

Interview with
VERNA MAE (ISOM) GIFFORD

October 1, 1968

**VOICES OF REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

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VERNA MAE (ISOM) GIFFORD

Verna Mae (Isom) Gifford was interviewed on October 1, 1968 in St. George, Washington County, Utah by Fielding H. Harris, a representative of the Voices of Remembrance Foundation. She related her personal history of living in various parts of Utah.

FH: Would you give your full name?

VG: [My name is] Verna Mae (Isom) Gifford.

FH: [What is] your birth date?

VG: [I was born] May 13, 1894.

FH: [What was] the place of your birth?

VG: [I was born in] Mountain Dell, Washington County, Utah.

FH: [What was] your father's name?

VG: My father was Franklin Howard Isom.

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

VG: My mother was Hannah Mariah (Wright) [Isom].

FH: [What] can you remember about your early childhood?

VG: I lived at Mountain Dell until I was about fifteen years old. Some people call it North Creek and some people call it Mountain Dell. Then we moved to Hurricane [Washington County, Utah]. I had a normal childhood like anyone would have. In the first part of my early life, we used to dry fruit and [work in the] garden. My father would go to the northern settlements or down to Silver Reef [Washington County, Utah and] over [to] Leeds [Washington County, Utah] and sell his [produce] to get money to [live] on. What fruit he couldn't sell fresh, we dried. We dried all kinds of fruit. He raised lots of vegetables — carrots, beets, turnips, parsnips and root [vegetables] like that. He would store them in a pit and peddle to these places later in the winter.

FH: [Would this] spread your income out over the year?

VG: Yes. We made molasses, too. In the fall, he would take molasses and go north. Maybe he would take [a] load of molasses and buy a load of flour. [Inaudible] We

had three big vineyards and when the grapes ripened, he would pickle grapes. [They were] the California kind, dark black. He used to take a fifty-gallon barrel up to Kanarraville [Iron County, Utah] to Brother Ford and get his winter's potatoes for the pickled grapes. That is how he got our food. [Laughter]

When he [went] up [to] the northern settlements, he would take fresh fruit. [There] used to [be] a factory in Beaver [Beaver County, Utah] where they made cloth. He used to take produce there and trade it for cloth. My mother was a seamstress and made all of our clothes. She made her boys suits, knit our stockings and made all of our dresses. He would buy cloth by the bolt and bring [it] home.

I can remember very well one day [when] he came home. He said, "Mama, I have the prettiest piece of red cloth you have ever seen. I want you to make yourself a pretty dress out of it." [Laughter] He thought anything that had red in it was real pretty. He used to bring a lot of cloth and she used to sew and knit her socks. She used to do lots of crocheting, knitting, [tatted] lace and made quilts. She had quilting bees and rag bees [at] home and invited people to come and help her. [A rag bee was a gathering to prepare rags for carpet looms.]

When we were a little older, we started going to the mountains and [we] ran a dairy. My mother would make butter for a while and then she [would] quit making butter and make cheese. We [had] our own garden while we were up there. It was a good climate for a garden. [We had] lots of potatoes, carrots and peas.

FH: Did you help with all of these chores?

VG: I helped to make the cheese and butter. I helped with the dishes when I was a little girl.

FH: Did you have your own churn?

VG: We had a churn.

FH: Would you describe that churn?

VG: It was kind of a round churn, barrel shape, and it had a crank on the side of it and we would turn that. You could churn twenty-five pounds if you had it full. It would take a man to do that [laughter] when it got thick. We used to make a lot of butter. My mother used to send it down [in the area] every once in a while to sell it. Sometimes it would go over to Leeds and other places around where people would buy it. She would make the butter into two-pound rolls. The mold was round and it was two pounds. When the butter was all molded, she had some cheesecloth [which was] right thin. She would wet [the cheesecloth] and wrap it around each pound of butter. We had a lot of mountain meadow hay, grass, and

they would cut that, keep it wet, and put a layer of [it] on the butter to keep it from melting. When she would get quite a bit [made], she would send [the butter] to town to sell it. When she couldn't [sell it], she used to put it down. She had a rolling pin [and] one end of the handle had broken off. She used to pound [the] butter down into big stone jars. It was salty and she would put it down that way. Then we would have butter in the wintertime. It wouldn't spoil on us. [We would] cut out a chunk of butter and put it on the table. [We did] the same with the cheese. We had all the cheese we wanted. We always had all the meat we wanted.

