volkspolitzei*, and it was shortened to "vopos." But they're standing on kind of a platform behind the fence and their guns are trained on whoever's over there.

Yes. I've seen pictures only. You're seeing the real thing.

Yes. And Carol and I are saying, Do we really want to do this? And I'm saying, You've got to do this. This is going to be the thing of a lifetime here. But I mean they're checking the axles, they're checking everything when you go in there, just to see what's really going on here. And then you change bus drivers. Of course, here's West Berlin bustling with activity and capitalism at its best at that time. And still. I mean it was a very vibrant city. And then you drive into East Berlin and it's like, my word, where are the people? The streets are empty. And they're taking you to areas that looked almost staged. Well, here is our avenue with all of our wonderful apartments. No people. And here is our lake with our recreation area. And the highlight really was the trip to the World War II memorial where so many Russians are buried, and the memorial to those troops. We probably *never*, never correctly estimated what Russia gave in that war. *Never*. I don't think it's ever been—we know from the history books that we read—but the general public, I don't think is aware of the loss. And so it was a fantastic tour.

At that point in East Germany, are you still seeing—I imagine in West Germany not, but I'm just curious, are you still seeing any remnants of World War II as far as rubble and—?

Absolutely. Absolutely. Absolutely. And churches that had been bombed. And you're seeing, oh, yes, all sorts of structural reminiscences of World War II. Yes, it was incredible. Most of the rubble was in East Berlin.

This is fifteen, sixteen years later.

Yes. Yes. A lot of it, of course, most of it had been—a *lot* of it had been rebuilt. I won't say most of it. But some of the things that they *weren't* rebuilding, they were *purposely* not rebuilding but retaining as, if you will, memorials. So yes, you were reminded everywhere. You were reminded as you would walk down the wall, down streets where here's the chain link fence and then here

are flowers and memorials and graffiti saying so-and-so died here because they jumped out of a window. And so there were all those kinds of reminiscences. And just the knowledge that physically you couldn't just *go* into Hungary. I mean which would have been great if you could've gone into the eastern European areas, but there was no way. So that was probably one of the most—that was a very good trip. And we made it back.

Yes, you did. You're here to tell the story.

[00:50:00] Yes. Right. So we were there for two years and, as I said, did a lot. We loved the Swiss touring and the Italian touring and all of that, and many wonderful experiences there. And then we came back, bought our *brand* new car, our little Volkswagen car.

You brought it back?

And shipped her back. We actually saw them take it off the ship in New York. And it was *zee blau*, sea blue. And it ran like a top. And we drove that back to Nevada. Actually, it took us a week for him [Ted Smith] to be able to check out, and he was *so* frustrated because that whole process. Well, for one thing, he had gone over on a ship, my husband, and said, I will never do that again in my life. I will go to *jail* before I will go back on a ship. Can you imagine sending your troops over on a ship? I mean does this sound archaic? And of course, he was a guy that worked for the airlines. He's going to get on a plane and go somewhere. So he says, We *pay* our way back. Well, we didn't have enough *money* to do *United* Air Lines, so we came back on Icelandic. Left Europe from Luxembourg, if you can believe this, Luxembourg City, got on that airplane, and landed at Reykjavik, Iceland *mid*way, midnight, and we are talking winter. It gives new meaning to the word "chilly," believe me, when you get off that plane. It's almost like, I cannot *believe* this. But they let us off long enough to just kind of stretch our legs, then we got back on, and you can imagine what kind of a

cattle car that was. I mean every poor person in the whole world who had to go from Europe to the U.S. and here we are. But it was good.

So you landed in New York?

Landed in New York. And it took a week to check out. Again, that upset him. It should've taken a day or two. But he was raking leaves. They kept him busy until we left. But we had good friends there, so we had a good time. We were able to see a little of New York. That's a wonderful city, by the way.

So what Army base is he at there, raking leaves?

Well, I tried to think of it. It was Fort Hamilton, I think. It was right near the bridge. I mean right *under* the bridge, as a matter of fact. Yes, I think it was Fort Hamilton.

That sounds right.

And it took us probably four days to drive back. And we said, We're not living in Henderson *any*more. We're going to move to Vegas. And of course, he was going back to the airlines. And then I was job-hunting again. And I had been up to the grade of GS-4. I was *really* fortunate in Stuttgart because you could imagine how many wives are looking for federal work. I mean that was the best-paid work, and because of my experience at Nellis, I was able to go in and get my GS-4. Of course, if you don't know GS [General Service] grading, that doesn't mean much, I guess.

Well, I'm learning what it means, so I can tell that it's significant.

