

*ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW*

*With*  
*Glen Cornwell*

*Conducted By*

*Tom Miller*

*January 1995*

**ORAL HISTORY OF GLENDALE**  
**by GLEN CORNWELL**

Today is January 31st, 1995. It's about 8:50 in the morning. My name is Tom Miller. I'm a volunteer participant for the audio history program for the City of Glendale. And we're sitting with Glen Cornwell in his home this morning, and it's a beautiful day outside. It's supposed to be about 80 degrees today, the last day of January. Mr. Cornwell has lived his entire life in Glendale but rather than me tell his story I'm going to introduce him and start out with a simple question. When and where were you born?

Glen: I was born in November, in 1920, in Burbank. And of course the reason that I was born in Burbank was that there were no hospitals in Glendale at that particular time. My mother's doctor, Dr. Thompson, was, uh, worked out of the Burbank hospital, so my birth certificate read Burbank, California. Then, after a couple of weeks I came to Glendale and I've been here ever since. Except when I was in school and when I joined the service.

Tom: Where did you go to school?

Glen: I went through public schools, in Glendale of course. And I graduated from Pomona College in 1942. And then I went to the Harvard Business School. From there, I was in the Navy and ended up as a Lieutenant in the Supply Corps.

Tom: Is this during World War II days?

Glen: Oh yes.

Tom: I see. I'm gonna run through these questions largely because they are the same questions I've asked everybody. We can at least try to get to the cross-section of what's going on here. How would you categorize your family's lifestyle in Glendale when you were a child? Was it just middle America? Were you a wealthy family? A poor family?

Glen: Well, I would say very much middle America. We were comfortable but we did not, we certainly did not have any particular excesses.

Tom: Tell us about the composition of your family. Mom and dad, do you have brothers and sisters?

Glen: No, I'm an only child. My mother unfortunately had a very severe case of rheumatoid arthritis which she developed when she was about 35 years old. I was 9 years old. So I grew up with an invalid mother, really. She could get around, and got around quite well with my help and my dad's help. But of course my dad was in business here. He started his hardware and sporting goods in 1911. And in 1932, they dissolved the partnership. That was all him, but at that time, they'd already been in business for twenty years. So they continued the name.

Tom: Now, in 1911, did that start as a hardware and sporting goods?

Glen: Yes. From the very first picture that we have was sporting goods, items in the store, right in the front. Baseball bats, that kind of thing.

Tom: And nuts and bolts and hammers?

Glen: Oh yeah. In fact, in those days it was very typical for hardware stores to carry sporting goods. And then of course Tom, I don't think you, do you remember the store?

Tom: Uhuh!

Glen: You do. Well, the last, of course we ended up by being there 67 years. And the last five years we were all sporting goods because we stayed in the same block, the same location that my dad started in. By that time, business began to change. Hardware stores were no longer expected to be in downtown locations whereas sporting goods were. Of course, at this stage now, in 1995, even the sporting goods are changing. Everything is mass merchandising.

Tom: Right, right. Let's, uh, when I heard you refer to it as a hardware store and sporting goods, I was surprised. Because I always thought of Cornwell Company as a sporting goods store.

Glen: Yeah, there you are, you see. You're of an age that knew it in the later years.

Tom: Now, you define today's retail environment as very much mass merchandising, I think you said. How is that different from the way business was conducted back when you were a boy?

Glen: Well, or even almost just before we quit in 1978. Well, retailing as a whole has changed. And by mass merchandising we mean very, very large companies with many outlets that are very large. And it's because of lifestyle changes, all kinds of things. Retailing until I would say early '70s probably was a very respected individual ownership type of thing where your entrepreneurs took active parts in the community, were a vital part of the community, continued to have respect for their employees which were also a part of the community. At one point, we had a retirement party for two of our employees that represented ninety years at Cornwell.

Tom: Between them?

Glen: Between them. We had employees that had been there for a long, long time. One guy had been there, well, both of them had been there for over forty years. It's just different now. And the people, instead of being in their personal situation that you get in most retail activity because of the long hours. That was one of the things. They started, Sears started staying open Sundays, that was the break. And then you get your shopping centers that are open every night.

See, we were open six days a week and originally Saturday nights. Then we moved to Friday nights. But you knew your customers and your customers knew you. Tom, you'd be interested that at one point, in that one quarter block of 100 block South Brand, where Mervyn's is now down to just about where the entrance is to the parking. I think there were seven members of the Rotary Club.

In that one quarter block on Brand Boulevard there was a bank. The Bank of America was there at that time. We had a clothing store. We had a stationery store. A hardware and sporting goods store. There was a camera store. There was a furrier. But now, and I know you had the same thing in Kiwanis, you don't have too many retailers in your service clubs. Because the retailers are parts of mass merchandising operations and their loyalty is to the company and not to their home and their community.

Tom: They may not even live in the community.

Glen: Well, they probably don't.

Tom: So in other words, where one store now stands, seven businesses at one time stood?

Glen: Instead of one store. It would be the Galleria.

Tom: Well, it's Mervyn's.

Glen: Well it's Mervyn's and then beyond Mervyn's you know, is the restaurant there.

Tom: That's right. The restaurant is there too.

Glen: So this is really what is different. So it isn't just gone to hell. It's the nature. That things change.

Tom: Landmarks. Can you give me an idea of some landmarks? Landmarks that stand out as significant in your memory. Especially as a child.

Glen: In Glendale, you mean?

Tom: In Glendale, right. Places you used to go and play, or play baseball, hide and seek?

Glen: You mentioned... people used to, kids used to play on the street for one thing. There were lots of activities. Whether it was ball or kick the can. They used to play in the street. Landmarks...

Tom: There weren't as many cars, and I guess they didn't travel as fast back then either, did they?

Glen: That's true. And there weren't as many people. Your parents didn't mind if you played in the street. It's a good place to play and the neighborhood got together and it was a good situation (fading).

Tom: Especially summer evenings? When it's warm.

Glen: Of course Brand Park was there. I mean Brand wasn't the library then. The castle...

Tom: What was the castle? Was that when Mr. Brand was still alive?

Glen: Yeah. Actually, that was his home. I don't know if he was alive. And then of course the Madison B. Jones Estate was always, that's the Dutch Colonial home on Kenneth Road.