FH: Did you have your own cheese press?

VG: We had our own cheese press. I would like to have a chance to make cheese once more [laughter] if I had enough milk. We made our own cheese and our own butter.

FH: Did you have neighbor friends when you were small?

VG: Yes. We lived at Mountain Dell and my grandfather [Owen Isom] settled [there]. He and my grandmother [Elizabeth (Howard)] Isom came from England. My father was born in New York City [New York] after they [came] to this country. He was the youngest one in the family. They stayed in New York until he was a year old and then they came to Utah.

FH: Were they converts [to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] from England?

VG: Yes. As they were coming across the country, they got on a train. It was kind of an open [car]. It didn't have a top on it and the conductor didn't like the Mormons very well. [Laughter] My grandfather had all his belongings that he brought with him on this train. Some sparks flew back and set their belongings on fire. He said [the conductor] only had six miles to go before [they arrived at] the next station but he went fast. Some of [the passengers] told him their [belongings] were on fire. He said, "I don't give a damn. I am going to drive these Mormons to hell."

[The] train pulled into the next station. The car was on fire where their [belongings] were. They stopped and put the fire out. I guess they lost [nearly] everything they had [with them]. They found out how it happened and this fellow wouldn't stop. He even speeded up to make [the train] go faster so the wind would fan it. "I am going to drive the Mormons to hell." When he [arrived at] the station, they found out what he had done and they canned [fired] him. He lost his job.

My grandfather came to Salt Lake [City, Salt Lake County, Utah] with my grandmother and his family. My grandmother was a Howard. That was her maiden name. She had two brothers [who] came with her from England. They settled in Bountiful [Davis County, Utah]. That is where they stopped. Sam and

Tom Howard were their names. She stayed with them for a year until my grandfather could find something to live in down here. She stayed there a year and he came on down to [this] country hunting a place to make his home. He had his oldest son and his son's wife with him, Uncle "Will" [William] and Aunt Katherine [(Wolf)] Isom. They called her "Kate" but her name was Katherine. They were with him and his oldest daughter. They [came] down to Toquerville [Washington County, Utah]. They met Sixtus Johnson. They were undecided whether they wanted to come to St. George and settle or go up [to Virgin, Washington County, Utah]. Sixtus Johnson asked them to go to Virgin. Have you been up that way as you go to Zion [National Park]?

My grandfather, his son and his son's wife [William and Katherine] decided they would like to come to St. George and look around. They came down here [and] Johnson came with them. They went back to Toquerville and decided that they would go to Virgin. He coaxed them to go to Virgin. They had no place [to go]. He said, "You can camp on my place." So they camped on his place. There was nothing [but] sand.

[Their] first house was made out of cottonwood logs with brush on top and dirt on top of that. He lived there for awhile. Brigham Young [had] sent him down here to grow cotton. He came down and lived at Virgin until my grandmother came. She had my father; he was a little boy. My father's oldest brother, George Isom, settled in Virgin [and] stayed there. My father, his father and mother, and his oldest brother, William, went to Mountain Dell. Before that, my grandfather grew cotton on every little place that he could find to plant anything. He dug a dugout in the side of the hill and lived and ate in that and slept in his wagon box. My grandma was there with him and had my father, a little [boy], and the rest of the family. They were living there like that.

One night they were hauling some logs out of [North] Creek with the oxen. One of the oxen [became] mired down and they couldn't get him out so they had to shoot him. That left grandpa with only one ox. It was stormy [and] raining a lot. My grandmother fixed the evening meal and, just as they sat down at the table to eat their meal, the roof fell in on their supper table. [Laughter] Mud and brush [fell] and they had to go without supper. That is in his history that I have. They never had any supper [and] they got right up and put a top on their house. They never stopped until they got [a roof] back on their dugout.

They lived in that dugout until they went north across the creek. Just across the creek is where they settled. It was up a little ways from there. My grandfather built a home [with] two or three rooms there. They were very poor until they got started. He got his means and money from Silver Reef. He finally got a few head of cattle. The first year they were there they planted grain. My grandfather cut the grain by hand with a sickle and shocked it up. Just as he was ready to thrash it, grandpa [became] sick and couldn't do it and my grandma thrashed it out. They put it on a piece of tarp or canvas, I guess. They had to thrash it out by horses

stomping on it. Then she winnowed it in the breeze to get the trash out of it. She had twenty-six bushels when she was through. That is all the grain they had for all winter and some for seed. They had some corn [that] they grew for corn meal.

