

Interview with
HAZEL (OLSEN) MOODY GARDNER

January 25, 1969

**VOICES OF REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION
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HAZEL (OLSEN) MOODY GARDNER

Hazel (Olsen) Moody Gardner was interviewed on January 25, 1969 in St. George, Washington County, Utah by Fielding H. Harris, a representative of Voices of Remembrance Foundation. She related her personal history of living in various parts of Utah.

FH: [What is] your full name?

HG: [My name is] Hazel (Olsen) Moody Gardner.

FH: When were you born?

HG: [I was born] August 20, 1896.

FH: Where were you born?

HG: [I was born in] Leeds [Washington County], Utah.

FH: What was your father's name?

HG: [His name was] Erastus Christian Olsen.

FH: [What was] your mother's [maiden] name?

HG: [Her name was] Mary Jane (Schlappi) [Olsen].

FH: Can you tell something from your early childhood? [Did] you take a trip?

HG: The first trip I remember taking was in the day of the horse and wagon. We were taking my sister to Lund [Nevada] to meet the train. The train frightened me so that I grabbed hold of the doorknob and [went] inside the station [because] I thought it was going to run right over me. [Laughter]

FH: That is a normal thing for a little girl to be frightened. Are there other things that you can think of from that part of your life?

HG: I don't remember too much.

FH: Did you get started in school at this time?

HG: I went through all the grades in school.

FH: [You went to school] in Leeds?

HG: [I went to school] in Leeds.

FH: Did they have a one-room schoolhouse?

HG: No, it was a two-room schoolhouse.

FH: [Did they have] two teachers?

HG: [There were] two teachers; one [teacher] for the upper grades and one [teacher] for the lower grades.

FH: How much [education] did you get in the years before you were married?

HG: [I attended] just one year of high school.

FH: In those days, was a year of high school equivalent to a year of college?

HG: No, but it was as much as my parents could afford to send me because they were not very well-to-do. Father was quite badly crippled. That was after he worked in the mines at Silver Reef [Washington County, Utah]. He couldn't work too much. He was a blacksmith by trade. Mother was the postmistress in Leeds for about twenty-five years, but that was not enough income to send us to school as far as we would [have] liked to have gone.

FH: During these years were you active in [The] Church [of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] organizations?

HG: I taught Sunday school classes and I was secretary in four different organizations, all at the same time, which kept me busy.

FH: What were those four [organizations]?

HG: That was when [we] had [the] religion class in school and Primary. As soon as I graduated from Primary, [I was] put in [as] secretary. I was [also] secretary of the MIA [Mutual Improvement Association] and Sunday school. [I was] kept busy making out reports. [Laughter]

FH: All the bishop would have to do is come around and visit you when he needed these reports. What do you remember about your parents?

HG: They were both very hard-working people. [My] father had a small farm in Leeds. The main thing I remember about him and his farming is that whenever he [would] pay his tithing, it was always the biggest load of hay that went to the tithing [office or it would] always [be] the biggest ham when they killed their [pigs]. [It was] always the very best of everything that went to pay his tithing.

FH: Did you ever have to lack for [items] to eat?

HG: We never lacked for food.

FH: In other words, the Lord blessed you?

HG: He blessed us extremely so. He blessed us with plenty to eat. Mother used to enjoy getting out and working in the garden. She always planted a lot of the garden and we would work in it. We always had a beautiful garden in Leeds.

FH: Did you believed in prayer?

HG: Very much so.

FH: Was [prayer] a regular part of your life?

HG: Yes, [prayer] was a regular part of our life.

FH: Did your father and mother teach you this?

HG: Yes, they did. They taught us always to pray. [There is] one little thing I do remember when I was a very small child. In those days, a nickel meant as much as a dollar or more would now. Mother gave me a nickel and I was on the way to the store to buy a nickel's worth of candy. I was just [very] small and I dropped [the nickel] in the lawn. And I looked and looked for that nickel. Do you think I could find it? So I prayed. [Emotional] [When] I opened my eyes, the nickel was right there. [It was] almost [in] plain sight. I always felt that [my prayer had been answered].