Well, I don't even think that they *start* you at a four anymore, it's so low. At that time, it was quite good. And salary-wise, we were on a pretty even par. What he was making with the airlines, I was generally equaling that salary, or maybe even doing a little better. And I had heard that the Atomic Energy Commission was a good place for a federal person to work because

salary structure was a little higher and they were doing a lot of hiring at that time. And I didn't know too much about what they were doing. Obviously, when I was a kid, or at least in high school in Henderson, we were very much aware of atomic weapons testing. And you would go and stand outside at certain times in the morning or whatever to see the tests. You could see the glow or you could see, you know, or we would *drive* perhaps out on the highway to Mt. Charleston and watch certain things. And it was well publicized. It had to be well publicized. *And at that point it's spectacle, I guess, pretty much. You're not thinking, that's a big bomb?* **[00:55:00]** Not at all. It's spectacle. And there isn't a sense of, "oh, my goodness, something could happen here." There's not a sense of, "what kind of radioactive impact is there going to be?" There just wasn't that kind of atmosphere at all. And a lot of the cultural phenomena reflected, of course, the fact that there was atomic testing going on. And even the newspapers. Hank Greenspun, who owned the *Las Vegas Sun*, my mother had worked for the *Las Vegas Sun*, was part of the so-called *Las Vegas Sun* family—he wound up being an absolute bitter person about the Nevada Test Site and its programs over the years. But at that time, there was no sense of that. I mean he was out there on the bleachers, reporting. I think everybody was more excited and maybe proud. So you know, you're right. It was kind of part of the entertainment venue, let's put it that way. Yes.

So I wasn't too sure what all this was about, and I *certainly* wasn't aware that by *that* time, atmospheric testing had gone away and we were in the underground testing phase. Not long, because that would've been 1965, so it would've been, you know, shortly after the underground test ban treaty [Limited Test Ban Treaty, 1963] went into effect.

So I went and was interviewed for a job, and they happened to have a GS-4 position in the security division, and that would've been in the personnel security division, which kind of

tied in with what I had been doing in Stuttgart. And I was hired and went to work. And I was doing, I think, punch cards or something. I don't know. IBM punch cards of personnel files that we had because, well, we handled all the security files, did all the Q-clearances at that time. We handled the whole investigation process in that office.

OK, I'm going to ask you more about what that was about. But you yourself, then, had been cleared at that level for some time?

I had a temporary clearance at that point, and I had been put in for a Q-clearance. So they probably did a background, and there was then a pending file on the Q. And the Q took at that time, I think, probably six to nine months. And we handled the investigations out of that office.

And the data's kept on punch cards at this point.

At that point, a lot of it—well, there were files, but there were also punch cards that gave you easy access if you needed them. And so I became part of that landscape.

Would you do investigations or would you—?

No, no, no.

You processed the stuff that came in?

That [investigations] was a *much* higher graded position. My goodness, they even had a GS-*11* in there doing that.

OK. So you're handling the data, basically?

Yes. Kind of a data clerk, probably, something like that. Now, this is the personnel security side. They had the personnel security and the operations security. Operations security guys are the ones that are figuring out how to make things physically safe, which is a simple way of saying it, but you know what I'm talking about. They would do crypto things or they would do reports on

operations that were going on and how to keep them secure and that sort of thing. So it was kind of an exciting side.

The guy that headed it up, his name was Udell Bunce, and he was kind of a tall, probably about six foot-four-or-five, *big* guy, came over and *leaned* over the counter one day and he said, Ms. Smith, how'd you like to be a "secketary" for *me*? **[Linda, it's your call whether to leave this as you pronounced it or to write out "secretary"]** He says, It'd give you a promotion. He said, Could you pass a shorthand test?

And I said, I honestly do not believe I could pass a shorthand test.

He said, Would you try?

And I said, I'll try.

So he says, I'll tell you where to go.

[01:00:00] Now remember, the Atomic Energy Commission is *not* federal civil service at this time. It's *federal*, obviously, but not civil service. It's *excepted* service, which means it has its own hiring rules and its own testing. So they have a different and less strenuous set of regulations governing them.

But you're still within the government grading system.

Still within the government grading system. So I go down to the federal testing place and I'm thinking, why am I even doing this? I may have taken a year of shorthand in school, I don't know, and I didn't like it anyway.

And so this lady that was testing me said, How long has it been since you've taken any shorthand?

I said, A very long time. I said, But I can get a promotion if I pass this test.

She says, Don't worry, honey.

I said, Oh, OK.

So she's dictating and I'm taking this down. I mean I probably could've written it in *long*hand.