Tom: Oh, the Gone with the Wind House?

Glen: Yeah.

Tom: Everbody thinks that as the Gone with the Wind House.

Glen: That was the Madison B. Jones Estate.

Tom: Huh. You mentioned the back of the ???? Building downtown. Security Pacific Building, that was there, it's still there. It's one of the last ones.

Glen: Yeah, okay, that's right. Okay, now you know, you kinda' jack up your memory. The Adventist Hospital of course was important. The P & S which of course is now Glendale Memorial.

Tom: It was P & S?

Glen: Physicians and Surgeons Hospital.

Tom: That's what Memorial used to be called?

Glen: Oh yeah. That was how it started. Now I think it was started about 1922-23.

Tom: Adventist was always on the hill here?

Glen: Well, in my lifetime, yes. You know where it started?

Tom: Ah-ah.

Glen: You don't?

Tom: No, I haven't.

Glen: Oh, you do need to be wised up. Haven't you seen one of those early Glendale books at all?

Tom: I have one.

Glen: Well, anyway, the Glendale Adventist Hospital started out as a hotel and it was, you know where the News-Press building is? Or was until, they just recently moved. Okay, that was an old Victorian-type hotel. In that location, that exact spot. And that became the hospital.

Tom: So right across from City Hall?

Glen: Right, right. And then they moved, as I say, in the early '20s where it is now.

Tom: I didn't know that!

Glen: I don't really remember the old one but I certainly remember the present building. And then in the '30s it was quite often, they opened up their dining room to the public. Of course, we didn't have all the restaurants then that we have now in Glendale. And I can remember quite often on Sunday, we would go to the hospital for Sunday dinner. And it was always fun as a little kid because they had a menu of all the things, and you go through and marked what you wanted.

Tom: Ah, I see. Just like you do now even if you're in the hospital...

Glen: Yeah, same thing exactly. But it was open to the public on Sunday.

Tom: Now, you just mentioned something I hadn't realized. Your grandmother was in the hospital here. How many generations are there in Glendale?

Glen: Well, you see, my dad came in 1892 when he was three years old. He came with his parents and some of his sisters. He was the youngest of eight children. So there was a whole generation gap that we might say. He actually grew up with his nieces and nephews. (Fay Stone?), I don't know if you ran into him at all. He was a very prominent dentist here in town. That's his nephew, actually, but they were contemporaries in age.

My mother came to Glendale in 1908 with her parents from Wyoming.

Tom: She was pretty young then too?

Glen: She was sixteen. And my dad graduated from Glendale High in 1907.

Tom: Was that Union High then?

Glen: Glendale Union High School District. There were eleven people in the graduating class. My aunt, his next older sister graduated in the class of 1904, and there were four in her graduating class. And the district encompassed all of Burbank, quite a ways out into San Fernando Valley, all of Crescenta Valley- La Crescenta, Eagle Rock.

Tom: And still there were only four graduating seniors?

Glen: The high school was located on the corner of Brand and Broadway. And they had a barn, people were riding to school, and feed their horses there...

Tom: You said Brand and Broadway. I thought it was on Harvard?

Glen: That was the new high school.

Tom: Oh, this was even before that!

Glen: Oh yeah! Brand and Broadway.

Tom: My goodness.

Glen: Now, they built the one on Harvard I think about '28 or something. I don't fully remember the dates, but around there. And then of course... Oh, that's wrong. Because they built the one on Harvard before that. It must have been 1918 because around about 1928 then, they built the present location. 'Cause I can remember as a second grader I think, they had people from all the different schools for the dedication of the Green Cross. Have you run into that?

Tom: I've seen this Green Cross on Brand Park. It's been resurrected.

Glen: Okay. Well. Okay. Alright. She was located at the corner of Verdugo and Broadway, right on the corner. And I represented Edison School. Whatever we laid on the thing.

Tom: As a second grader?

Glen: As a second grader. I went to Edison for two years. Then I went to Eugene Field for two years and then Keppel. I ended up in Keppel, then Toll, then Hoover.

Tom: Did you go up at Glendale College at all?

Glen: No.

Tom: Well, you've just come up with a wonderful selection of landmarks. Any others that you remember? Well, the Brand Park, when Mr. Brand was alive or at least when you were a child, it was still the mansion. Was it a park at all? Could you...

Glen: No, no. No, it was just a big house up there.

Tom: I see. With the walls all around it?

Glen: Oh yeah. Just the same as it is now.

Tom: See I think of it as a park and an open turf to go run around.

Glen: Yeah. Then of course, this is before my time, but you know, they had an airfield in there.

Tom: Any other landmarks in particular that pop up in your mind?

Glen: Not especially.

Tom: Okay. You've attended, you mentioned your schools. Do you recall any particular characteristics of the student body? They were pretty small compared to today's student bodies.

Glen: Well no, not really. Well a little, little bit. But remember of course, there was, originally, there was just Glendale High. Then they built Hoover. And, I think when I was at Hoover, we had about sixteen hundred students.

Tom: Oh, well, that is pretty comparable...

Glen: We had I think, over four hundred in our graduating class.

Tom: Now, is Hoover a four year school back then?

Glen: No. Three.

Tom: Still three. Could might have been larger than it is now.  
'Cause my graduating class had only 500 for three classes.  
But that was before CV was built? Crescenta Valley?

Glen: Oh yeah. Right. At that point, CV was just a gym grounds.

Tom: I see.

Glen: If you're interested in that type of information, do you know (Wayland Parsons)? He's the former Deputy Superintendent of Schools. For many years, in fact he just retired, it's been three, four years ago now. Anyway, Wayland started out as a teacher at Roosevelt Junior High and then moved up to Clark. And he was involved in all, during the time that, he was a principal at Clark that turned in to, eventually turned in to Crescenta Valley High School.

Tom: Is he still around Glendale?

Glen: Oh yeah. He lives up in the Verdugo Woodlands.

Tom: Oh great! I appreciate that. I was looking for more people.

Glen: He would be a good one to get.

Tom: Great. Thank you. I'll get in touch with him, his number.

