

GEORGENA LOFLEY HANSEN
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Interviewed by Dottie Grimes and Shirley Spears

Georgena: My name is Georgena Lofley Hansen. I was born in Castle Gate, Carbon County, Utah on July 9, 1926. My parents were John Charles Lofley, Sr. and Martha Mabel Atwood Tucker Lofley.

Dottie: Tell us about your brothers and sisters, how many and why your mother has so many names.

Georgena: My mom was married to Lillard Tucker and he died in the flu epidemic in 1918, well when I think about it, it was 1919. She had 7 children by him, one died as a child with whooping cough and so I had Cora, Rueben, Nelda, who died, Vearl, Max, Della and Willard were her children by her first husband, and it's a long story how she and my dad got together but they got together. My mom was working for my dad and his wife who was her aunt and her aunt died and shortly after, I don't know how long, my dad married my mom and Cora, I don't think was married at that time but she got married shortly after, and Rueben was still home. All the rest of them were home but the 3 younger, Willard, Della and Max did not remember, at all, their own father. So my dad raised them, and then I was born; then Jack was born and Charlie was born. That's interesting because when Jack was born, Dad said his name is John Lofley, well so when Charlie came along he said his name is Charles Lofley. When Jack went to get his social security number, it came back as John Charles Lofley, Jr. So we had John Charles Lofley, Sr., John Charles Lofley, Jr. and Charles Lofley, which is quite confusing to some people. We grew up as brothers and sisters, we hardly ever used half brother or half sister. They called my dad, Dad Lofley, which I thought was quite a tribute to him. I'm going to throw this little tidbit in. When my father passed away, he kept looking over at the wall or at the door and I knew that it was time to let go and I said "Dad, just forget it, just go; we're okay". But I knew there was someone there waiting for him and it's always been my believing that it was Lillard Tucker who was waiting to tell my dad, "thanks for a job well done". I could just feel that presence as well as I know my dad's parents and things.

Dottie: Do you know how old Lillard was when he died?

Georgena: Oh, he was born in 1874, and he died, it had to be 1919 cause Willard was born in July of 1918. And Lillard died, I think in February of 1919. So he was.....he was older than my mom, he was about 14 yrs. older as my dad was about 14 yrs. older than my mother. But she was married in 1905 to Lillard which made about 15 years and she lived with my dad nearly 40 years.

Shirley: Where did she live when she was married to Lillard?

Georgena: In Elmo, they had a store in Elmo. Lillard Tucker store.

Georgena: It was across from Clyde Cox, up there and then they moved the store when they went quit, I don't know why. The main highway used to go right passed it from Cleveland. It came up that way and out to Price.

Shirley: Now where was that as far as location?

Georgena: Up from Bishop Winn's, right by the canal up there. Then they moved the house down where Charlie lives now, and it used to have the things like the store, slant down. Then they remodeled it.

Dottie: So that house that Charlie lives in was originally theirs?

Georgena: Uh-huh, Lillard's and.....part of it; Charlie's added on to it.

Dottie: Why was your mother working for her aunt?

Georgena: She was trying to support her kids. She lived in Elmo and my dad was in Castle Gate. Her aunt had . . . they called it dropsy in those days but she couldn't . . .and I found out, when I was looking at genealogy and really serious, she was older than my dad and she had children. But I can't remember if they were all married but I remember they were coming to visit my father as I was growing up. In fact, I have a little rocking chair to put pins and thimbles and things on that one of the brothers, that would be my step brother made for me and gave me. Arvel and I used to go visit.

Dottie: What was her name?

Georgena: Mom's Aunt Ellen? Ellen Atwood Elliot. She was married, I think her husband's name was Ray Elliot, I'm not positive. They had a home in Thistle, not them, some of my mom's relatives had a home in Thistle. At Summit, as you went up....you know across from that gas station on that hill. We used to go up there and visit. Aunt Ellen needed someone to work for her so my mom took the kids and went up there and lived.

Dottie: What did she do?

Georgena: Housework and took care of....I don't know if there were any kids home, there must have been some of them at home. She did the washing and ironing, regular housework.

Dottie: Did she live with them?

Georgena: She lived in with them, she and her family lived with them. It sounds weird, I guess to some people but after Aunt Ellen died, my dad just, I guess had gotten attached to the kids. They stayed in Castle Gate.

Dottie: So your Aunt Ellen was married to your dad?

Georgena: It was my mother's aunt.

Dottie: Okay, it was your mother's aunt and she was married to John Charles Lofley?

Georgena: Uh-huh, that was her second husband. She was married to an Elliot first.

Dottie: Did they have any children?

Georgena: I can remember Ozzie and Kate, I can't remember all their names; they were Elliot's. She and my dad didn't have any children. My dad had one by his second wife that's buried in Castle Gate. His mom died at child birth and he lived for about 3 months. My dad always blamed the lady that worked for him. She was washing and she got steam and then pulled on the baby and he got pneumonia and he always felt like that was why he died. I'm not his first child but.....

Dottie: So he married after Ellen died, then he married the second wife?

Georgena: Aunt Ellen was his third wife. He's been married 4 times. Mom was the 4th one. (Laugh) The first one, he married in the Philippines when he was over there in the Spanish American War and I don't want to tell all that story, it's a long one. Well, I guess he was kind of rough and tough and he said when they had time off they'd go have a big party and got drunk and he said he woke up and had a wife. I don't know if he'd known her before or what and I guess he didn't quit his partying but after she got what she wanted, I don't know what, money wise or whatever, he woke up another morning and she was gone. He said he searched and searched and searched for her before he came home and couldn't find her. So after he got to the states, I don't know why he went back to Castle Gate cause he was from Illinois. He'd lived in Illinois and he, I think he said, that's where he got off the train and I can't remember if there's relatives.....see I didn't write all this down and it's just what I remember but he got a divorce from her. All we know is her name is Maria, we have no idea what else. So he was married to Maria and then he was married to Barbara Vardell, and she and the baby are both buried in Castle Gate and then he married my mom. He said after he woke up and she was gone, Maria, he said "I decided if I couldn't remember what I was doing, that was it" and he never took another drink.

Shirley: Did he work in the coal mine?