FH: You had an answer right now. Did this help you to have a firm belief in [prayer]?

HG: It really did.

FH: [Did] your father come from pioneer stock?

HG: Yes, [and] so did my mother.

FH: Do you remember your grandparents? What can you tell about them?

HG: Father's parents came over here from Denmark and from Sweden. Erastus Snow was responsible for bringing them to this country. [Grandfather] lived in Ephraim [Sanpete County, Utah]. I don't know how long [he lived in Ephraim]. [My father's] father [Niels Olsen] died when he was two years old, and his mother remarried Mr. Larsen. Then my father's mother, [Anna Marie (Christiansen) Olsen Larsen] died when he was six years old. President Snow brought him down to Dixie country and he lived here from then on.

FH: How did he get along with President Snow?

HG: He didn't live with President Snow. He lived with one of his relatives. [I don't know] whether he was a brother or not.

FH: [President Snow] made arrangements for him to live there?

HG: Yes, and he wasn't too well-treated. He had to work, and he was quite young at the time. He was a healthy, young fellow and they expected quite a bit [from] him, I'm sure.

FH: [Did] they expect him to be a man right away?

HG: Yes, and they would send him out on freight wagons. [He would be] driving a four-horse team. [He drove these teams] when he was [very] young. Sometimes they would send him without even a coat [and it would be] in the coldest kind of weather. They persuaded him one year to hang his stocking up at Christmastime. He did not want to do it, but they hung it up for him. Next morning there was a potato in it. So that is the kind of treatment that he [received].

FH: That could have made him bitter.

HG: Yes, it could, but it didn't.

FH: Do you remember anything about your mother's people?

HG: Yes, her parents left Salt Lake [City, Salt Lake County, Utah] when she was ten days old and came to St. George. That was in October. Her father's name was Henry [John] Schlappi and her mother's name was Margartha Furher, F-U-R-H-E-R [Schlappi]. They both came from Switzerland.

FH: [Did] they settle in St. George?

HG: [They came] in 1861. [They were] among the first of the pioneers.

FH: What do you remember about your mother? What kind of a person was she?

HG: She was a [very] ambitious woman and an excellent dressmaker. She could look at a picture and make a dress without any pattern. I remember her doing that for me many times. She loved to work outdoors in the garden.

FH: Was her health [very good]?

HG: No, her health wasn't too good, but she still raised a family of nine children.

FH: She had a lot of power in living?

HG: Yes.

FH: I would like to have you name those children and tell whatever you feel you would like [to] about them.

HG: The first one was Mary Elizabeth [Olsen] and they always called her "Mamie." She was the [sister who] was going to Salt Lake [City] to enter the nurses' home [nurses' training] when I [was] so frightened of the train. [Laughter]

Another sister was Ane Marie [Olsen]. She was named after [my] father's mother. They always called her "Lyle."

Their first baby, however, died at birth. Their oldest son was Henry [Olsen]. The next boy was named Erastus Christian [Olsen] after father. He died [when he was] twelve years [old]. [The next child] was George Henry [Olsen who] is still living.

FH: Where is he living?

HG: He is living in the old [family] home in Leeds. It has been remodeled, but it is the old place. Then there was Margaret [Olsen]. She married and lived in Cedar [City, Iron County, Utah] for a good many years.

Another brother was Antone Preston [Olsen]. He was killed [August 12, 1923] in a mine accident [on] Iron Mountain [in] Cedar [City].

I was the next [child]. My youngest brother, Glen [Roy] Olsen, lives in Ogden, [Utah County, Utah].

FH: [Did] your family all stay close to the church?

HG: Yes, they have all been [close to the church], except my oldest sister. She did not go through the temple; she married a very fine man [David Oral Beal], a doctor, but they finally [divorced]. [Later] she married [Alexander] Colbath. They lived [in] Silver Reef for a long time. He owned mines up there [and] most of that property. Finally, they sold to [a] western mining company, [but] I've forgotten the name of it now.

FH: [Was it the] Western States Mining Corporation? Your family represented your parents well and you have had a wonderful family.

