

Via My cousin Paula Kowalski Jackson's
mother-in-law

My Mother made a tape describing her marriage and life with my father near Las Vegas on the Nevada desert. Here is what she said:

EARLY DAYS IN NEVADA

I am Edna Jackson Ferguson. The date is April 15, 1975. Over fifty-two years have elapsed since my husband went to work on the Boulder Dam Project. I have been asked by the Associated American University Women of Boulder City to tell you of my husband's work, and about our life in those early days, for their Living History Project.

To begin, it was the latter part of December, 1922. Clarence Jackson, known to most people as Jack, had just finished a job in Utah, and was returning to Los Angeles to seek more employment. Stopping in Las Vegas over night, he decided to try his luck at finding work on the big dam that was going to be built on the Colorado River. The Bureau of Reclamation had offices in Las Vegas, directing the preliminary investigations to the building of the dam. The man in charge was Walker R. Young. After a short interview, Jack was hired.

Investigations were being made at both Black Canyon and Boulder Canyon, to see which place would be more feasible for such a giant piece of construction. The work being done at this time was at Boulder Canyon, which I remember as being 18 or 20 miles upstream from Black Canyon. (Which is where the dam was finally built. JKJ)

Jack was told to report for work at the camp for field employees at Boulder Canyon. It was approximately 50 miles from Las Vegas. To reach this camp one traveled the main highway toward Salt Lake City (which is now Interstate 15) for a few miles, then turned to the right, on a road used and maintained by a large borax mine. This dirt, and sometimes gravelled, road was followed for about 2/3 of the distance. Then, with about 17 miles to go to Boulder Canyon, one followed dry washes, over hills, and in the tracks and ruts of those who had been this way before. This last 17 miles took longer than the first part of the trip. Anyone familiar with flash floods in the desert can understand that the tracks and ruts they had followed going into town could be washed out on the return trip. Only an experienced eye could pick out the correct way to go. The road (if one can call it that) was very narrow in places, and sometimes in making a turn, one had to make a complete circle, crossing over their own tracks to negotiate the turn, in order to get started up the road ahead. All of the supplies pertaining to the work and for subsistence of the men working there had to be brought from Las Vegas over this route. One can imagine the work and planning that was entailed, just to get things going.

When Jack arrived at the camp, he found it well organized with a field office, mess hall, sleeping quarters for every one, and the necessary equipment to take care of about 30 men. There were no