Georgena: He worked in Castle Gate for a long time and then he was a janitor at the school and drove bus, then he drove supplies from Castle Gate out through Nine Mile out toward Vernal and picked up things and brought back. When they had the Scofield dam broke, and they were telling everybody if they had a place to go to get out of there cause our home was down closer to the river, they moved to Elmo. They moved into a house that's not there anymore, just down by Desert Lake. A big rock house and Frank and Mary Jones, lived in it a while, Bishop Jones' parents. They were in there after we were.

Shirley: Did it just deteriorate or did someone tear it down?

Georgena: I think Fish and Game knocked it down, or somethin'. We lived there until they could get things fixed to move up into town. Then that's where I spent the rest of my life.

Dottie: About how old were you when you moved in to town?

Georgena: I don't know, Charlie was born there so I had to be at least 4 year old. We weren't in Castle Gate too long, cause Jack was born in Castle Gate and he was born in '28 and we moved down here when he was a baby and Charlie was born up in the other house.

Shirley: I know rock homes, when you lived in those, they had an awful lot of scorpions and centipedes because they lived in that coolness. Did you remember that?

Georgena: I can't remember of them. The only thing I can really remember of that house was when my dad's two sisters from California came to visit and I slept with my sister all the time and we had to go upstairs to sleep and a lot of activity was going on downstairs and I was enjoying it. Three probably four years old, I don't know how old I was.....but I remember, and she insisted that I go to bed cause she was ready to and I was crying and I didn't want to go to bed and she spanked me. And I never liked that Aunt, I didn't realize that she knew it until I got my autograph book out the other day, looking for something and she wrote in there and she said.....we went to California every year, and she had written in when we were down there, "someday I hope you remember me kindly". So I said "Aunt Ellen, you're forgiven". Now that was my dad's sister Ellen that I'm talking about now. But I'd forgotten that and I looked at that and though "oh my gosh", I didn't really realize it. I didn't like her. I couldn't ever get over that, my mom and dad didn't spank me like that and unless I was really mean.

Shirley: Did you get a lot of spankings from your mom and dad or were you really mean?

Georgena: Not. . .just when the three of us got together, Charlie and Jack and I, doing things we shouldn't, like putting the chickens to sleep and rocking them to sleep so they didn't lay eggs, (laugh), things like that. Mom would say we'd take turns of getting the stick that we got spanked with, because her hands were so small, and so I'd be real careful to get one that didn't hurt because we wore dresses. And when it was the boys turn, they got a willow, and it stung my legs like crazy. They'd cry and cry and then when mom would leave, why they'd say, "it didn't even hurt us". (laugh) I'd have little marks. And my dad spanked me, not a lot, cause I think I was kind of his. . .what special, I don't know if it was special or just because I was a girl. We went down where you live now, only it was when the log houses that were there, my friend lived down there. Elva and I walked down one Sunday afternoon to play. I was supposed to be home at 4:00, well it was about 4:30 because we walked, and it was quite a ways down there for little kids—well we weren't really little and my dad had a broken leg and was in bed so when I came home Mom said "Why didn't you come" and I said "Well we just got playing, I guess", my dad said "you know you were told when to be home, your mother needed you." And he said, "You need a spanking." and I just. . .you know how smart-aleck you can be, "Try and give me one, you can't get out of bed." I don't think I said that but. . .he said, "Come over here." I lagged and he said, "Get over here." and I found out he still had a hand and he could still get me. I got a spanking, and I tell

you, I wasn't late anymore. And I asked for it, I really did, because I was smarting off because I thought he couldn't get to me. But when he finally said, "You better get over here." I thought, "I'd better," so I did.

Dottie: I remember my Grandmother couldn't move very fast but she'd take her cane and swat us as we went by.

Georgena: Any how that was funny.

Dottie: Who were your friends when you were growing up.

Georgena: Elva, Oviatt Jensen, her sister Lois, Winnona Erickson that's Julie Ehler's mother's sister. And that's who we were visiting that day and then my cousins that were living here Sydonia Atwood, and Reeda and Norma Rug, and Zina Winders, ah what's her name now--Ada Wilson, Verl Winder's sister that was my age, Wilma Mills--then we had kids older. Did I say Lois Axelson, which is Lois Abrams now. We had a lot of fun. Winnona and I were really close cause we were in the same grade, Elva was. . .I always tell her she was older than me from October to July (laughs) when she turns her age she's seventy nine now, so she's older than I am. On my birthday she says ok now were the same age. (Laugh) Anyhow I think Elva and I, through the years, kept closer. Winnona passed away. I'm not sure where Wilma is. Zena and I talk once and a while. I found something from her in my autograph book. I'm going copy and send to copy off it to her. (Laughs) But she rode the bus - Zina did and Wilma did. Wilma was Melvin Mills's sister- the Melvin Mills that's here. I believe that's the way it is. So you know we had a lot of friends.

Dottie: What did you do for fun?

Georgena: Well we did a lot of things (Laugh)

Shirley: You can talk about it.

Georgena: I had to--or, I didn't have to, Elva and I wrote, a lady asked Elva one day if she would write something about Elmo growing up in Elmo and Elva said, no she wouldn't, unless somebody could help her. and she said, "Well you can have somebody help you, so she asked me, and it's in this.

Dottie: Oh that's great!

Georgena: So she'd talk- I did most of the writing and putting it in, but we talked about it and I'd write it, and she'd go, "Oh that sounds good." Oh, I don't want the whole thing that's in here. You can read it some time. A lot of our entertainment was brought to town through traveling groups, and they'd bring plays and musicals and things, and that always a big thing to hear these lady's--you know these gals--dress so nice and their makeup. For us at this little town. . . and then dancing. . . there was a dance, I think, every Saturday night. That was something we liked.

Sometimes they'd bring music in, and a lot of times that was what we called our one man band. Jimmy Atwood's grandfather—he is my uncle. He played the harmonica, and he had a little. . . we called it an accordion, but it was more of a concertina-type thing. Elva's mom would chord on the piano. He played all the songs, so that was fun, and dancing around that old church on that pot-bellied stove in the middle

And we went bob-sleigh riding and skating on our own ponds or else down to Desert Lake. When we got older, the guys would bring their cars, and we'd load them down and go out on that lake in those cars. It was thick ice. I don't think you could do it now. All the ice was thick. Then they'd slam on their brakes. . .and. . .it's funny it didn't kill someone. We never did tip over. (laugh) But they'd get in that car and zooming as fast as we could in the snow out there, and slam on the brakes and just spin around. It was a lot of fun. (laugh)

Shirley: Did you ice skate on that pond also?