HG: [Our] family [was very] close together.

FH: What did you do just for fun in those years before marriage?

HG: We used to have great times in Leeds. We had dances [very] often, [and] on all the holidays we had sports and races.

FH: What kind of music did you dance to?

HG: [We danced to] organ and violin music. We used to have great times, [but] not like they do now-a-days! [Laughter]

FH: [Were the] dances a little different?

HG: Yes, [we danced] the Berlin polka and the Schottische. We used to [like] to watch the older people dance the Masuviann, Quadrilles, and the Virginia Reel. We had lots of fun at our dances [and] did enjoy them. The fellows would go to Toquerville [Washington County, Utah] and buy strawberries. While they were [gone,] we would stay home and make a cake. We [would] have a big strawberry supper when they came home, which was [very] good.

FH: [Did] they grow strawberries [in] Toquerville?

HG: Yes, [very] nice ones.

FH: Did you ever have any candy pulls?

HG: Yes, we used to do that, too. [We would] make good ol' molasses candy.

FH: What you are [saying] is that your fun consisted of a social [time] for the whole community. You had a [good] old time and made your own fun

HG: We made our own fun and it included everybody. [The] old and young would join in the fun. Whenever [we] had a dance, [we] couldn't have it without the older people. [We] depended on the older people and they always came.

FH: [Did they come] especially [for the] strawberry suppers? That sounds so good!

HG: They were good! [Laughter]

FH: Did you enjoy music when you were growing up?

HG: Yes, [I enjoyed music] very much. I never did learn to play any of the instruments, but our family, especially my father, loved music. He used to play the guitar. [He would play] all [the] old tunes and sing to us. We spent many a happy evening listening to him play and sing old songs like *The Bird in The Gilded Cage* and many others.

FH: Did [any] of your family, besides your father, play instruments?

HG: They all learned to play the guitar, except me. I couldn't quite master the art. Then father had an instrument [which was] something like an accordion, only it

was about so big around. He used to play that a lot, too. The boys all learned to play the guitar and the harmonica together.

FH: Did they make a harness?

HG: Yes, they would make a harness that would fit around their shoulders and on their chest to hold the harmonica up in front while they accompanied themselves with the guitar.

FH: Have you enjoyed reading in your life?

HG: Yes, I have really enjoyed reading. I don't remember the books I used to read, but I do remember that reading was one of my favorite pastimes.

FH: Would you tell [about] your courtship and your marriage?

HG: [Laughter]

FH: How did you happen to meet this young man [Milton Everett Moody]?

HG: His father [Joseph Milton Moody] was a [United States] Forest [Service] supervisor in Leeds. [They lived at] the forest service station for a few years. That is where I first met him. Later, they rented a farm. I went with him for about four years before we were married.

FH: Did you [think] during that time that he was the one that you were going to finally end up with?

HG: I went with one or two other fellows during those four years, but they didn't appeal to me like he did. He was a wonderful young man.

FH: Did you go dancing with him?

HG: Yes.

FH: Who asked the question? Did you [ask the question] or did he? Was there ever one asked?

HG: You mean the question of marriage?

FH: Yes.

HG: He did, of course! [Laughter] Yes, he did. We planned on being married sooner than we [were]. He had [an] illness that kept us from getting married when we first planned. During his school year, he [started] teaching and that was his profession.

FH: Where did he go to school?

HG: He was one of the first [students] to graduate from Dixie College [St. George, Washington County, Utah]. Then he went to Springdale [Washington County, Utah] and taught there one year. We were married and he taught three years here. He had planned [to go] on a [LDS] mission, but due to [the] illness he had, he couldn't go at that time. He told the bishop that as soon as he could save enough money to see himself through, he would go. After we had been married for three years, he left and went on a mission for two years in the southern states. By the time he arrived back home, all the positions in the larger schools had been assigned, so he taught one year in Leeds. During that summer, my brother was killed in [a] mine accident. I felt like it would be good for us to stay in Leeds with my parents during that year, so he taught there one year and came over here and taught. No, he went to Enterprise [Washington County, Utah] and was principal of the high school for two years. [Then] he went to Hurricane [Washington County, Utah] and was principal for one year. Then they asked him to be the superintendent of the Washington County School District. [He held this position] for twenty-nine years before he passed away.