Glen: 'Cause he, he actually in Glendale all his life too. He's a year or two younger than I am. He was at Edison when I was there.

Tom: And then split up when you went to Keppel and he stayed there?

Glen: No. He wasn't a particular friend of mine in those days. We became closer later.

Tom: Okay. You've talked a little bit about the composition of the student body and how things have changed a little bit. Do you have any additional thoughts on how the school system has changed? How education has changed perhaps?

Glen: Ah yes. It seem like that, that in those days, you always looked up to your teachers. Teachers as a group were very much a part of the community. Again, they were involved in the community activities. And you just grew up respecting your teachers and they were

a vital part of what went on in town. I don't think they have quite the status as a group. I mean, that doesn't mean they're not good. A lot of pretty wonderful dedicated teachers this day and age. But as a group, I don't think the teaching profession has the status that they used to have.

Tom: They're not seen by parents and students in the community in the same light?

Glen: Probably. I mean, you know, we just grew up. I mean, you know, if you were in trouble at school, it wasn't the kid's fault. I mean it's the kid's fault. It wasn't the teacher's fault. The first thought until you got into what the problem was. They were the law and they were respected. And I think it made a lot of difference in the way that things went on in school. The discipline was better. And I believe in public education. Our kids of course all went through Glendale schools. All our grandchildren were in public schools. I believe in public education. But it's a different ball game. There's a lot more pressure now than there used to be too from that standpoint.

Tom: What is the significant benefit or difference of the public education in your mind.

Glen: You mean today, or then, or when?

Tom: No, just in general. You say you believe in public education as opposed to a private school. Any thoughts of why?

Glen: Well, for one thing, I think it, assuming that you get a good education, it reflects the community better. If you're going off to a private school in some other town, you don't have the community connection. I'm really pleased that you are doing this as a part of the community foundation because it does give a certain sense of community continuance that could very easily be lost.

Tom: Well, I'm certainly learning lessons.

Glen: Well, it's a different town. It's a great town. But it's a very different town than it was when I grew up, that's for sure.

Tom: It certainly is. I could even say that just of the past thirty years, not to mention longer.

Clubs and organizations, churches, civic associations. Now you were in Rotary and are still in Rotary?

Glen: Oh yeah. Glendale Rotary. I've been a member for, since 1947. I have 43 years of perfect attendance. My dad of course was very active in various organizations in town and I decided after World War II, I decided to work with him. So the company eventually

became mine. It was expected that I would be involved as well. And you know, they're always looking for some young guy to do something and I tried to do my part.

Tom: Was your dad in the Rotary also?

Glen: No, no. He was in Kiwanis. He had 54 years perfect attendance in the Glendale Kiwanis.

Tom: Oh, of course. I don't know what I'm thinking.

Glen: And you know, it was no chore for me. And people say "Oh, 43 years perfect attendance". It really was no chore because I grew up thinking of Kiwanis meetings. We'd go on our truck and arrange to go to Kiwanis clubs. So it was no big deal. But here again, if you live in town, you have business in town, it's a lot easier than if you don't live in town, or your business is some place else to keep up the continuity.

Tom: Chamber of Commerce. Both you and your dad involved in the Chamber of Commerce?

Glen: Oh yeah. I was vice-president at one point. I was Chairman of the Community Chest Drive one year, and President of the Glendale Association of In-Group Donors...

Tom: In-Group Donors? What does that mean?

Glen: A.I.D. This was, oh, this was a group of, at one point, this was a whole thing that eventually got involved, oh, United Way projects. But one point, you know, we had Community Chest Drives, we had Red Cross Drives, we had other guys within the community of Glendale.

We had the Association of In-Group Donors which the emphasis was on businesses and employee payroll deductions. I mean was, like United Way has evolved. But this was just for Glendale. And then, in fact, that is the basis of your Glendale Community Foundation, you know. If you go back in your records, don't you know?

Tom: I perceive the connections but the minutes don't mention anything specific. So this is a good lesson for me. I've not seen anything that actually ties it specifically together.

Glen: I may have some of that stuff. Because, between Bob (Rykle?) and myself, I think he succeeded me as the president. When the Community Chest, Glendale Community Chest decided to go in with United Way, United Crusade at that time in Los Angeles, I was one of the

members on the community, one of three on the Community Chest Board that voted against...

But anyway, when they decided to do it, then of course it was imperative that the A.I.D. association probably do the same thing. Of course, L.A. was very anxious to get all that money and we had a reserve. We arranged for the reserve to go to the Glendale Community Foundation. It was about, oh at least 60, it might have been double that, 60 kinda sits in my mind, \$60,000.00.

At that point, there's about a third of what the Glendale Community Foundation have. That's where it came from. The Glendale Association of In-Group Donors. There was an L. A.A.I.D. too.

Tom: Now I had heard that the community foundation was started by members of the Tuesday Afternoon Club. Betty Preston, for example...

Glen: Well, they were one of the original ones, and of course Don (Packer?), you know. But you see their emphasis was different. The other one was an annual campaign. Whereas the community foundation. That's true. I mean, the background. But one of the early boosts came from this other organization.

Tom: Oh, I see.

Glen: Well they've been in existence probably for 10-12 years.

Tom: Do you know where the seed money came from? A guy named John (Brucker?), wrote a check for \$3,000.00.

Glen: Do you know who he was?

Tom: No. Well, somebody said he's a businessman?

Glen: John Brucker was one of the inventors of the Sunbeam electric razor.

Tom: No kidding!

Glen: No kidding. I knew him. He was a German fellow, and he had the original patents of the Sunbeam electric razor. He came to Glendale, he hadn't been here too long. I think he got involved with the Glendale Federal people somehow. He did live in Glendale. But that's who he was.

Tom: From what I understand, his \$3,000.00 was what really started. It is the genesis of it. Now, we're over \$3 million.

Glen: I know it. You've done a good job.

Tom: I love my job. Who asked me to do this, you know! Part of what I think I should be doing.

Churches. Long time church goer to the same church or others?

Glen: I grew up at the Central Christian Church and went to Sunday School there, one thing and another. And then 9th grade, I decided to go to the First Methodist Church. And we've been members of the First Methodist Church. Not members ever since, but attendees and then we became members in 1950. Still are. Both of us.