Georgena: Yeah. We skated on Desert Lake. It was really nice because we had that great big lake to skate on. We'd pull sleighs around on it.

We had chicken roasts, a lot. A lot of people didn't know they donated to us. (laugh).

Dottie: (laugh) That's what we keep hearing.

Georgena: Merrill Day. . .one day somebody says, "Did you lose some chickens last night?" He says, "Well, I haven't been out and counted them, but I guess I'm just getting paid back for what I ate that didn't belong to me. (laugh)

Then on Halloween, we'd monkey around and dress up for school and primary parties. We put in here (recreation document) . . .the older boys would tip over outhouses. Sometimes there were surprised occupants inside!" Oh, we played a lot of games: Run Sheepy Run; Kick The Can. We'd get either in the old school yard or the part that wasn't used much, or up where the DUP building is now, and a bunch of us in town would play games, and before dark, we'd play ball—football or whatever we could find to do. We had a lot of fun. We had to do all our own. And Elva and I—our favorite is hiding when her sisters went out on a date, and stretching a rope across the sidewalk when they came home. (laugh)

Dottie: (laugh) Oh, you were a prankster!

Georgena: (laugh) This one night her sister had a really special date with a guy on a motorcycle. When they come home, she tripped (laugh). He caught her. I guess he thought she was clumsy, and then he hit the rope. (laugh) She said, "Oh, my sister and her friend!" We were back where we couldn't be seen. We didn't dare be seen either. (laugh)

But we'd climb the trees; we thought we were seeing the whole world from that big maple tree down to my mom's. Our initials—I'd like to climb up there now and see if they're still up there.

Dottie: The tree is still there?

Georgena: The tree's still there. Down by Charlie's—just as you drive in his driveway—that great big silver maple. It wasn't that big when I was climbing up it. I bet it is up quite high.

We had our Christmas programs that we enjoyed. The Church always had primary on Christmas Eve. They'd have Santa Claus come, and we thought it was really good if we could have an orange or a little sack of nuts. That was really a treat. And at school, we had games to play, and jump over the ditch and hope you didn't fall in. The ditch ran right in front of the school. We used to go out and jump over it, back and forth. Once in a while we'd go to school with wet feet. We didn't dare go home.

Dottie: Where did you go to school?

Georgena: In Elmo. I graduated from the eighth grade in Elmo. I think there was about six or eight of us that graduated the year I did—1940. And then I went to the 9th grade in Huntington. I graduated a year later than I should have because we went to California when I was a junior. And I went to work in an air craft with my brother and his wife for about six months, and then they moved and I had no way to get there. So then I went to work for Woolworth. I had to go to school so many hours a day—Monday afternoon. I just did bookkeeping and filing, and things like that, because we were required to have so much school.

Dottie: How old were you at that time?

Georgena: About sixteen, seventeen.

Dottie: That's in California?

Georgena: Los Angeles. We lived in my aunt's house (that I didn't like), when she passed away. My other aunt wanted my dad to come down there because he could find work.

Dottie: So your whole family went down?

Georgena: Well, there was Mom and Jack, and Charlie and I and my brother that was married, Willard. He and his wife went. Then they moved down with my other aunt, down in that direction. So we were in different parts. . .

But it was fun. I learned a lot in that filing school. I learned to ride the streetcar. I had to get off on Main Street and go over to Broadway, and then the next street over was Lullaby Land, I guess. They told me never to go over there. I worked at Woolworth, and I worked in the aisles. You walked down the middle and you took care of both sides. It wasn't aisles like they have now. I was in the stationary department. A Negro came in one day, and you know, I just waited on people—that was my job. I asked him what I could do to help him, and finally he said, "What part of the South are you from?" I said, "I'm not. I'm from Utah." He said, "You sound like you're from the South." But he said, "I've never been treated like this by anyone from there, in fact, you've treated me nicer than . . ." I thought. . . I was taught to be nice. Then I had some friends. . . a girlfriend from Georgia, and we'd go out to eat, and she'd make us move if a Negro came and sat next to us. She'd say, "I'm not eating here." So we'd all have to get up and move our food. I

wish I had taken the stand that it didn't bother me, but I didn't. But it really bothered me. I hadn't been taught that.

Then I started handling the money. In the morning, I'd have to be there and put the money in the cash register, and then go back after so long and count it, and just leave so much in. Then they started sending me to the bank with the money. I think, "How did I dare walk a block or two. . .?" But they'd disguise the thing—what I'd carry it in. One day it would be something, and then they wanted me to go over past Main street, where I'd been told not to go, to get these big leather bags that we'd carry around in the store to put the money in. I told them I wouldn't do it. They said, "Well, it might mean your job." And I said, "Well that's fine. I'll just go back to school." So I quit because I was not going to go over there. So I went back to school until we came back here, and I worked on weekends at Kress's. I went up there and worked on weekends.

Then we came back here in April—about the last of April. I was too late coming back, to graduate with my group. I thought, "Well, I'm through with school." But I went back the next fall and graduated a year later. I graduated in '45, instead of '44. I went to Salt Lake and worked. I was up there working for the telegraph. I was up there when the war ended, and then I came home. My mom got sick, and I stayed home. I didn't go back to work. Well, I went up and handed in my notice and then I came back and stayed. I just worked for ladies that had babies—for a dollar a day—stay there all night; do the washing and ironing; take care of the family – 10 days of it, and I made \$10.00. In the first part of November, the lady that was teaching school. . .they had two grades here, or teachers: first, second, third and fourth and then fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth. Anyhow the lady got ill—Mrs. Stokes from Cleveland—and they couldn't get a teacher, so LaVern Day, and I can't remember who else of the school board approached me and asked if I would teach for six weeks until they could find a teacher.

Dottie: Oh!