Because she's going so slowly?

Yes, she was just kind of going along, Oh, don't worry. Don't sweat it. I swear, whoever that lady was, I owe a lot to her. I passed, and Udell was my new boss. And that was a fun job. That was a GS-5.

So he's the operational security—?

Yes. Yes. And at that time, a lot of exciting things going on in the offsites. It started out as Project Dribble, but it wound up as Project Sterling. But a lot of DARPA [Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency] testing was going on at that time. And this was in Mississippi, you know, the Hattiesburg stuff, and so we were very much involved in that. And of course, there were all the underground test files from the test site that we were working with. And I was just fascinated. I just started learning a lot, if you will, about the operations just by virtue of the fact that I was right there. And he [Udell Bunce] and his boss were very much involved in the management, in the physical activities, if you will, at the test site. The laboratories were in and out. So there was a lot of interaction there, and that's where you really get to learn what's going on. Because actually the office is responsible for operating and maintaining the test site. It isn't an office that has scientific or experimentation goals. It relies, obviously, on the laboratories to do that, or the users, and there were more users than just the laboratories. But you learn so much when you're interacting with the users. And it was a great experience. A lot of time to go out to the test site and see the stuff on the ground. And of course, the people there were very, very

much wanting to involve the support staff, the administrative support staff. That was an ethic, if you will, of the office.

In what sense?

In the operations. They didn't say just because you're a secretary or you're an administrative assistant or you're a clerk, that you shouldn't do this or that or the other thing. You do find that mentality in other federal agencies. You're in your little cubicle, you're doing your little role, and you shouldn't learn more than that, nor should you—. No, a totally different learning environment. It's like, `Hey, I want you to write a report here about this, even though I know that's stretching you a little bit, but take that on.` They would let you grow and they wanted you to learn about the operations.

What's interesting about that is that it's sort of hearkens back to this notion of not as much social stratification, that even though you've got these different roles, they aren't limiting you, in a sense.

It does. And that's a good analogy because you *didn't* have a sense of organizational hierarchy to that extent. And of course, that's where I learned that the first document that you look for is your organization chart. I had to have an organization [chart]—you know, *that* gets back to the tech orders. I had to have the procedures or the organization structure so that I understood how things *fit* and where to go in the organization and how to make things work. And at that time, my *greatest* career aspiration was to be the GS-6 secretary of the security division. Wouldn't that **[01:05:00]** have been a wonderful job? Right. I mean I can't even believe it. And then a position came open as the GS-6, secretary to the director of the organization and personnel division. The organization and personnel division was a very important division. They did all the hiring, all the recruitment, and all of the management directives that governed the organization.

And this is now with the AEC management then, I guess, then—because I'm trying to understand organizational issues—that feeds out to the various relationships with the other entities that the AEC is involved with.

Absolutely. Right. And so it was sort of the integrative glue from the management standpoint of not only the organization but the organization and its associated agencies and contractors. And so that was an opportunity that I was really interested in. And again, it was secretarial, but it was the highest secretarial grade, a six. And the lady who had held that position had been given a tremendous opportunity because there were *very* few—in fact, at that point, Mary, I'm trying to think of what the highest graded female position in that office would have been. And I'm almost thinking that the highest graded position would have been Betty Van Vliet, who is the lady I'm talking about. She had been talking to her boss for *several months*. She was just a *crack* secretary. She was so good. She had been there since the beginning of the office, and she had transcended secretarial. I mean she ran the place. She wrote the manuals, she did everything. Well, she *begged* her boss to give her an opportunity for a professional position at the lowest grade level. She said, `You bring in these male interns that are right out of college and you give them a GS-7, and then they're on a two-grade track—they go 7-9-11 within three years—and I have to train them.` And she wasn't acrimonious because you weren't acrimonious: `These are facts. Give me a chance, even though I don't have a degree.` She didn't have a degree. Well, neither did I at that time. And finally, she talked him into it. He said, `Just to get you off my back, I'm going to do that.` And so he promoted her to a seven. Oh, my goodness. No degree. I'm not sure the female-male thing was as important as having that degree, by the way, and I still think to a certain degree that's true.

But I think that the fact is that the woman is probably less likely to have the degree, so there may be a correlation in some sense. At least someone who's in a secretarial position.

Indeed. Indeed. Yes. So she left that position and he advertised it and I applied. James G.LeSieur, Jr., he was the director of organization and personnel division. And the interview was quite interesting because he said, I don't really need you to be a secretary. He said, I need you to write announcements. I need you to take care of the directive system. I need you to— he listed a host of—[tasks] and he says, I certainly don't want anybody in here with a can of Pledge, dusting my desk, or answering my phone. But I want you to know the truth. This is what I need.