There was a man and his family, Peterson was their name, [who] moved there. They had quite a big family. Grandma gave Petersons half of [the] grain so they would have something to eat.

FH: Love your neighbor as yourself.

VG: The Petersons lived there quite awhile. I don't know how long they were there. After that, it seemed like they started to build up their place. They planted orchards and had all kinds of fruit — apples, peaches, apricots, pears and grapes. They got their orchards and vineyards [started].

FH: Was [this ground] all irrigated?

VG: It was all irrigated [from a] ditch on the side of the hill. My cousins and my brothers and sisters and I used to wade it. [We would] run [in] and break the bank off [laughter] and let the water run down the side of the hill.

FH: [Laughter] Did you ever get a spanking for that?

VG: Yes. [Laughter] We had an uncle [who] drank quite a bit [laughter] and he took care of the ditch. He caught us two or three times. [And] if he didn't go after us! We would break that ditch and let the water out. There would be so many of us in it [that the water] would rise up and it wasn't running downhill enough. If it had been running downhill enough maybe it wouldn't have backed up so much. [Laughter] My uncle used to get mad. He would get a stick and take after us [laughter] and chase us. His own [children] were in there with us, too. He used to drink quite a bit. He married my father's sister, Aunt Sarah (Isom) Wilson. Sarah Elizabeth was her name. She had a large family there. They all lived at Mountain Dell.

My Uncle "Will" had two sons, Sam and Tom. They married and stayed there, too. There was my father's family, my Uncle "Will's" family, his father and mother, his sister and her family, and Sam and Tom and their families. [Those were] the only people [who lived] there, just the family. We stayed there until the Hurricane Canal was finished. [The first water flowed through the Hurricane Canal on August 6, 1904.]

FH: Can you remember when [the canal] was finished?

VG: I could if I had my histories here. I can't tell you the exact time. My father worked on it for fourteen years. [He worked] mostly in the winter. Most of them worked in the winter when they couldn't grow crops.

FH: [The canal] has been the life blood of [the] Hurricane area.

VG: Yes, it has. Before [my father] started to work there, he was called on a [LDS] mission.

FH: Where did he go?

VG: He went to the southern states.

FH: How long ago was that?

VG: I was about eight years old when he [left] and I was soon old enough to be baptized.

FH: [That would have been] about 1901.

VG: My birthday came after he [was] gone and I wouldn't let anybody baptize me. I was going to wait until he came home. I was ten years old when I was baptized because there wasn't anybody to do it. [Laughter]

I had three big brothers [who were very] good size. My father rented [the] farm out for two years when he found out he was going to go on this mission. He hauled enough wood for my mother to last her two years. He went north and bought flour and cloth like he had been doing all the time. He set her up. She wasn't wanting for anything.

He [had gone] into farming and livestock and was very successful. When he went on this mission, he sold some of his cattle and put them in to keep him on his mission and for [his] family to have what they needed. He was gone for two years.

My oldest brothers read the history in school about the Civil War between the states. My second oldest brother [Samuel Isom] said, "If pa goes down there he will never come back. Just as sure as this world he will not come back. He will get killed." He read so much about [the] war between the North and the South.

FH: There were some missionaries [who] went down there [and they] didn't come back.

VG: Yes, there were two or three of them [from] this [area] too. The Berry brothers [didn't come back].

UV: I have the picture of them.

VG: He had quite an experience. [The] main places where he labored were Tennessee and North Carolina, I believe. He had quite a lot of experiences and had to travel. In those days they had to travel without transportation. They had to walk wherever they went and ask for their meals and a place to stay. They had to travel without [purse] or scrip], they said. Sometimes they would go to a house and ask for a place to stay. [When they] told them who they were, they would turn them down and practically threaten to shoot them if they didn't get out of there. They would go to the next place and they [would be] different [and] would take them in.

He said one day they went to [a] place [where] there was a big family and they took them in. They [said] they would like to have something to eat and a place to stay. They had walked quite a ways. He said they had been there only a few minutes [laughter] and they heard chickens squawking. It wasn't very long until the woman of the house invited them in to eat. She had chicken and hot biscuits, all they could eat. Father's companion said, "My, these biscuits are good. I don't know how many I have eaten." The young lady who was waiting on the table said, "Mister, that makes thirteen for you." [Laughter] She stood there and counted them! They had lots of chicken, lots of possum and sweet potatoes.