Tom: What, do you have any particular civic or Chamber or Rotary functions or events? Things that really stand out in your mind as fond memories? As a kid? Any vivid memories?

Glen: I'll give you a quick example. Maybe it'll spark a thought. Kiwanis has a program or has had in the past to help terminally ill children. It came to the attention of the Chair of the Committee that there was a local child who's terminally ill. His last wish, so to speak, was to meet Magic Johnson. This was back in mid-80s when Magic was highest of the high and the championships.

So, several Kiwanis members, one of them was Dave Thompson, former Police Chief, Page White and some others arranged for a police escorted trip in a Ferrari down to the Forum, so that this child could have lunch with Magic Johnson. And that is you know, it's not an earth-shaking kind of event but to me that really pushed the button.

Tom: It's a thing that an organization can really get involved. Any memories of not necessarily that specific kind of thing but, event or function that really stood out?

Glen: Well, I have, it's too long to go into here. I actually have it written up. But it's a long, long story. And it involves a lot of people here in Glendale and Guatemala. It was very satisfying to me because it involved three organizations that I had been active in. Rotary, Red Cross, American Field Service. And our son Alan was a senior in high school. We had an exchange student all year from Australia, John Busby. So as a result of that we, and Billy particularly even more so than me, we became involved.

Tom: Billy's your wife?

Glen: Yes. Involved with the American Field Service. She worked with the students. As a result of this connection, and I have written out. When I type it up, I'll give you a copy sometime. In the process, we were able to provide the City of (Casaltamango?), Guatemala with an ambulance that arrived one year before their major earthquake. They had not had anything like that for about 20 years. But it involved exchange of people and it was all because of one little girl that came from Casaltamango. The Rotary got involved, Rotary International. We provided, even arranged to have a nun go down there as a teacher for one summer. It involved tennis players at Glendale College, the coach of Glendale. It's a long story. It's really interesting. That's a good project. I'll write it up and give you a copy.

Tom: But it was something that really created a better result because all these people worked together.

Glen: Oh, absolutely.

Tom: You know, it used to kinda' surprise me at how different agencies and organizations, it doesn't surprise me anymore when people are able to put their efforts together to help someone or some organization.

Glen: That's true. Well that's just one thing. It involved three local organizations that had an international angle to it.

Tom: That's great. Quality of Glendale's transportation system back then. This is red car days and even pre-red car days. Did you ride much public transit?

Glen: All the time. When I was growing up. And of course, you know, I used to go downtown on the bus. I lived, my parents had built a home on Dorothy Drive just below Kenneth. The No. 2 Bus used to come down Pacific and I'd walk over to the bus and take the bus. And as I mentioned, my mother was ill and I took the whole Saturday morning, I'd take the bus and go down to the 'Y in the morning. YMCA. We played basketball and whatever we'd do, swim in there and those fun things. Then I had lunch with my dad on Saturday, downtown. Then I took the bus and went home.

We all used lots of public transportation. I didn't use the red cars as much because of where we lived.

Tom: Remember how much the bus fare was back then?

Glen: Probably 10 cents.

- Tom: It was pretty efficient then. Could you live in almost anywhere in Glendale and get yourself to a bus station fairly easily? Bus stop I mean?
- Glen: Probably. Yeah, because you see they hadn't built up on the hills as much as there is now. I would say it was pretty good most everywhere.
- Tom: Did residential development in that area end right about at Kenneth or did it go up above into the hills?
- Glen: There were definitely homes above Kenneth. But it didn't go up quite as high as they are now.
- Tom: Do you remember as a self-contained city such that people lived and worked here?
- Glen: No way, no way. Glendale was always considered a bedroom town. And the reason it was of course is because of the red cars and the close transportation to downtown. It was very obvious as a bedroom town. Probably the majority of the people worked in Los Angeles.
- Tom: That's why there aren't any office buildings I suppose...
- Glen: Well we had some of those buildings and we had attorneys and we had accountants. Of course accountants weren't as important in those days as they are now. I mean they were important but it wasn't, they weren't nearly as many. We dealt with Hutchinson & ??? from the very beginning I guess.
- Tom: Now that's the Security Pacific Building which is our building. That's where we are now with the Community Foundation. That was the first high-rise in Glendale.
- Glen: Yes, I'm sure. Six stories. Are you on the sixth floor?
- Tom: No, third floor. I have a beautiful view of the ventilator shop. You know Al Newton, my predecessor, started his career in that building, and ended his career in that building. Did you know that?
- Glen: No, I didn't.
- Tom: He went to Glenfed in between.
- Glen: He started at Security Bank.
- Tom: Right.

Glen: And then of course catercorner across the street was the Bank of America.

Tom: And your business was just...

Glen: Just south of that.

Tom: So most people went down to Los Angeles for business or offices. Do you have any thoughts about the changes in Glendale in terms of the high-rises and the business that goes with it?

Glen: Oh, I think it's very exciting. As a matter of fact, you often here Glendale isn't what it used to be and of course it isn't. But that doesn't mean it's necessarily worse. I think Glendale has done a fabulous job on the whole of keeping up with today's world.

Tom: I don't hear that very often from people. Especially from people who've been here a long time.

Glen: I really feel that way! And I like living here. We don't have any thoughts of moving away.

Tom: Good! Not a lot of your contemporaries have.

Glen: Yeah, and it's too bad.

Tom: It is too bad. There's that opportunity for a continuum that we're losing because not only are new people moving out, but the established people are moving out. It will create a new history I suppose.

Glen: Well, as we know, there's lots of pressures from every angle but I think on the whole we've done a pretty good job.

Tom: That's great. Politics in Glendale. You've seen a lot of political change. I'm sure in fact you live just off off Parcher Drive. Parcher was an icon in Glendale politics. What are your impressions of individuals who have ran for office in the past? How were campaigns conducted years ago? Have they changed now perhaps? What changes in the political process, local politics?

Glen: Surprisingly, not much really when you think about it. I think it's too bad that people who are interested in the community have to spend so much money to run. I think that is a shame. It was always a certain amount that they had to pay, you know, campaign brochures and things. The other night I went to the Eileen Givens thing and they said they were gonna get out one mailing and it

cost \$20,000.00! That was a statement made. I don't know if it's right or not. I didn't look into it. We all know with the advertising and the radio and all this stuff, it's just a shame that it has to be so expensive to run.