FH: During the first part of your marriage, were you able to get a little more [education]?

HG: Yes. I neglected to say that after he taught one year in Leeds, he went to BYU [Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah County, Utah] for two years and graduated. [This was] before he went to Enterprise to be principal. While he was there, I took special classes there, besides working to help him through school.

FH: Sounds like you had a good time up there.

HG: We did. We had a [very] good time.

FH: Were [both of] you interested in the same things?

HG: Yes. That is where I learned to Marcel hair when they used to do it with an iron. A lady, that I was helping, taught me how to [use the] Marcel [iron]. The next year that we were there, the main part of our living [expenses were covered] when I Marcelled hair. When we went to Enterprise to teach school, they did not have anybody there to teach dressmaking, so I taught a class in dressmaking for two years.

FH: Your life and his just went hand and glove [and] right along.

HG: Yes, it did. It was really wonderful.

FH: I bet you missed him while he was gone on a mission.

HG: I did, but I went home and lived with my parents who were getting quite old. They weren't able to do much, so I lived with them and took care of them for those two years.

FH: It was wonderful that he was able to go [on a mission] after he was married and [that] everything worked out so well.

HG: Yes, it really was. It worked out [very] fine. While he was in college he taught a couple of classes in the high school to help him through. That is the way we had to finance our [education].

FH: Were you unable to have children of your own?

HG: Yes, that is right. We were not able to have any, but we were [very] fortunate in getting two children. [We have] a boy and a girl, which we adopted.

FH: Tell about them.

HG: The girl was the first one [that] we [adopted]. She was only a few hours old when we got her.

FH: [What was] her name?

HG: Her name [is] Beverly [Moody].

FH: What kind of girl was she? Was she alert in school?

HG: Yes, she was very good in school, although she had to work for what she got. Some of her friends were a little bit older and they seemed to grasp things just a little bit quicker. I always thought it was because they were older and more mature. She was born in October on her daddy's birthday.

FH: I know [about] your problem, we had the same [problem] in our family.

HG: She just barely made it over the line. She had to work, although it wasn't too hard. She did very well in school [and] enjoyed it very much.

FH: What has happened to her through the years?

HG: She married Robert Covington and they have five children — one boy and four girls. [Their names are] Gary, Linda, Teresa, Bevelyn and Bobbi Rae [Covington].

FH: Where are they now?

HG: Gary and Linda are both [attending] college. Teresa and Bevelyn are in junior high. Bobbi Rae is in the sixth grade. She will be in junior high next year. [She] is the youngest child.

FH: Where are they living?

HG: They are living in St. George.

FH: What does he do for a living?

HG: He owns and runs a laundry — the Covey's Motel Laundry.

FH: Talk about [your] other child.

HG: The boy [Cantrell Olsen] was born in Springdale. [It] was quite a coincidence the way we were able to get him. His mother died when he was about a week old. She [had an] infection. My husband's brother [Anton Moody] was teaching in Springdale at the time and that is where he was born. He had heard us say several times that we wanted a boy. So he talked to this man [the father of the baby boy] to see if he wouldn't like somebody take care of [the] baby. [My brother-in-law] called us and told us that we [should] come up and talk to Mr. Cantrell so we went. The baby was [very] sick and [had been] passed around from neighbor to neighbor to take care of [him]. There were five children in the family, but the oldest girl was only twelve [years old] and she wasn't able to [care for the baby] like it should be done. So different neighbors had taken the baby and he was a [very] sick child. Mr. Cantrell was not really sure that we could [have him]. [He wasn't sure if] he would part with him. I told him that the baby is [very] sick [and] he needs to be [seen by] a doctor. He said that if we would take him down to a doctor, he would decide —

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

HG: — in a day or two. We brought him down [to] my brother-in-law [Wilford J. Reichman] [who] was a doctor here [and] he took care of him. The next day Mr. Cantrell came down. He had decided that we could have the baby [and wanted] us to go ahead and make out the papers, which we did, and sign them.