Georgena: And I was fresh out of highschool. So I taught for \$35 bucks a month. That was good money. Then Arvel came home in the next February, and then we got married the next Dec. . .when school was out, I thought this was it, you know. I taught the rest of the year. They didn't ever get another teacher. Clay Petersen was the principal. Then when I went to California, I thought, "Well, I'll go down and live with my dad." He had stayed there when we came back. I thought, "Well, I'll go down and stay with my dad." And my brother sent me a letter that the school board had sent to see if I would sign a contract for another year.

Shirley: Oh, You must have been doing pretty good.

Georgena: So I came back and went to University of Utah for the summer and took some classes, so that I would feel more like I was doing something. I taught the next year, and we got married in December. I thought they'd fire me, and then I got pregnant right off the reel, and I taught then until the end of the year, while I was carrying Arvel B.

Shirley: How did they feel about your being pregnant? I know it was a different thing back then.

Georgena: Well, I know every teacher before that got pregnant, they'd fire, but the clothes I

wore. . .and I was out playing with the kids. . .the superintendent said, “The parents don’t mind” so I finished the year.

Dottie: Isn’t that so silly now, looking back on it?

Georgena: So I finished the year out and they got new teachers. That’s when McNiels came, and they lived in the schoolhouse and I did their washing and ironing, because they didn’t have any way to do it.

Dottie: They lived in the schoolhouse?

Georgena: They lived in one room of the schoolhouse until. . .

Dottie: Was there a bed and a stove?

Georgena: Well there was a furnace, you know, that heated the whole building. The wall furnaces—I think it was steam that went through it. They just lived in the north corner room. There was a bathroom—no tub, but a toilet and sink. They had to bath in a Number 2. But most of us did then. Then they rented a house down where Larna lives now. (Only Larna and Fred tore that house down after they moved.) They lived there quite a few years to finish out their teaching.

Dottie: Why did your dad stay in California?

Georgena: Because he had a job. He stayed until the year that . . .we went down there for our honeymoon, and he got really sick—he was a chain smoker—he got sick in February, and the doctor told him to quit smoking or he would be dead within six months. So he quit smoking just like that, but he couldn’t work. So then he came back home. . .we went back down when school was out and got his clothes and things. We took Mom with us, and we went down and brought him back home.

We took him back to visit once in a while when Arvel B. was little. So he lived here the rest of the time.

Dottie: Was he a member of the Church?

Georgena: No. He never joined. He said he had been baptized when he was little, and he didn’t think he needed it. I’ve often wondered if he was baptized into the Church, because my grandmother must have been a religious person, because he could recite scriptures like you can’t believe. He said that was his bedtimes stories, and she died when he was nine.

Dottie: Wow. That shows what influence you have in those young years.

Georgena: He made sure that we were to church. He’d say, “I’ll do your dishes, if you go to church”, so you know where I was. He made sure Mom had her nickels and dimes for fast offerings when the boys would come around and he donated to the church when we built the

other church on the other corner. He couldn't do much labor so we did some of the labor and Vearl did some, you know each family was supposed to do so much. He donated the cash because he said "that's where you kids are going". The day we went to the temple and when I got back home, I went down to my mom and dad's and Dad put his arm around me and said "I can see you're happier now cause you've done what you've....." so we had his work done and somebody's had him sealed to my mom. I just couldn't quite, you know when they said you could do that, I couldn't quite bring myself to it, even though the Tucker kids that were still here said that it was okay. But all of a sudden I just quit worrying about it and one day I was working on the computer in the library and pulled up, somebody had done it in St. George. I have no idea who did it. And I said, "well, that must be why I...." it was just about the time that I quit worrying about. And I said "I was glad somebody else took the burden off of me", so I didn't have to worry about that. Like my nephew said one day, "we grew up poor but none of us knew we were poor cause none of us had anything". He said "you know, we just all had the same". Same amount of whatever; worked together.

Dottie: Were you named after somebody?

Georgena: My grandfather.

Dottie: What was his name?

Georgena: George, my dad says "if I have a boy, he's George and if it's a girl it's Georgena".

Dottie: His last name is Lofley?

Georgena: Lofley. And I just barely can remember him. I was probably about two and I have a picture of me with my dad holding me and Grandfather. I can remember, I know it's not from the pictures cause it's been so vivid all my life. But I have never seen a picture of my grandmother Lofley. She was in England, he came to the states and went back and finally he got her over here to see if she'd like it. She came over, went back to get the kids and their things to bring back and she got pneumonia, but what did they call it. I can't remember what they called it; and died so then their grandparents put.....my dad who was 9 and his one sister who was not quite 11 and the oldest one was about 15, the one I didn't like was about 15 and sent them over on a boat by themselves to their father.

Dottie: Was it consumption?

Georgena: Yea, that's what it was called, consumption. Any how, I wish I would have written down things Dad told me because I go, or try to find anything on my relatives, most of them are younger than I am so it doesn't do much good. I finally got in contact with a my second cousin's son but he doesn't know as much as I do.

Dottie: It sounds like your dad talked to you a lot.

Georgena: He did, he told us a lot of stories but you know, we just didn't write it down. My mom was sick a lot and he baby sat. He did mechanic work for people after he got here, he was jack of all trades. Arvel B. thought if anything broke Grandpa could fix it, didn't matter what it was. In fact, he fixed up the walker that I learned to walk in so my kids could walk in it and I still have it. I need to paint it and make it look decent. He put different kinds of wheels on it, you know, that he could get. And all my kids learned to walk in it. Any how, my old player piano, it's still out in the family room but it doesn't, not got the player in it cause all the rubber was fallin' down, ruing... we had it taken out. But he used to sit and pedal that thing and sing to us and that's why I like all those old songs.

Dottie: What are some of your favorite songs?

Georgena: The old ones? My Isle of Golden Dreams and Hot Time In the Old Town Tonight, Darktown Strutters Ball, oh what were some of the other's we used to sing? But we had a lot of piano rolls and I kept them and one day they came up missing and I said "Arvel, where did those piano rolls go?" "Well, they were just in the way", he'd dumped them in the wash. I was upset. I cried for days.

Dottie: Did you go get them?