Tom: Alright. I have a question for you that I'm just gonna ask. It has become my observation that in election years, especially six months before elections, all of a sudden community organizations whether it's community coordinating council, advisory council, Kiwanis, Rotary, whatever; all of a sudden you start seeing candidates all over the place. And it's obvious to understand why but did you ever observe that? That the candidates today are involved in organizations, in my opinion, in my observation, in order to get elected.

Glen: I don't think that's a poor observation. I think it's part of politics today. Not just Glendale. I think things evolve and whatever you do, the next time it comes around you gotta do a little more. And it just keeps building and building and building until we've got what we have now. As I remember, they didn't do as much of that. But they have to get around and they have to get their name. And of course here again, there were more community people involved in the community.

It's surprising as long as we've been out of business that people still remember our store. They remember me. While I remember them by face, I may not remember their name. And the reason they remember me is because I spent a fair share of my time on the floor waiting on customers. You get to know them. And this is the personal thing that in this day and age you don't have. Everybody shops and buys things. You're buying from some kid working at minimum wage who doesn't care whether he's there or not. You're not gonna get the same feeling as you got someone who's a career and taking care of customers.

Tom: Not a salesman, but a service oriented place.

Glen: Right. This is what's really different and as a result you knew more people. When you're in an office some place, in a building, you don't get to know as many people. And people don't get to know you like they do when you're a visible person in a visible operation. This is what our society has gotten into. And as a result, if you're gonna get to be known, you've got to go to these clubs and these organizations so they'll know who you are.

Tom: But there's a couple of different motivations. One is to become known and the other is to serve the community.

Glen: Right.

Tom: There's the balance of...

Glen: It seemed to me though, looking back a period of years, they were always seeking people to run for office. To appear on commissions or to do this thing. Now it seems like people are seeking to do them.

Tom: Why is that, do you think?

Glen: I don't know. I really don't know. And it may be, just from my personal situation rather than a general thing that's the one thing that's different.

Tom: I've noticed in the news there's been an article seeking commissioners for 3 different commission in the past coupla' weeks.

Glen: I noticed that in the paper. But here again, I mean so you want to be a commissioner you gotta fill out these forms, you gotta do all this stuff. You know, why bother? It's enough to say I'm gonna do it and devote your time to it. But you gotta go through this, then there's always a question where you got your conflict of interest. It was probably there but it wasn't the big deal that it is now.

Tom: I try to temper my thoughts and observations with one perspective and that is it is my job to serve the community. That is what the community foundation is paying me to do. So I go to these things everyday, all day long because that's what I'm suppose to do. And I try to remember back when I wasn't in this position. And I was working in a little office working for Glenfed or whatever. Anyway, how about the perceptions of how elected officials made decisions? What factors influence their decisions? Do you think politicians over the years, by and large did the job because they wanted to serve the community?

Glen: Oh yes, I would say so, by and large. That doesn't mean that they weren't in a position anytime to take advantage of this situation. That doesn't mean illegally or to anyone else that's kept from it. I feel that by and large they were there because they were interested in Glendale and hope that it would be continued to be the type of city that they have known.

Tom: Certainly not the salary. Did you ever think of running for public office yourself?

Glen: I never did. I had been approached several times and we always, in our business did business and it was an important part of our

business to work with the city and the school district. Speaking of conflict of interest, naturally if I had been on the Council or the school board, I would have had to stop that part of our business. I didn't think I could afford it at the time. In fact, I couldn't even be on a commission because the rules were such that you couldn't do business with the city. Which isn't necessarily a bad thing except that is the reason why I was never on it. Lots of committees over the years and got involved with a lot of other things.

Tom: Controversial issues of the day. Now this question is, I asked this to just about everybody, but some of them had a certain time frame that they moved to Glendale or whatever. Your time frame is entirely Glendale so maybe I'll just ask you an open ended question of controversial issues of the past many years? What can you recall?

Glen: The freeway is probably one. A big decision whether it was going to go north or south of Broadway.

Tom: Down on Broadway?

Glen: Oh yeah, yeah. There was, did you know Joe (Heff?) personally?

Tom: No.

Glen: You know who I'm speaking of?

Tom: Oh, yes.

Glen: Joe had really wanted the freeway to go below Colorado actually. Well down in that area. That's where he would push. He didn't want it where it is. Obviously he was not successful. Of course, it turned out I think, it benefitted him a lot more where it is. But in the intial stages, he really worked hard to try to have it below Colorado. That was controversial.

Of course the Galleria was controversial. Let me give you some idea. They asked me, the City Council asked me to be the chairman of a committee, that was on Brand Boulevard. To be chairman of a committee to encourage the passage of the Glendale Galleria. And I was glad to do it. And I did it because I believe that it was very important for the city to do it. We got rid of five blocks that weren't bringing anything in. It wasn't certainly a slum area but it wasn't the best area in town. It was a very, very good thing. Very timely. But you can't say the Galleria destroyed independent merchants on Brand Boulevard. It did. But you can't really blame it on them. I mean its conditions on the whole.

But you see, all of the people that were active in the merchants association, and the Chamber and all that, they're all fine.

Tom: How about Hopkins?

Glen: That's true. But they were there, but they weren't one of the early merchants. They came in, I don't know when exactly, probably in the late '50s, '60s even. But I'm talking about those that were in business before World War II.

Tom: Oh yeah, I see. And yet the Galleria changed Cornwell forever.

Glen: Oh yeah. And all of 'em really. I think we saw the handwriting on the wall maybe a little sooner than some of 'em. I absolutely have no regrets. We had the opportunity of being the sporting goods store in the Galleria. But I turned it down because frankly I thought it was important that the proprietor be there most of the time. And I wasn't about to work seven days a week and six nights a week.

Tom: Now the Galleria was in '75 or so?

Glen: I think it opened in '76. I think it was two years before we quit.

Tom: My observation, that was just when I went away to college. I really missed the construction of the Galleria.

Glen: Now where did you go?