He came home from his mission and we went up the mountain again on our dairy business.

FH: [Were] you baptized when he came home?

VG: I was baptized by my father and confirmed.

FH: Where were you baptized?

VG: In a big deep hole in the creek [at] Mountain Dell.

FH: What about [your education]?

VG: When I started to school, my first school teacher was Minnie (Stratton) Wilson. She married my cousin, Morris Wilson. She didn't have many [children] to teach. My brothers and sisters were older. I only had one sister older than me. This teacher kind of favored her husband's brothers and sisters more than she did the rest of us. She would [have] it in for us. She made me stand in the corner with my face towards the wall. [Laughter]

FH: I don't suppose you ever really needed that.

VG: Oh no! [Laughter] We thought she picked on us. After my father came home from his mission, the next winter the whole family moved to Virgin and we all went to school. We rented a house there. That winter we all had the measles. To cap it off, my older sister had typhoid fever and we had an awful time. [In the] spring we

moved back north to our home [in] Mountain Dell. That was the only year that my parents went with us. After that, they would rent us a house to live in. My oldest sister and oldest brothers [who] were old enough to [go to] school moved down there. We would go Sunday night and [come] back home Friday night. Lots of times we would walk from Virgin to North Mountain Dell. That is four miles.

One time we were walking home. We couldn't wait for them to come and get us so we started walking. We [went] across the creek. My brother, Joe, helped me across the creek. I was scared. I was afraid I was going to fall in. We [were] out in the middle of the creek and on a rock about that big around. Both of us were standing there on that rock. I was shaking so bad [that] we both fell off into the water in the middle of winter. We walked home wet! [Laughter] But we generally waited until they came and got us.

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

VG: We had a lot of experiences there.

FH: Did you enjoy [going to] school?

VG: We enjoyed it. I used to enjoy tithing settlement times. I thought that was a big thrill to go with my father. We had to go to Virgin. That is where we went to meetings. [It] was the ward we belonged to. Bishop Leroy Beebe was the bishop. People would take what they grew [to pay their tithing]. They would pay tithing on their meat, butter, grain, molasses and [items] they had grown. They didn't have money. They would take it down [to a] cellar under the old school house, weigh it and give you credit for it, [a] tithing receipt. I used to like go and watch them do that. They would take all kinds of meat and butter, vegetables, anything. [The items] wouldn't keep too long because they didn't have [ways] to keep it in those days. They would give [the items] out to the poor for fast offerings. The grain would keep awhile. [From what] I can remember, everything that was [used] for tithing was what they raised and it was all used by the poor. Nobody went without. I used to like to go to meetings in Virgin.

FH: How much [education] did you complete?

VG: I went to the eighth grade.

FH: Was that normal in [those] days?

VG: Yes. My father died in 1906. They had [completed] the canal. He cleared the brush off of his land and worked in the winter. In the spring he planted grain and alfalfa. That was his first crop. The next year, 1906, he died in March. He [had] planted his grain [and had done] all of his plowing. It had been raining for several days. In those days it used to rain more than it does now. Every darn wash or anything that could carry water was full. All of that [water] ran into the Virgin

River. My father always came home Saturday from down [in] Hurricane. That morning he had been over to LaVerkin [Washington County, Utah]. That is across the river. He [took] some willows off some poplar trees. There is a big irrigation ditch that ran right along his lot where we were going to [build] our house in Hurricane. He stuck these willows in [the] bank [so they would] grow. They took root. We had the tallest trees there were in town. We had a whole row.

FH: Was this about 1905 or 1906?

VG: It was 1906 when he planted those trees.

FH: The first settlers in Hurricane [came] in 1905.

VG: Yes. I think they were [the] Bradshaws. I'll have to read the history.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

VG: That is when my father lived in his wagon. [The] morning of March 24, 1906 it was storming. It had been for quite awhile. My mother never slept a wink that night. She was worried about my father [and] couldn't sleep. She got up and woke my oldest brothers up. She said, "I want you boys to get on your horses and go down and tell your dad not to cross the [Virgin] River." She had a premonition that something was going to [go] wrong. They got on their horses and went down to cross the creek. They couldn't cross it [because] it was so high. They came back and told her that they couldn't make it. She was just unsettled, walking around and couldn't do anything. She was so worried.