Georgena: No, I went down but by then they were ruined. I said "Arvel that's cause for a divorce." I just cried and cried and think about it once in a while 'cause a lot of them were still playable, really good if anyone had a player piano. They'd be worth money now, but he thought they were just junk. I have to almost put everything under lock and key. He'd clean that corner out if I'd let him. He said "No more teddy bears" and I said "I'll take any they'll give me". Any how, he was quite musical, my dad was. I remember the home teachers coming, going back to scriptures and we had LaRue's Uncle Claude. He loved to come and they'd get up and going on scripture and my dad could quote really well. He'd know where to go, he really learned it when he was young. But I guess the reason he got so wild is because, out here with only sisters to teach him other then what men do, he started working in the coal mines when he was 13, well maybe before, I don't know.

Dottie: Do you remember hearing about Pearl Harbor?

Georgena: Oh yes! It bout knocked us all for a loop. My dad had a radio, there wasn't a lot of people that even had a radio, and when it came on the radio that night and then we went to school the next morning, there was a special assembly and everybody upset and kids getting ready to go join. Ugh, it was heartbreaking. You know, it really hurt, really upset.

Dottie: Do you feel like the mood around the community was frightened and depressed or was it enthusiastic and patriotic?

Georgena: Oh, I think we were frightened but people were patriotic. They did. . .well I wrote and wrote and wrote, that's the reason I hate to write letters today. Everybody was worried who was

going to be next. And I think a lot of the young guys just partied themselves because they didn't know what was going to happen the next day, you know.

Shirley: Tell us about your special story about the letter you found.

Georgena: When I went to get up the other day, NaVon Wilson, Varden's brother, he was the same age as I am and he was my boyfriend in the first and second grade. He got held back for some reason. Anyhow, when he went in to the service, I wrote to all the guys that wrote, all my friends and he wrote me....I found this yesterday, I'd forgotten, April the 10th, 1945 and I sent mine back the 19th of April and it came back because he was killed on the 14th of May in Okinawa, just a month. . .and when this letter come back, it says deceased and got the guys name and they tried to black it out before I got it but you can see it on there. I got it back, I didn't get it back until September.

Shirley: So you didn't know. . .

Georgena: I knew he got killed cause it was in the paper. They always had a list in the paper of people, you know, the ones that got killed or the ones that got wounded. So we knew that had got killed. But yesterday when I was looking for the pictures, I found the one that he had mailed me that I answered back and he told me....and I hadn't paid that much attention, he was in the Mariana's Islands at that time on the 6th of April when he wrote this. And he said he was wishing he could get sent to the Philippines cause he knew a lot of boys that had been sent there. And he just told me about how he'd make new friends, you know where he was at but he wasn't with the same group and how many people he had met with Wilson name that were spelt like his. I could read it, it's really not that. . .there isn't anything personal in it. It just says,

“Well there isn't anymore that I can find to write now so I guess this will have to be enough so write as often as possible. I didn't tell you about our theater hall, it's floorless, wall-less, roofless and seatless, in other words it's just a screen.”

I thought was cute when I found it yesterday. The letter that I had sent, I'd gotten mine so I'd written. . . didn't open for 50 years. I could not bring myself to see what I had written to him so I just put it away and I got it in. . .and this is a sad thing, he was killed in May of '45 and the war ended in, I think August of '45. I just left it, I just could not. . .and I hadn't written anything when I opened it--only just a few things that was going on. In fact, I had a hard time reading it this morning. I was telling him about what I was doing in school because that's the year I graduated.

Shirley: Would you mind if we made a copy of those letters to put in the file?

Georgena: I guess it'd be okay, there's nothing personal in either one of them, just friends. I'll make one. This is what I kept out of the paper, I made copies, I made one for Lucille. He was home on leave and he loved animals and he had won that steer. And then I found some other things. Gay's daughter Jocelyn wrote me an email one day and said, “Grandma, I have to do something about life in the '40s, will you write. . .” and she gave me a bunch of things to answer. It's got a lot of stuff I already told you; Kick-the-Can and all the games, you know. I got here, “as

far as the war, it affected our whole town and county, I was a sophomore in high school when war was declared. It was such a shock, so many of the young boys were called as soon as they graduated that year. Some quit school and joined the service. Most of my relatives and friends were called into service.” Then I told about Elva being left with a small baby. I told about NaVon being killed. I have a few letters written from friends that I kept and some that was able to make it home and is still around, or they were still at that time. And about a couple of friends that were wounded and kept prisoners in Germany. I’ve always felt guilty because I didn’t join the WAC’s or WAVE’s but my mom was SO against it that I just couldn’t. There were a couple of gals in town that did but. . .

Dottie: Who were they?

Georgena: LaRue Oviatt and Floye Oviatt, they were sisters.

Dottie: Lilly’s daughters?

Georgena: No, they lived where Elva lives now, there Elva’s cousins. They were Burt and Liza, well, Cecil’s sister, Burt and Liza and she was Cecil’s sister and it was her two daughters. Loy was older, redhead and LaRue was just a year older than I am. I’ve got a few comments of mine “we had some of the best movies, music and fun of all times, some of the songs, such as, Kate Smith singing, God Bless America, Bing Crosby with White Christmas, so many beautiful songs both in popular and country music. Our dances like the Jitter Bug, Waltz and fun group dances, those were the days.” Then I have two tokens I kept, that we used to spend for money.

Shirley: From what store?

Georgena: Well, they were given out to us, to my parents I guess.

Dottie: During the war?

Georgena: Uh-huh, I put ‘em on that pin so I wouldn’t lose ‘em. And some of the things during the war that I wrote down, we couldn’t buy silk stockings so we painted our legs.

Dottie: You are the first person, I have asked everybody we’ve interviewed and they say don’t even remember silk stockings.

Shirley: Maybe they didn’t wear them and you did.

Georgena: Oh, I did, I taught school, I had to. Well, I guess this was after school. I wore silk stockings before....I don’t know why I got to get....unless it was my aunt made sure so we’d paint ‘em and then draw a line up the back and hope that it was straight so that people wouldn’t think our nylons were crooked or silk, it wasn’t nylon, it was silk. The gas rations, the fun we had with that. Sometimes guy’s would miss work so they could go partying and that’s not something they should’ve done.

Dottie: They would have to say, “okay, now I can’t do that if I go to work today” cause they can’t use that gas.