Tom: USC. But I moved. I lived on campus. And so I missed the construction and all that. But my observation is that Brand Boulevard was really a very quite place retail wise. It was several years leading up to that.

Glen: Well, you know why. Because they were small, individual operators. They were not big mass glitzy places. It was a hometown situation.

Tom: And we were right in that transition period.

Glen: Sure, it was the beginning. See, from an outsider that wasn't involved, they didn't realize what was going on. But you see, these were businesses that provided comfortable incomes for their proprietors and opportunities for their employees to have comfortable incomes. It was just a different ball game entirely.

Tom: Okay. They have some specific questions here. I think you've addressed several of them. Upset about the new hous-

ing, I think predominantly hillside development. Brand Boulevard...

Glen: I'm not upset about the hillside. No way.

Tom: People have been. They've been up in arms about hillside development and so forth.

Glen: Tom, and I think I mentioned this before, things do not stay the same. They change. And it behooves any community or any business to go with the flow and try to adapt to current conditions. And in the process, you have to adapt your lifestyle.

Tom: I heard something interesting from John Gregg. You know, the developer John Gregg. He said that in a speech I heard not too long ago, that only twenty percent of the hillsides in this area is privately owned. The other eighty percent is publicly owned.

Glen: Oh, yes. It is one big deal, one time they were going to develop a beautiful panoramic road on the Verdugo Mountains. With a big hotel up there. This was probably in the '70s. It wasn't that long ago. Of course the environmental people went after that. They had grandiose plans. Not necessarily bad development. But interesting development which I didn't think was too bad, frankly.

Tom: Some of the questions here, activities, recreational activities as a kid. You've already talked a lot about kick the can, hide and seek.

Glen: Well in the 'Y. You know, tennis courts in town, for years public tennis courts.

Tom: Now your tall and lanky. Did you play basketball? Is that your favorite sport?

Glen: I played basketball. I played tennis. I was never on the school team. And Chuck Gibson, you know Chuck?

Tom: No.

Glen: Chuck is (HM's?) contemporary. He was the tennis coach up at Glendale College. At the store, one of the things we did, well you probably remember. If you look in your Hoover scroll, our ad was the first ad in the advertising section. We would do that sort of thing. Of course, we were active in the athletic teams, we were in the business.

Tom: So you still follow tennis, it sounds like?

Glen: Oh yeah.

Tom: Do you play it, still, too?

Glen: Yeah I do. I play occasionally.

Tom: Down at the college courts?

Glen: Well I don't play there. I usually play over at Nibley Park. And we have a court in our homeowners association.

Tom: I see. Impacts of the depression on your family and friends. How did depression impact your family, your business?

Glen: We were lucky. How it impacted me personally, as I mentioned the store began in 1911. It was a partnership between Dan and my dad. And it had been very successful. They had had a very good relationship. But in 1932, business was not as good naturally. So Dan, he wanted to get out of Glendale, and get out of business and go up to the Modesto area and have a ranch. So he, he and my dad arranged for my dad to buy him out which he did.

So they left, and for six months in the agricultural field, he decided he liked hardware stores after all. And of course he just really wanted to come back. But they didn't do it. He went over to El Monte and bought a hardware store in El Monte. So that was one of the most profound thing that happened as far as the depression. Even though it was negative it was positive as far as we were concerned. Fortunately, we had a nice home and we were comfortable.

Tom: Still on Dorothy?

Glen: Dorothy Drive. 1440 Dorothy Drive. It's still there. It was a nice neighborhood. It wasn't a fancy neighborhood but it was a very nice neighborhood. We had always plenty to eat. People, you live more simply. You didn't do the things that you just expect to do now. I can't say we had a hard time. My parents were careful and I grew up to be frugal and so forth. But I can't say it was very difficult.

I don't think the store ever lost money. There were some days, some years that weren't as good as others, but I don't think we ever lost money. In fact, I may have told you this before. When I decided in 1978 that it was time to close the store, my dad was still living of course, while not active in the business there was a place for him to hang his hat. I told him, "Well dad, were gonna close off Cornwell after 67 years." You know what his remark was? "It's good to quit while you're ahead."

Tom: Is that right?

Glen: That was after, that long a time, he was just 20 years old when he started. So, no regrets. So that was our experience with that. It made a difference in our family because of my mother's incapacity but you know we had one car and we took the bus, we went downtown.

Tom: Do you think having the diversity of sporting goods and hardware helped? The reason I ask is, I would think in hard financial times, a bat would be easy to avoid purchasing and you use a stick instead.

Glen: Oh yeah, sure.

Tom: But having hardware, you pretty much need pipes.

Glen: Well you see, sporting goods as a retail industry really did not start taking off until after the war. We always get it. We always serviced the teams in the schools. But when I joined the store which was in 1946, right after I got out of the service, we had 25 feet on Brand Boulevard, and sporting goods took up about 25 percent of the floor space. It wasn't just athletic goods. We had hunting, fishing, camping goods...

(end of tape, Side A)

Glen: As I mentioned, the last five years that we were in business, we were all-sporting goods because it just wasn't smart to continue the hardware.

Tom: When did Virgil's come in? I just always remembered Virgil's.

Glen: Virgil's came in after, I'm sure it wasn't until after World War II. They had a store, you know where their original store was? Virgil's started right, they had a store right where the new wing of the City Hall is. It was on Glendale Avenue, just below Wilson. And they were there. And they had a nice store. It was a smaller store. At that point, they didn't have variety. But you see, what happened, they bought... See Glendale Hardware was older than we were.

It started in 1906. And they had, they were originally on Broadway and they built in the '50s sometime, they built their store on Broadway just east of Glendale Avenue. Do you remember, you must have remembered that. The building is still there, Bob (Bregman?) still owns it. They decided to sell. Virgil's bought it. So for many years, maybe it's

still Virgil's Glendale Hardware. So they were there on Broadway for a long, long time. And then they bought an old market. Of course, they were out of town. And they had a lot of parking and it was easier to get through. And they just kept growing. And finally they built the store where they are now.

Tom: Who is Virgil? Was there a Virgil?

Glen: It's Bob's father. Do you know Bob?

Tom: No. I know of him.