I said, I'm your lady.

[01:08:55] End Track 3, Disk 1.

[00:00:00] Begin Track 2, Disk2.

And so I said, I'm your lady. And he kind of grinned. Very pragmatic. Wonderful guy. I loved him. And I became very best friends with the lady that I had replaced, and it turned out that she and I were *incredibly* compatible in the way we did things. And it's one of those very rare work experiences that you have where you almost read each other's mind. I mean it's like I went in and I had no problem at all understanding the way the office was organized or understanding the procedures or whatever because it just made sense to me. And Betty had done it. Betty had essentially set it up. She remains my best friend today.

So she was on her professional track and I was doing my, quote, "secretarial job," which was really *not* a secretarial job. And there again, getting a great opportunity to *learn* the organization. And probably the most *valuable* information and experience that I could've had for further progression *anywhere*, anywhere, was *understanding* the fundamentals of the

organizational sciences. You don't learn that in college. You learn that in a live organization, and putting those directives together, understanding them, reading them. A *great* experience.

Now, just—finish your thought, then I'll have a question for you. Was there something else you wanted to say?

No, no.

The question was, if you can give me sort of a sense of what that really was. You're saying the organizational relationships, where the directors would be going to, what's involved?

Right. OK. At that time, and it isn't too different today—a *little* different in that you had one *major* management entity, the contractor, the management and operations contractor for the Nevada Test Site, who at that stage was Reynolds Electrical and Engineering Company [REECo]. You did have Holmes and Narver, who was an architect/engineering contractor. Somewhat of a subordinate—not subordinate to REECo—but the all-powerful contractor was Reynolds Electrical and Engineering Company. You had the user organizations, the people who *came* to the site to do the experimental work or to do whatever kind of work that they were scheduled to do, if you will, and that would have been a host of organizations. The laboratories, obviously. We had, of course, Sandia, Livermore, and Los Alamos, but we also had the Division of Biology and Medicine from UCLA [University of California at Los Angeles] and we had EPA [Environmental Protection Agency], at that time the U.S. Public Health Service. We had the [National] Weather Service. We had medical organizations. We had security organizations. We had just a plethora, if you will, of users on the site. So it was complex. It was very complex to understand how those organizational relationships work. Obviously, you had the AEC as the federal entity. That was the contracting organization, so to speak, and the overall manager responsible for the public health and safety aspects of the work that was going on; for

maintaining the infrastructure; for doing all of the logistics that you would see. “The roads and commodes.” as we humorously call it. And running, if you will, that political entity called the Nevada Test Site, which is a county, and a very busy county. Running the buses, running the housing and feeding.

So the municipal aspects of the test site.

Yes. Oh, yes, it was like running a municipality, for sure, a *large* municipality. Probably at that point at *least* a combined work force of ten thousand, I would guess. Maybe even higher at times. *Very* active test program. Incredibly active test program. Gee, I think I’ve seen numbers that before I came, in ’63 there was something like a hundred tests. That may be overstated and I would have to check that number, but many, many, the year that we resumed.

Yes. Yes, that’s easy to check.

[Per DOE/NV—209 REV 15: 96 tests in 1962; 47 tests in 1963. A majority conducted at the NTS]

But we were very active. And what we would do, in order to *communicate* with all of these various entities. First of all, we had a much stronger than they do now, I think, *organization* at the **[00:05:00]** Nevada Test Site. We had an AEC organization *at* the test site that was very robust. And that would have been kind of a microcosm, if you will, of the headquarters in Las Vegas that was really responsible for the integrative aspects of all of those users at the test site. These are the guys and gals that do the rules, regulations, and actually even to the extent that they were managing the overall *budget* aspects of what was going on. Because of the way the funding was flowing, AEC was a very strong focal point in the whole budgeting and monitoring of the costs. So it was a little different model than it is now.

“Were the laboratories as *strong* as they are now?”,would probably be a question. Perhaps as strong, I would say, but I don’t think I ever sensed the tension that there is now, because they were so busy. And I mean it was such an incredible team effort. And there wasn’t a

sense of one organization pitted against another. We've talked about the laboratory [ies]. Naturally, they had this built-in sense of competitiveness, and that's on purpose. I mean it was *created* for that, the tension. But you didn't sense it because everybody was there for the test site.