Georgena: Yea, we had to watch where we went so we did a lot of ours on horseback. We’d ride to Cedar Mountain to a sheep camp and have a mutton fry or whoever happened to be working at the sheep camps some of our gang, oh listen, if I said gang now.....some of ‘em would be working, herding sheep, so we’d go out and be singing all the way back, yodeling to the top of our voice coming over the rim of that mountain and the moon coming up, oh that was pretty.

Dottie: Can you still yodel?

Georgena: I haven’t tried it for a while, but I could. And I remember the food rations, you know, not having enough sugar for everything that we.....

Shirley: Did it effect you very much?

Georgena: Well I know that we only had cake once a week at my mom’s house, you know. Some of those things we watched and my aunt.....and I remember when we got married, you couldn’t buy towels and sheets very much cause when my aunt.....we went down and my aunt sent my cousin’s cedar chest back with Arvel and I when we went for our honeymoon and she put sheets and towels, some of them we used but she put some in there so we’d have some because that was right after the war so it was, you know, hard to get.....

Dottie: When did you get married?

Georgena: December 21, 1946, so we got married a year after but they still hadn’t got to the point where you could have everything and when I was in high school, the buses couldn’t go to activities all the time. If you didn’t live in Huntington, you didn’t get to go to a lot of the things.

Shirley: What about Levi’s or shoes, leather?

Georgena: I can’t remember, I had shoes but I can’t remember, always what kinds they were. Seems like I was able to get...but then we wore ‘em quite a while til sometimes we had paste board in the bottom.

Dottie: Did you ever go without meat or butter?

Georgena: Well we lived on a farm so we were pretty fortunate. My dad had a garden.

Dottie: Do you remember anything about the Victory Gardens?

Georgena: Yea, a little bit. I can’t remember if they had one here or if just everybody had their own.

Dottie: That's what we've been hearing is that everybody just grew their own big garden.

Georgena: Oh, we had a big one cause we had to weed it. (laugh) I remember passing out, out there weeding happened to be that time that wasn't good for me to be out in the heat and Dad had to come take me in the house so the boys had to do my share of weeding, that's why they probably always got the willows (laugh).

Dottie: Do you remember anything about the presence of the Red Cross in town? Did they do any projects to send over seas?

Georgena: That's something that...., you know, I was so involved in other things and then we went to California in '43.

Dottie: Do you remember participating in any recycling, like the scrap metal or the papers?

Georgena: Oh yea, I remember that cause everything that we could get, they come and....I don't know if they bought it....think they bought it, not sure. I remember my dad, before we went to California, he wasn't here after we got back.....

Dottie: Did you take the newspaper?

Georgena: My dad had it always! He took the daily Tribune and then he had a Spanish American War paper that he took all the time so I was lucky to have newspapers cause he'd sit and read the funnies to us.

Dottie: Do you remember anything about the posters of WWII?

Georgena: I remember seeing them but I don't have any.

Dottie: Where would they post them in a small town?

Georgena: It seems like there was some in the post office, you know.

Dottie: Do you remember them at all?

Georgena: I just remember seeing pictures of people in uniforms.

Dottie: I just heard that's how they communicated to the public was by posters, they didn't have television and a lot of people didn't have radio so they plastered posters all over to keep the war drives going, the Red Cross and the war bonds.

Georgena: It seems like they were in the . . . must have been the post office, maybe some in some of the stores but I can remember seeing the people in service, is coming to my mind. I know when we ever did get to go to a movie, first part of it was always the news of what had been going on.

Dottie: Did you pay attention to that?

Georgena: Yes, I did cause I had so many friends over that way in both directions.

Dottie: There was a lot of news during Viet Nam that I didn't pay attention to so I wondered if you ate up the news reels and everything they had or if you just thought it's too foreign.

Georgena: I always watched them, sometimes I didn't like what I saw and heard but that was just life, I mean, you wondered "is my friend there or is he going to make it back?" It was sad, I think, that's my feelings on it.

Dottie: Did you feel like you got enough news of the war or were there times that you'd wonder "what's going on?"

Georgena: I think a lot of times we wondered and now I think we get too much, you know and yet maybe we need to see all of that cause our times have changed so much. I was fortunate, my dad had a radio, we took the paper, that's where I got all of these clippings cause they'd come out in the paper.

Dottie: What about air-raid drills, did you have any drills down here?

Georgena: I can't remember of us ever having to have anything like that.

Dottie: You didn't have any shelters you had to go to if there was a bomb. Did you feel like you had to grow up too fast because of the war because it came right at the end of when you were a teenager and your friends had to go off to war? Did you feel any sacrifices that way?

Georgena: Yea, I sacrificed my own good times (laugh). No, I wouldn't say I felt...because I was about the only girl left in Elmo of the bunch that wasn't married. I was the old maid, cause I was past 20 when I got married andwell ask Arvel about it. He'll tell everybody the only reason he married me is cause I was the only one left, old enough to marry (laugh). That one picture on this quilt, I won't say the whole thing, you can make out the rest, he showed it to Nathan one day and he says "now do you see why I married her, she's such a cute little...blank, I don't want to say it on the tape but it starts with S. But he does, he tells everybody. But you know, most of the time there was someone coming home on leave that we got....and I got a lot of letters, I really...from a lot of different friends. I guess I felt like I was doing my part by writing all the time. Sometimes I'd write 10 letters a week or so. I know I enjoyed when I was working in the aircraft factory and even if it was just with the nuts and bolts, you know, sorting them and getting them....

Dottie: When did you do that?

Georgena: When we first went to California, and that was better pay then the store but it was more transfers on the bus or streets cars and I just went the other way. Any how I think we

sacrificed to a point but maybe not as much here as other places because we were pretty well self sufficient in our food.

Dottie: Do you remember hearing when President Roosevelt died, before the war was over; he died in office?

Georgena: Yea, that was in '45, wasn't it?

Dottie: It was right after VE Day but it was before the war in Japan was over. What did you think or Truman when he took office? Did anybody know him?

Georgena: I must have had confidence in him because.....but I just loved President Roosevelt, I thought he was so.....you know, maybe I didn't think that much of it.

Dottie: Had he been president all your life, when were you born?

Georgena: '26, no there'd been others. He went in about....well probably all my life I can remember things like that.

Dottie: He was president for so many years that some people.....

