

Velma Swales, 85; hiring boss at Hoover Dam in the 1930s

By **JEANNE FREEMAN BROOKS**
Staff Writer

Velma Levon Swales always did have a mind of her own. And gumption. As personnel director at the Hoover Dam construction site in the '30s, she didn't take to married construction workers gambling away their paychecks.

So, her brother Carl Clark Sr. said, Mrs. Swales would inform each man, "If he didn't give his money to his wife, she would pay the man one-fourth his earnings and mail the rest to his family."

Mrs. Swales, 85, died Dec. 15. Friends remembered that she liked being called "a tough little tiger."

Mrs. Swales and her brother Clark were born and raised in Kansas City, Mo. Their father was a mail carrier. Even as a little girl, Clark said, Mrs. Swales could be, at the same time, "ornery" and a lot of fun.