Glen: You don't see him around town. I know he's around. But you don't see him very often.

Tom: One of the questions here is were there any minority people from town in the '30s? Did they live in a particular area?

Glen: No. Minorities, the minorities as I remember were the Japanese. We had two or three, always had two or three Japanese kids in school. There were those of Mexican descent. It wasn't a big deal. Typical America. People had German names and Italian names and everything else. But minorities weren't a factor.

Tom: What's Cornwell, British?

Glen: I guess so.

Tom: How about the war? You talked about how the Depression, the family and the business and the city. How about the war? You were away. Were you gone during the whole war?

Glen: Oh yeah. I was in college when it started. Then I moved from school into the Navy. And I was in the Navy for four years. Then I came back and decided, one thing I learned in the Navy, of course when you're 22, 23, 24 years old, those that were about 5 or 6 years older than I was that had been out in the business world that I ran into, the one thing they wanted to do after the war was to get into business for themselves.

I had the opportunity if I wanted it so I decided at that point that I was going into the store. Before that, I had never made a big decision. I always worked there. So I knew what I was getting into. It was fun for me because my dad was very easy to get along with. He almost immediately made it possible for me to eventually become the owner. We expanded from 25 feet on Brand Boulevard to 100 feet. We had the parking lot in the back. I had personal satisfaction in seeing it grow.

The war, I guess that's the personal situation. Oh, I know what I was gonna say. As far as the store is concerned, we were very lucky. When my dad and Dan split up, it was his business then. Lock, stock, and barrel. He said I'd had a partner for 21 years and it was satisfactory. I was able to live on half the profits. I could still live on half the profits. At that point, whenever, people got all their salaries. At that point he said I'll just split the profits with the employees. Half! And we did that till he quit.

In the retail business, at least in that business, you don't make a profit until after Christmas. You work, you stay open 11 months for December. When you get it all done, and you take inventory and you find out what profits you get, we did take an interest on our investment. But after that, we just cut right in half. So, during the war, that was one of the things. People were quitting like crazy to go to defense labs and one thing or another, businesses like that. Of course, hours were frozen. There were years with that arrangement that our employees made more in bonuses than they did in salaries. So we did have a real good group of loyal people that worked for us.

When I joined, my dad said, "Well, glad to have you aboard. I'll split my half with you." So he was only getting a quarter of the profits and I was getting a quarter and the employees were getting half. But what I did with mine, I just plowed it right back into the business. As time went on, it got bigger and bigger. His got a little smaller 'cause he was taking a little out.

Tom: It sounds like this was World War II era. Is this the timing, that you met your wife?

Glen: Well, it was after the war.

Tom: How did that happen? Tell me about it.

Glen: Well my aunt, May Cornwell was principal of Horace Mann Elementary School for forty years.

Tom: Your dad's sister?

Glen: My dad's sister. She was the one that graduated at Glendale High in 1904. Went to L.A. Normal School, came back to Glendale as a teacher and became principal of Horace Mann. Billy, who also graduated from Hoover High School, went to Cal, and she was a teacher. She was a first grade teacher at Horace Mann. I came,

and of course I didn't know. All the people I knew before were married and gone.

So she said "I know this first grade teacher that's really cute. Why don't you meet her?" So I went to meet her. My aunt laid hands off from then on. We went together for a couple of years. And we got married in 1948.

Tom: So did you just walk in in her classroom after class one day and say "Hi, my aunt said I should..."

Glen: No, no. It wasn't that simple. She just arranged a meeting. I think she brought her by the store. I heard about her and she heard about me. It wasn't an immediate thing.

Tom: Wild animals. Were there wild animals more than there are now?

Glen: We have more wild animals right now than we have ever had. I had deer out here eating my plants.

Tom: In the back right here?

Glen: And there are ground squirrels that are driving me crazy.

Tom: Whole size deer or little deer?

Glen: Oh no! Big deer.

Tom: Really!

Glen: Does with, in fact I was just out there the other day and there's just droppings all over the plants. They just nimble away at all that.

Tom: And they could just come down from the hillside?

Glen: Yeah. We've lived here about eleven years. But our home that we built up on Glencoe Way, we had deer there all the time. We had a pool and we used to have possums and that sort of thing.

Tom: Our proximity to the college can't be missed. Did you experience problems with the College Hills fire couple of years ago? Were you in danger up here?

Glen: Not here, but we certainly were earlier than before. We had fires a couple of times. Oh! The most recent! Yes. We did have trouble. I was up on the roof. Watering down. I watched the planes over that hill jumped 8 lanes of freeway up the hill, and it got to across the street.

And then another time when we were next to the hills too. The fire came and I was watering. To give you some idea of the efficiency of the Glendale Fire Department, 45 minutes from the time the fire began, until the time that it was out. We had the Glendale Fire Department of course. They responded quickly. We had a visit by the Red Cross. And we even had the supervisor in the area there waving his hat around. It all happened in 45 minutes. It didn't take long to get the response. We have a very, very good fire department here. The Police Department certainly is good. We have the Red Cross that is extremely responsive too. I'm not overly surprised. Our interim fellow, John (Stroud?) is an excellent guy. He was head of the Red Cross chapter in L.A. He's retired. He's there as a volunteer. Isn't that neat?

Tom: I was just going to ask, oh yeah. Speaking of Police and Fire. I'm sure you probably saw in the News-Press two articles. One, is that we're the second or third safest city in the country?

Glen: Sure did.

Tom: And largely, because we have a police and fire departments, are among the top ten in the country. And we're the only city with both fire and police on the top ten. You noticed that?

Glen: No, I didn't realize that. That's great.

Tom: Yeah. They're each on the top ten and we're the only one with both of them in the top ten.

Glen: As I said, we have such a great community. And there's so much to be proud of. These people who tend to run it down for one reason or another are missing the big picture. And of course we are lucky we have an outstanding Red Cross chapter and we're lucky that the city appreciates that and we work together very closely.

Tom: Law and order. Do you have any quick impressions of law and order? How it's change over the years? You alluded to it perhaps in your references to teachers and how they are perceived.

Glen: My only comment is, and I think, we have had this. I think we have to work at keeping this, of having the law and order people, the fire people, the City Council people, be involved in community organizations so that they have a feel of the public as a whole. If your not careful, that isn't gonna' happen.