Georgena: Yea, a long time. I've got a....and this was in 1943, text of the president's talk on Washington's birthday, President Roosevelt. I didn't read it this morning but it must have been something cause right here it says something about false prophets, so I thought "I wonder why I kept that", I'm going to read it when I get a minute. I thought he did a lot and I was in Salt Lake the day the telegram come and the war was over.

Dottie: Tell us about that, what happened and how did you feel?

Georgena: Oh the messages were coming through so fast, we couldn't hardly keep up with 'em and one came through....one of my friends from her husband that lived up there, I just remember he said and he was a captain in the Air Force, I'm not sure if he was over seas at that time and I got to read it for her cause we kind of glance to see who they were to and all that and I was the one....and here come this message down "would call". It was just exciting, people were out on the streets.

Dottie: Since you worked in a telegraph office, did you know about it before a lot of people?

Georgena: Well I can't remember.....did it come through or did we hear it on the radio or how? That is a blank to me, I was thinking about that. Now I was on 2nd South and Main is where it was, the telegraph office at that time.

Shriley: Were you the telegrapher there?

Georgena: I could but most the time I got the messages that come down the tube and call, I'd do

a lot of calling. We worked around in different places and I enjoyed that, I don't know why I quit it cause I really enjoyed it. It was really interesting. But Mom got sick and so I came home and I think I was a little bit homesick on top of it so I just. . .I'd been up there about 4 months.

Dottie: Was there cheering or honking horns?

Georgena: Everybody was just so noisy but we couldn't leave cause the stuff was coming down so fast, the messages.

Dottie: Tell us about how you met Arvel and how you got married.

Georgena: I've known him almost all my life. (laugh) He was a friend of my older brother Willard. They used to come down and bring their dates. Arvel's six years older than I am, and they'd bring their dates out; my dad had grass out the back. I don't if it was lawn, but it was, you know, so they'd bring their dates down on our backyard and have some parties. And I'd go out. . .you know, we'd be playing out there, we didn't have to be, but we were playing and they'd always give us a nickel to get in the house (laugh). So I could tell him quite a bit about some of his dates (laugh). He gets really upset cause. . . anyhow, we went together a few times. Most the time we went six or eight in a car, and he usually had the car. I went with him quite a bit. We went up to Hiawatha to a dance one night, and he'd been tipping the bottle a little bit and the first thing we knew, everybody was with him there was about six of us or eight and the first thing we knew, there was no Arvel, he'd got tired and had all he wanted and come home. (laugh) He left us all up there. He doesn't like to be reminded of that. So and so was going home with so and so and someone else was. . . finally Jack Eldon came up and he was quite a bit older than me; he said, "if you don't mind going home with me, I'll take you home." I said, "No, I don't mind going home with you." It didn't matter to me that he was maybe 15-20 years older than I. I didn't want to walk home from Hiawatha, and he was so nice. So I dated him a few times but not anything seriously, but I thought I owed him something for bringing me home. So every time I went with Arvel after that, my mom would say, "Have you got some money in case you're close to a phone, you can call for a ride." Shortly after that I think he went into the service, and I wrote to him a few times and he wrote, but he wasn't a letter writer. After he come home then we. . .

Dottie: Where was he in the service?

Georgena: He spent most of his time in the Philippines. When they were liberated, he was there. He tells a lot about what he did and things he went through. It took him quite a few years, he came home with Malaria fever, though and they told him it was pneumonia and finally they took him to a doctor over here. He'd been around it, and he knew what it was. He still had it for quite a few years after we got married. There was a lot of times that I'd just take Arvel B. and go down to my mom's, he'd just get delirious with his fever. The first time, I didn't know what to do, he said "get that kid out of here", he was making noise you know, he really didn't know what he was doing so I loaded Arvel B. in the car and went up to Mom and Dad's and said "I don't know what to do. I can't be there with Arvel B.," so his dad went down and took him to the doctor, and he ended up in the hospital, 'cause I knew he was really sick, but I couldn't do anything.

We started dating when he come home and he was partying, he was a partier and I think that made it worse and I went to a dance well, we dated a little bit and then we were to a dance in Elmo around Thanksgiving time and I had gone without a date and this guy asked if he could take me home and I said “well I guess,” well in the mean time Arvel got brave enough to ask me again so I went and told the other guy I wouldn’t go home with him and I went with Arvel. I guess that was before Thanksgiving cause. . . oh and I had a date on Thanksgiving night but we couldn’t call, I couldn’t call and tell him I wasn’t interested, anyhow, he proposed to me and so when that kid come after me Thanksgiving night I said “I’m sorry but I’m going to get married” (laugh) Oh boy! but I couldn’t get a hold of him before. He says, “well okay, if that’s what you decided,” and I’d been going with Arvel and little bit but not really a lot and I don’t know why he proposed. The next day, I have to tell you this, the next night we had a date and he came down and brought me and we were headed to the movie I guess, I don’t know. We got up to the junction, Highway 10, he stopped the car and opened the cubby hole and handed me a little box and he says “I don’t know which one you want, which one you’re supposed to have now, there’s your rings” so I opened the box and took the engagement ring out and put the box and he said “you keep cause if I take it home I don’t know what my brothers and sister will do with it” so I kept the wedding band until we got married. We were supposed to get married on the 24th, Christmas Eve but after school was out we were going to clean the house but the people didn’t get out so we decided on Friday night to get married the next day and do our honeymoon then come back and clean the house. So we called Bishop Wilson and said “can you marry us”, or we went and talked to him cause we didn’t have a phone and said “can you marry us tomorrow instead of Christmas Eve” and all my family was going to be there Christmas Eve but they couldn’t make it that day. Anyhow, he said “well I’m going to be working on the canal but I can take time out to do that” so we decided to get married at 12:00 and about 11:30 he came down to my mom’s and had his suit with him and he changed into his suit and married us and went back to work, changed his clothes and went back to work. We went to California. There was just my mom and his mom and his sister and Charlie there, my brother. When we got married, the Bishop went to marry us, and we got our marriage license as Arvel B. Hansen, and Grandma said, “Arvel, that’s not your name. It’s Ben Arvel.” (Laugh) So the Bishop had to change the name on our license, and then we had to go back to Price and have it okayed. He said, “Well, I knew that Ben was there someplace, but he wasn’t sure. He’d gone through the service as just plain Arvel. So we got off to a pretty rough start.