Absolutely. I mean it was, `Who do you work for?`

`We work for the Nevada Test Site.`

I don't think any of us said, `I work for the Atomic Energy Commission.` We said, `We work for the test site.` And that I don't sense as much now, although I'm sure there are elements of it left. But again, when you're at that program activity level, it's easier. And then you have buckets of money, see? It's the bucket-of-money concept. Resources aren't scarce. I mean obviously, they're finite, but they're not scarce. If you want it, you get it. `Go build your tunnel shot. Spend your billion dollars so we can disintegrate it in less than a nanosecond.` Not a problem. All for the good of the cause. So it was an exciting time to be there, for sure.

But mostly, my career up to the point I was with the O and P division [Organization and Personnel] which was in the non-testing side, but learning the organization, having an excellent opportunity. I loved the job. I mean it was great. The gentleman who was in charge of our office was a human dynamo by the name of Robert E. Miller. He had literally—well, I won't say he had *totally* grown up in the test program, but mostly. But he had come up through the program, management and budget side of the house, and he was a very, very sharp man, but very controversial.

Why?

Just there were a lot of issues that I think from an ethics standpoint that were being dealt with. Whether they were true or not, I don't know. But there was a lot of controversy in the office at that point.

The man that had been there as the manager from the time the office was established in 1962 was Jim Reeves, and I think you've heard his name. *Totally* revered person. *Very* highly respected, and a very well liked manager. And he had come there from Albuquerque. They had been campaign testing before 1962, as you know, and when they established the office, Jim came bag and baggage with his staff. And one of his *key* staff members is a lady by the name of Jeanette Eckart. And Jeanette was his executive assistant. And she brought with her pictures of Dr. [J. Robert] Oppenheimer. I mean the whole flavor of Los Alamos. Because that's where she had spent her career, you know, was in Albuquerque and working with the Manhattan Project, Manhattan Engineering District. So that whole Los Alamos flavor was manifested in the **[00:10:00]** manager's office.

And when Jim left, Robert E. Miller took his place. And it was a totally different dynamic. He was a stress-giver and was, for various reasons, I think, not the most popular manager. And so Jeannette was working, after having revered Jim Reeves, Jeanette was then working for Bob Miller. And of course, everybody knew that she was really the one in charge of the world. I mean there was no doubt in *anybody's* mind that she was.

And there was a position vacancy in the manager's office and Bob Miller decided he needed a deputy and he wanted to solidify the relationship with the laboratories. And so he decided he was going to pick the deputy manager. There wasn't going to be too much competition here. He was just going to go out and get a lab guy. And that would've been the first time that that had happened, that you would bring a laboratory guy into the fed at that management level. And he had tried to recruit a couple of folks and they had just said, `Not in my lifetime.` And finally, he decided it was a Livermore guy by the name of Charles Eugene Williams, who was a test director for Livermore. And Charlie said, `I don't think so.`

Arkansas physicist. That's an oxymoron, but that's OK. And then Miller put the strong arm on him and Duane [Sewell], because I think Duane was Charles's direct boss at that time. So Charles decided that he would at least come in for an interview. Well, as it all worked out, he took the job, and he had no *clue* what the federal government was, what the grading system was, had no clue even what his salary was, as it turned out. He didn't *ask* before he accepted the job.

And so Bob Miller then decided he was on the hunt for his secretary. He was going to hire Charles's secretary before he got there. So in his normally democratic manner, he came down to the O and P division and said to Jim LeSieur, I hear that Linda Smith's a really good secretary and we want her upstairs. How that happened, to this *day* I will never find out. I didn't have that much interaction with anybody in that office upstairs. But somehow, Jeanette, I suppose, had learned that, so she decided that I was the one that ought to be up there. And Jim LeSieur said, No, no, you don't do it that way. You advertise. You put up a vacancy announcement. You make this competitive. And he says, No, I'm not going to do that. I just want her up there. And so there was this going on and I was thinking, oh, my word, I do *not* want to leave here. And this man is making me nervous. And so that went on for a while and Jim LeSieur would come in and say—he just flat laid it on the line that he would not just come in and decide to hire somebody. But of course he *could* because it was AEC.

Well, as it turned out, Jim finally acquiesced that it was a promotion and I can work my way through this, and so I wound up in the manager's office, working for the new deputy manager, who had absolutely no clue of what was going on. The first question he asked me was, Do you have any idea what I make? And I said, I can certainly find out. I know

just where to go. And I thought, is he serious? Did not know. Did not know what grade he was. So-called grade. So that was an interesting beginning. For the next session.

Yes, it is 3:30 so I guess we—

We should, because I need to go and you need to go—

[00:14:35] End of Track 2, Disk 2.

[End of interview]