FH: Was that was a real blessing to you?

HG: However, we did not know whether that boy would live or not. He was such a sick child [and] had not had the proper care.

FH: What a blessing to him, too.

HG: That is what he tells me all the time. He is always saying, "Mother, what would have become of me if it had not been for you?"

FH: [That is] for certain.

HG: That is right. He appreciates us very, very much. Both [of them] do.

FH: Have you had [both children] sealed to you?

HG: Yes, we took them to the temple and had them sealed to us.

FH: So they are your very own?

HG: Yes, they are our very own.

FH: After you were married, were you busy and active in church work?

HG: Yes, I worked in all the church organizations. I was a block teacher for years [and I] still am. They don't call it block teacher [anymore]. They call it visiting teacher in Relief Society. When we were first married and [moved] here, I was secretary, again, in Primary, which was quite a job because I didn't know boys from girls. We would have quite a time when I made out reports. [Laughter] I felt sorry for Sister Harmon. She was the Primary president then. I taught Sunday school classes, and later on, I was in [the] stake MIA under Sister Lorna Worthen. I was [also] in the MIA with Ruth Snow. She was the president and I was one of the counselors. After that, I was in the stake MIA again with Ina Bracken. [Also] I was in the Relief Society presidency with Sister Vera Milne. I worked in [the church] organizations all my life.

FH: You would not be happy unless you were.

HG: No, I would not. For about five years after this ward was organized, I gave the visiting teachers topic in Relief Society. So I have had an active [church involvement].

FH: And you are still active?

HG: [I am] still active. [I] try to be. [Laughter]

FH: How long has it been since you lost your first husband?

HG: It will be ten [eleven] years [on] April 6, [1969]. [Milton Everett Moody died April 6, 1958.]

FH: What caused his death?

HG: [He had] a kidney ailment. His kidneys went out [shut down and] that was all.

FH: [Could] this have been [due to] inactivity because he sat around [during] teaching jobs all those years?

HG: I think it could have been because he was not too active. He raised a good garden. He would get out every morning and work in the garden, but that didn't seem to be enough [exercise]. I don't know.

FH: Was he sick for a long time?

HG: Not too long. He [starting getting] sick about November [1957]. [That is when] he started failing. He was not able to go to the office as often [and] would have to stay home occasionally. [He was in the hospital from] the first of February [1958] until the first of March in Salt Lake [City].

FH: [Did] he stay right in the [office] as superintendent up to the end?

HG: Yes, until he died. That is right. He died April 6, [1958].

FH: [Did] this make quite a void in your life?

HG: It really did. I did not tell you about my son. He finished his [education] here. He [then] went two years into [military] service and [then] he went on a [LDS] mission.

FH: Where did he go?

HG: He went to the Spanish mission [and] spent most of his time in Texas.

FH: [Was this the] Spanish-American Mission?

HG: Yes. [The church] organized the Spanish mission in the southern part of California. It did not only take in the southern part, it [also] went up as far as Los Angeles [California]. While he was on his mission, his father passed away. It was a two-and-a-half-year mission [and] he had six months left.

FH: Did he come home?

HG: He was able to come home before his father passed away, and then he went back and finished his mission.

FH: It is much better for him to go back.

HG: Yes, he would not have felt good if he had not gone back and finished. Then he worked in California for a while and that is where he met his wife. He married Beth Partridge [Olsen]. She was originally from Fillmore [Millard County, Utah]. Her parents lived there. They are living and working in Las Vegas [Nevada] now.

FH: What is his occupation?

HG: He works for the city [of Las Vegas] in the health department.

FH: Do they have [any] children?

HG: No, they have never had any children.

FH: After you were alone for a while, did you get together with another good man?

HG: That is right!

FH: How did this happen?