Dottie: So you honeymooned in California?

Georgena: We went as far as Nephi, and the snow was deep. Oh, and another thing, I said to Mom, “I’m going to take some money because I’m not going to ask him for something the very first pop. We got out to the highway, and he handed me his wallet, and he said, “Take all but \$20.00 out of that. I don’t want to be carrying that.” So I’ve had it all the rest of our life. So I had his money plus what I had. (laugh) But there good memories.

Dottie: Tell us your kids’ names and when they were born.

Georgena: Arvel B. was born in September 19, 1947. We lacked two days of being nine months

married, but I didn't get pregnant until after I was married. In fact I can probably tell you the day that I did, because I was sicker than a dog. Anyway, he was born in Price. Arven D. was born on the 10th of July, 1950. Joy was born October 24th, 1953, and Gayleen was born on May the 10th, 1957. I had several miscarriages in between. I wanted a big family, but after Gayleen was born, and I had a miscarriage, Dr. Merrill said (I was really upset), he says, "You know, a lot of people would love to have four children. You're going to have to make up your mind," . . . I'd had a really bad time with that miscarriage. . . "You're going to have to make up your mind whether you're going to be here to raise your kids, or if you are going to keep trying to have them, and let somebody else raise them." So I decided it was more important that I stay with my kids.

Dottie: That was a good choice.

Georgena: I was really mad at him. He told me how lucky I was to have four kids. I was never going to go back, but when I got home and thought about it, I decided he had a lot of wisdom. He was a good doctor.

Dottie: What was his name?

Georgena: Dr. Merrill– LaVille H. Merrill.

Shirley: Where was his office?

Georgena: Hiawatha. He was in Spring Canyon, and then Arvel worked in Hiawatha, and if you paid \$5.00 a month, you got to go to the doctor all you wanted and got your medicine.

Shirley: Times have changed, haven't they?

Georgena: Then when he died, we changed to Dr. Spencer.

Dottie: I've heard that Hiawatha was a good place to work.

Georgena: It was. Even when they got laid off, we could pay the \$5.00 a month, and keep it up until they went back to work again. I think a lot of people took advantage of it, but . . .

Dottie: There's a question I forgot to ask you about the war. How you felt when they dropped the atom bomb.

Georgena: I think at that time, we all felt like something had to be done. You know, after all the lives that were lost. I hated all the lives that were lost when it was dropped, but I think my feeling was, "Well, something had to be done." I don't know if that's the way you should feel or not, but it just . . .

Dottie: Well they said that the war was going to last at least another year, and maybe longer because it wasn't going that great. The Japanese are the ones who attacked us. We didn't get into it until they attacked us.

Georgena: Look at all the lives that were lost just then. So, I don't know. . .I think less lives were lost then than if the war had gone on.

Dottie: What's sad is they had to drop two. We just talked to someone in the Navy and they sent them back as far as the Philippines, because they just didn't know how much destruction that bomb would cause.

Well I want to ask you a couple more questions. We are also doing a project on the Swinging Bridge and the Muddy. Have you spent a lot of time on the desert? Has that been part of your life?

Georgena: We used to go for Easter down that way, and I remember going across that bridge.

Dottie: When did you start Eastering on the desert?

Georgena: Oh, let's see. We used to go to Cedar Mountain.

Dottie: Is this when you were a child?

Georgena: On Cedar Mountain, yes when I was a child. I think it was after we were married that we were down there the other way.

Dottie: What's your favorite spot out there?

Georgena: I think probably over where we ran cows around Johnson Hollow, although when I was growing up it was Bull Hollow. I loved it out there. We had a great big rock that we would climb up and eat dinner on. It was great big then. We were out there, not long ago, and the rock didn't seem so big. But I couldn't climb it like I could before. (laugh) I remember going out there, down in the wash—the roads weren't like they are now. If it started storming, everybody headed home, because of the flash floods that would come.

Dottie: Do you remember any flash floods?

Georgena: I remember trying to get through one or two. My dad. . .when they were just getting started. . .we would just gear that old car up and hope that it made it through. I can't remember if we had to push any out or not. I remember pushing, but not whether it was just getting out of mud puddles or mud holes.

Dottie: So you said you ran cows down Johnson's Hollow or Bull Hollow? Is that after you were married?

Georgena: Yeah. We used to go out there after wood. I'd go out there with my brothers and their wives and get a load of wood and camp all night. We'd have to help load.

Dottie: What about your mom and dad, did they have cows?

Georgena: Not too many. They had milk cows, mostly. They farmed. They rented a farm for a few years, and that's when we really got to play on the haystacks and things. My older brothers and dad did some farming. We always had haystacks to jump across and over and go through.

Dottie: Hay was fun when you were a kid, wasn't it?

Georgena: We were not supposed to be sliding down the straw stacks, but that would be climbing up it and sliding down. Elva and I, and I don't know who else, went down in our pasture, and there was a big straw stack, and somehow lit on my elbow. I didn't dare tell my parents; I was afraid I would get a licking. I was favoring that arm, and my dad said, "What's going on?" So I finally told them, and he put my arm in a sling. I had it x-rayed (later) and he said, "Did you ever break your arm at one time?" I said, "I don't know. I had it in a sling." So that's what I got for not minding. And I got a sprained ankle for playing football when I should have been mopping the floor. We just butchered a pig, and Dad always took the bladder and washed it up and cleaned it up and blew it up and tied it, and we used it for a football—a pig bladder. And the boys were out there just having a good time, and I wanted to be out there, so I sneaked out, I wanted to jump. We jumped so far; I don't know how we played football, but and I lit on my ankle, and the boys had to go get dad to come carry me into the house. And he made me sit down. . .and finish that floor on my but! (Laugh). But they were good days. I was so grateful, when I look around now, that I could grow up here.

Dottie: What have you like the most about living around here?

Georgena: I think the thing I like is the closeness that we had when I was growing up. You were just one big family. Some of the kids have made a comment—Lofley— was not a name you heard. We were imports or something. If you weren't an Erickson, or Mortensen, or Oviatt. . .I don't know. Maybe it was me feeling that way, because I wasn't one of the names that was familiar, but for the most part, people accepted you. We were just like anybody else.