I was out in the door-yard. I was twelve years old. I said, "My grandpa went by, my Grandpa Wright." He was a noisy [fellow]. He made all kinds of noises when he came to let us know he was coming. He would sing and yell and give off a lot of [noise]. He never stopped and never said a word to me. That struck me funny because he always made over all of us like he just loved us. He never turned and looked at me or anything. That struck me so funny. I went in the house and said, "Mother, grandpa just now went by and he never even looked at me. It is funny for grandpa to treat me like that." When I said that, out of the house my mother went and down the street. She [was] down [nearly] to my aunt's place and met them all coming. I followed her and, when I got to them, she said to me, "You haven't got any papa. Your papa is gone." That is how I was told about it. I was only twelve years old. Well, I wasn't twelve until May. That is what she said. [Emotional]

[Do] you know where the big [Hurricane] Bridge is there now? You have seen where an old road used to come down and cross the river. That was where they crossed. There was no bridge there. He had a horse that was so mean [and] he balked. He was in [the river] in a covered wagon. He had the cover tied down and was sitting up on the spring seat. [When] he got in there [the] horse balked and

wouldn't go. My father couldn't get out. He tried to get that horse to go and the wagon tipped over and he went into the river.

My uncle, this man that I have been telling you about [who] used to get angry about us breaking the ditch, was up on the Hurricane Canal watching the ditch. He was a ditch-watcher. If anything went wrong he would get help. He saw it happen and started yelling. He yelled as loud as he could and the people over in LaVerkin heard it. Powell Stratton is [living in St. George] at the Cooper [Rest Haven] where my husband is now. [He] is eighty-five years old. [Powell] and his oldest brother, Ab [Stratton], got on their horses and went just as fast as they could go. They went down there where they thought the hollering was coming from and my Uncle "Bob" told them. My uncle was named Morris but they called him "Bob" all the time. He told them about my father tipping over and [that] he had gone down with the flood. The two Stratton boys rode their horses as fast as they could travel down the river and got down to where Ash Creek came into the [Virgin] River. Ash Creek is more like LaVerkin Creek. It comes down [from] Toquerville. [This] was a big flood. They [arrived] just as my father's body got there. [Emotional] The water came in this way and the river was running straight. It came in like that and it turned him with a lot of driftwood and kind of backed him up on the side next to the shore.

UV: Was he still in the wagon?

VG: No, he was out of the wagon. They saw his hand come up like that like he was doing it for a purpose. They saw his hand and Powell Stratton jumped in [the river] and got a hold of my father. He [was] overcome. He couldn't drag him out alone. His brother then got in, pulled him out and got him out on shore. Powell said he doesn't know how his brother did it. They got over to where there were a lot of water willows [on] the side of the creek and they grabbed hold of them. They held on and they had to hold my father, too. That is where they got him out of the river.

I have quite a talk every once in awhile with this fellow up there telling me about it. They took him up to Virgin and Powell Stratton took my father's body to his mother's home and prepared it for burial.

That next winter [1907] after that my oldest sister married. [Lavinia Isom married Joseph Campbell.] She was twenty-two and I made her wedding cake. I was twelve years old. I can remember I put figs, almonds, raisins and butter in [the cake]. They stayed there with us and helped my mother. Then we moved to Hurricane. We had all [of the] ground under cultivation [and planted] into hay. We didn't go to the mountain anymore for dairying. We had [the] Mountain Dell property, too, to take care of and the Hurricane property so we couldn't take care of the dairy in the summertime. So we moved to Hurricane. We had a granary in the yard at Mountain Dell [where] my father kept his grain. They tore [the granary] down and moved it to Hurricane. My mother bought a big tent and

pitched it. [She] boarded it up and put a floor in it and [used] it for bedrooms. We ate in [the] other house. That was our home.

FH: How many children were in your father's family?

VG: There were six boys and five girls.

FH: Were they all older than you?

VG: I was the fifth one. There were four older than me.

FH: Were the boys good sized at this time?

VG: Yes. They were able to work on the farm. We lived in this tent and went to school in Hurricane. My first teacher was Jacob Workman. My next teacher was Joseph Wittwer from Santa Clara [Washington County, Utah]. The next one was Sarah Miles. My mother sold cattle [to] her. We built the herd up again after my father sold so [many] when he went on his mission. [Mother] had my brothers gather all the cattle and they drove them to Hurricane and corralled them there until we could get the buyer to come. I don't know how many head. I [have] forgotten. She sold them for \$25.00 a head. [Laughter] That is [the money] she [used to] build her home.