- Tom: Gives the public a perception of what they go through also.
- Glen: Right. It's a two-way street. They're a part of the community, and they should be part of their community. The community should take them in, and they should respond accordingly. Once again, it's a small town attitude.
- Tom: You know, that's very important. It's becoming more, people are becoming more aware of it. You may have heard of this, first time home buyer program by the City of Glendale.
- Glen: I've heard about it. I don't know the details.
- Tom: Well, it's assisting people with low down payments to get into residential homes here in Glendale. And one of the side benefits is that they anticipate more police and fire personnel to be able to afford to live in the city of Glendale.
- Glen: They have to live in Glendale.
- Tom: It gets expensive. Newspapers, media. You probably followed and probably advertised in the News-Press.
- Glen: We had, or actually I think the whole time we were in business. At least the time that I was there for 32 years. We had an ad in the lower left hand corner of the front page of the second section of the Glendale News-Press. Every Tuesday night.
- Tom: What was special about Tuesday night?
- Glen: That was our ad. That's what made it special.
- Tom: I mean, do you know why that night was chosen.
- Glen: For years and years, I don't know why Tuesday. But for years and years the front page of the second section, this is of course Parcher's days, the front page, the second section was all the local news. The other news, we occasionally get something in the front page. But always, the local news is on the front page of the second section. There was one ad, a two-column ten-inch ad from lower left to lower right. It was always consistent. Glendale Hardware had one night. We always had one night. All the established businesses had the ads. You probably don't, being a kid, you probably didn't remember it as such.

When I came to work there after the war, my dad had established the spot. They had a little script, 20 years of (building?) in Glendale, a picture of a horse and a buggy. And they would go or he would go to the library and look up the old ads, not the ads but the old news about what was

going on 20 years ago. And they kept this up for a long time. Twenty years ago didn't mean anything in 1946. We changed it to a horseless carriage. We did 45 years, then after 5 years we go to 50 and so forth.

One of the fun things in our life was, we were out one time. We passed this used car lot that kinda' featured real old cars. And here was a 1917 Model T Ford, sitting out there. Just like the picture that we had in our ad. So we went to get it. This was a part of our family as our kids were growing up, we used to be in the Days of Verdugos Parade. We'd dressed up in old fashioned costumes and go to the old settlers' picnic. We kept up until our daughter got married, and she and her husband left for their honeymoon. I decided we weren't using it anymore. Billy used to take the kids to school. It was a 1917 Model T Ford. I sold it to (Rand Doll of Doll Electric).

Tom: Oh really!

Glen: I said Rand, I'm sorry. Wheeler, I sold it to Wheeler. Rand was his brother. I knew them both. But I sold it to Wheeler.

Tom: They were triplets. Wasn't there another brother too?

Glen: Yes, there was another one.

Tom: And they were the first triplets in Glendale?

Glen: Right.

Tom: I just had dinner with them last night. Not with them, I was at an event.

Glen: Oh they're still around. They've kept active.

Tom: You know Frances' has been in the community foundation. In fact, she ask me to say hello to you. I'm kinda surprised it took me so long to remember. We were just sitting, and I mentioned, and she says hello.

Glen: Great gal.

Tom: Okay. I have two very general questions left. And they are almost arbitrary. Let me open it up. I'm gonna ask you two last questions and I'm gonna end with the positive one. What do you think is Glendale's biggest problem today? And then I'm gonna ask you, the greatest asset, the benefit of Glendale? What do we have to look forward to? What do we have to overcome I guess?

Glen: The greatest problem of course, and I think we're making progress on it, but the greatest problem is our increase of population of various ethnic groups. It really behooves us to try to work them in to the mainstream. I mean, they're here, they're taught English as a second language, you know. They're really very nice people on the whole. As you probably know, most of them come from Iran. They're good middle-class solid people who have come from Iran. My impression at least is they're not really poor people. It's a different culture but we're very much like Glendale and that's probably one of the reasons that they decided to settle in Glendale 'cause it was the type of community. But it's hard to work them into the community. That's why we did it. 'Cause we do our little part. We noticed we're getting quite a few now in the Rotary Club and I'm sure you have in the Kiwanis Club. A just think it's very important that we try to encourage the old values that we had into the new people that are coming. Not let them take over. It doesn't really bother me that they're here. But I don't want them to take over completely. It's still Glendale. A changed Glendale, but it's still Glendale.

Tom: It's still America, perhaps.

Glen: Absolutely. Of course, the sooner they get rid of this dual language thing the better off they'll be. You see, I have a feeling for this because my grandparents on my mother's side were German. They were both born in Germany and they came as immigrants. My grandfather was in the Franco-Prussian War and he came to America 'round 21, 20, or 22 years old. And I knew them. I was pretty young when they died. The German culture sheltered through my mother. But dog gone it. He wasn't German. He was an American. He came and I'm sure he knew no English when he came, and gosh, he spoke well, and wrote well. He became part of America. This is America. You gotta try to do the same thing with the people that are coming now. I don't care what they are. Or where they come from. Or what color they are.

Tom: I guess, maybe that's what your getting to. It could be Latins, Asians, Middle Easterns?

Glen: It happens, of course there are so many Armenians because they settled here as a group. It isn't just that. It's also the Koreans and any of them.

Tom: Okay. We talked about the biggest problem. What is the biggest asset to Glendale? The biggest strength, the thing that should give anybody who listens to this, pause for enjoyment of living here, rejoicing of living here?

Glen: Well I think the biggest asset is our heritage, and the fact that we are in a large metropolitan area where we have nice homes. We have a reputation of having a good community as we've said. Being a part of a metropolitan area, we are still distinct. I think we should stay this way. But being here, we have the advantages of what goes on in a community culturally. Anything that you want to say. We're in a great, great spot. That doesn't mean we want to be a part of Greater Los Angeles. We want to keep our identity, and have something to say about what goes on.

Tom: Thank you very much. Anything else you'd like to add.

Glen: That's it.

Tom: It's been very interesting.

Glen: Well, you make it easy Tom.

Tom: It's now 10:20 in the morning. We're signing off.

-----