HG: It was two years after my husband passed away. I worked some during that time. One evening we were [at] a party and [Erastus] “Ras” [Snow Gardner] was there with another lady. I didn’t think anything about us getting together. He went on a trip to Hawaii [and] while he was there, he sent me a card. [It was] a picture of the certain part of Hawaii and [he wrote] on this card about how he wished some [of] his Dixie friends were with him. When he returned, I thought: why don’t I call him up and thank him for this card because I really did appreciate him thinking about me while he was so far away. [Laughter] I called him up. After that, he called and wanted to know if he could come and tell me a little bit about his trip in Hawaii. He did and we started going together. It wasn’t very long until we were married.

[Erastus Snow and Helen (Olsen) Moody Gardner were married May 6, 1960 in the St. George Temple, Washington County, Utah.]

FH: Where were you married?

HG: We were married in the [St. George] Temple.

FH: Who performed the ceremony?

HG: President [Harold] Snow was president of the temple at that time and he married us.

FH: Have you regretted this? [Laughter]

HG: [Laughter] No, no, I really have not because it has been wonderful! We were both alone and our families were grown.

FH: This has been fine for both of you.

HG: It really has — it has just been wonderful.

FH: [Have] you spent part of the time in Pine Valley [Washington County, Utah].

HG: Yes, he has a home [there], runs cattle and farms up in Pine Valley. We spend six months of the year up there during the summer. Then we come down here and spend the winter. [We] go to the temple.

FH: I think that could not be better.

HG: He is really a wonderful man. He is [very] good to me.

FH: He thinks a lot of you, too. He has children and you have children, [so] how does this work out between the two of you?

HG: Very fine. My children could not think more of a man than they do of “Ras.” They really think he is tops.

FH: [Is] the same thing true with [his] children and you?

HG: I really enjoy them. I like them very much. They are [very] kind and good to me.

FH: Has this been an ideal thing for you?

HG: It has as far as I am concerned. I think he feels the same, too.

FH: Have you have learned a lot from life?

HG: Yes, I have.

FH: You are well-qualified to give counsel and advice your descendants. Tell how you feel about life.

HG: I don’t know. There are lots of things that I could say if I — I think one of the main things, not that my children are not honest, but honesty is important.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

FH: What about living their religion? Do you feel that is important?

HG: Very much so. Without their religion, there is a vacancy there. They should always live their religion. [They should] live up to the commandments that the Lord has given us because they [will] receive many, many blessings doing the commandments that are given to us. It is not hard to do if we think about the commandments as we go about our daily life. They are not hard to live up to.

FH: Is it hard to put the Lord in debt to you?

HG: I should say.

FH: The blessings are so many.

HG: The blessings are so many. We have so many things to be thankful [for] these days, but it just doesn't — I don't know what I could do [or] would do if it was not for the belief that I have in the Lord and our church. It would be very, very vacant to me not to be — [Emotional]

FH: Especially in view of the fact that you expect to be with your first husband again.

HG: That is right. [Emotional] I think that if we try to be kind to each other, be thoughtful [and] be considerate of each other's feelings, it means so much.

FH: Isn't it really easier that way?

HG: [It is] much easier. If we control our feelings and our emotions and tempers, especially our tempers, and speak kindly instead of saying things that we regret afterwards, [it would really help]. That is one thing that really upsets me. If I let my temper get away from me, and say things that I regret later, you can't call them [the words] back. That is the thing, you can't call them back. I do have a strong testimony. I feel that without our religion, I don't know how we could get along. I have heard some people say that it doesn't mean anything to them, but how they can feel that way, I don't know. If it was not for the belief that I have in our Father in Heaven, I could not go about my work each day. My testimony means a lot to me.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

FH: How do you feel about these children? What do they mean to you? Do you [have] any particular feelings toward your children?

HG: I surely do. [Emotional] I feel that they mean everything in this world to me. I don't know how I could have got along without them. I want them to know that I love them and that I love the grandchildren. They are very dear to me. [Emotional]

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

HG: [I] asked our Father in Heaven — [emotional].

FH: She is so overcome that she is unable to continue speaking, but understand and know the deep love that she feels when she expresses it in this manner. I am sure that you can appreciate this.

[END OF RECORDING TWO. END OF INTERVIEW.]