My brother-in-law, Joseph Campbell, my sister's husband, was a carpenter, one of the best there was in the [area]. He has five sons. The Campbell Brothers are Hurricane contractors and builders. He did the carpentry work on our home for my mother. Then we had the house laid up [built] by the Worthen brothers in St. George. The brick part, mason work and painting [were done] by the Milne brothers in St. George. My mother built an eight-room house, four rooms downstairs and four [rooms] upstairs. She had a bathroom in her pantry on the side. She [had] that all done and in March 1911 she [came down with] pneumonia and died. She left me, the oldest girl [to care for the others]. My sister was married [and] she was still there with us.

Before my mother died, my grandmother [Elizabeth Isom] went to Salt Lake [City] every summer. She had diabetes and [was] under a doctor's care all the time. My mother sent me to Salt Lake [City] to help take care of my grandmother.

FH: Were you about seventeen [years old]?

VG: [Yes.] I hadn't been up there [but] about three weeks and I [received] word [that] my mother was dead. I wanted to go home. My sister was there taking care of the younger brothers and sisters. My oldest brother [William] wrote back to me and said, "No, you stay and take care of grandma because that is what ma wanted you to do. Mother wanted you to help take care of grandma." I was so homesick and broken up. I could hardly stand it but I toughed it out awhile. [This] went on for

about a year. [Emotional] My oldest brother, the one [who] wrote to me and wanted me to stay [and] help take care of grandma, [was] killed on the road as you come down the hill from Short Creek [Arizona]. He had a load of gravel to [use] around the place they were building. The horses ran away with him and hurt him [very] bad, internally too. He didn't die there but he died a day or two afterwards. I [received] word about him dying and I thought, oh dear, I just have to go home and help take care [of the others]. I couldn't stand it here. We were living with my aunt and uncle, Liddie and Richard Wilkin. They didn't want me to go [home]. I toughed it out. It was in June and Grandma Hugely wanted to go home in the fall and spend [time] down with the rest of the family in Hurricane. She wanted to go home. They wanted me to stay there and go to school. I had stayed there two winters before and [had gone] to school.

FH: [Which] school did you go to?

VG: I went to the eighth grade. I [finished the] eighth grade while I was there. It was in Granger [Salt Lake County, Utah].

FH: Is that where you finished [the] eighth grade?

VG: That is where I finished [the eighth grade]. I stayed there and went to school and helped take care of her. That fall, they wanted me to [continue to] stay there and they would put me in another higher school. [But] so much had happened at home since I left [that] I was so homesick I couldn't stand it. I said, "Grandma, I can't stand it. I have to go home. I have to go home and see my brothers and sisters. I am needed there." So I went home and she went to my aunt's place and stayed in Hurricane. I was to go back with her the next spring but I couldn't do it. She just lived in hope of me going back and taking care of her. My sister and her husband [Joseph and Lavinia (Isom) Campbell] were living there. They had a house built by then and they wanted to move by themselves. They thought I was old enough, [and] with [help from] my brother who was two years older than me, [I could] take over. I told her I couldn't go back. I said, "I have to stay here and take care [of the others]. My sister wants to move by herself and they want me to take [over]. I think I ought to stay here and take care of the younger ones." My brother [Andrew] was twenty [years old] and I was eighteen [years old].

She moved herself. I had everything to do to maintain the home as much as if my mother had been there. I had to can fruit. I had to sew [and] patch [clothes]. I had to dry fruit. I had to make soap.

FH: How many children were still home?

VG: The boys were Hyrum, Rulon, Waldon, [then] Cassie, Ida and Reeta. That is six besides me and my oldest brother [Andrew]. There were eight of us. I stayed there and I had everything to do just like that. [I had to] take right over and take care of my brothers and sisters. My youngest brother, Walden Isom, lives in Cedar [City,

Iron County, Utah now]. [He] was seven years old. He started to school [the] next winter and I had to take care of him. He was a little bit of a [fellow]. He used to come to me and put his arms around me and say, "I sure do love you." I [have] never forgotten that. I tell him about it every once in awhile when I see him! [Laughter]

I took care of them until my brother, Andrew, [was] married. My youngest sister [Reeta (Isom) Thorp] was thirteen. Andrew lives in Idaho Falls [Idaho] now. He married and I decided I had a chance to take [a] nursing [course]. I would be just across the street from home. I decided I would take it. I could help [at] the home, too when I wasn't there. I [worked] with Dr. Wilkinson for awhile and he wanted me to go to Cedar [City]. I went to Cedar [City] and worked with Dr. Leonard. [I] left my brothers and sisters in Hurricane. What money I earned I helped with the family. I gave to the family.

My aunt [Liddie Wilkin] wrote and wanted me to come back to Salt Lake [City]. She found out I was working and wanted me to come back to Salt Lake [City] and stay with her and find a job. My sister, Cassie, wanted to go so bad [so] I let her go in my place. She left home in April 1917 and went to Salt Lake [City] and stayed with my aunt. That is when World War I broke out. I went up there two or three times but I didn't go to stay.

I worked with this doctor [Dr. Wilkinson] in Hurricane. I helped with operations and confinement [maternity] cases. I went all over the [area] with the doctor on confinement cases. [Laughter] Finally, in 1918, the war ended. In October 1918 I went to Salt Lake [City] with the doctor [who] I was working with. I had money in the bank [that I had] saved. I said, "I am going to be a nurse or I am not going to be a nurse. I am not going to be a practical nurse any longer. I am not going to work myself to death for nothing." The nurses I was working with were getting [over] \$30.00 a week and I was getting \$7.00 and I did the hard work. [Laughter] I made up my mind that I was going to Salt Lake [City] and get this [education]. I was going to go into the LDS [Latter Day Saints] Hospital and [be] trained. Have you heard of Dr. Middleton?

FH: I sure have!

VG: He was a wonderful [fellow]. I went up there.

FH: He operated on my mother once.

VG: I went up there and told him what I had come for. He said, "I don't want you to go in that hospital. I don't want you working with those filthy nurses." I said, "Why, Dr. Middleton, that is the LDS Hospital." "Yes," but he said, "they have some nurses there that were in the war that are just rotten clear to the core. I don't want you associating with them. Besides, I would rather have you [with] what you know now as a practical nurse. I would rather have you than any trained nurse

there is. I can tell you what I want you to do. I can't tell them because they think they know too much." So he talked me out of it.

[END OF RECORDING TWO.]

VG: I went to the [Utah] State Fair [and] had a wonderful time. I met my sister, Cassie, there and we went to the fair every day. We went to [The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints General] Conference while we were there. I went home and gave up the nursing idea. If I can't be a nurse I am not going to be — so I [came] back to Dr. Wilkinson's to work. He wanted me to come back and work with him. He promised to pay me more. Influenza broke out while we were there in Salt Lake [City] that year. You know how bad it was. They had everything quarantined.

Later, my cousin and I, Dr. Wilkinson and Will Lunt from Cedar City all went up in a car together. We left Salt Lake [City] late in the afternoon and went down to Richfield [Sevier County, Utah]. We tried to get a room. Nobody would let us in. They were afraid of [the] flu. We had to wear a mask over our face, a piece of gauze with string on it tied around us. They wouldn't let us in the hotel. We couldn't get into a hotel to save our soul! We couldn't get [a room] in Richfield so we went over to Nephi [Juab County, Utah] and [found] a room there. We stayed until morning.

The next morning, after leaving Nephi, Will Lunt was very sick. He had contracted [the] flu. My cousin and I sat in the back seat with him all the way home, him with that flu. He lived in Cedar City and is the father of the Lunt boys in Cedar [City], the big car [dealers]. In three days he was gone. It killed him and I [had] sat beside him. I went home and went right to [Dr.] Wilkinson's the next day to work. [We] hadn't been home only just a day or two and we had a very bad case of appendicitis there. It [had] ruptured. I helped [during the] operation. I was coming down with the flu. We had to send to Salt Lake [City] and get Dr. Middleton in Cedar [City] and get Dr. Leonard to come. I had the flu and had to assist the doctors [while they] were operating on this man, Brother [David] "Dave" Hirschi. Dr. Wilkinson came down with the flu. We had to put him to bed. Oh, I was sick! I was [very] sick the next day.

FH: Did you go to bed, too?

VG: The doctor's wife was in bed. She had a new baby [and] was in bed. I took sick so there was nobody there [who] could take care of me. There was nobody there to take care of this patient. They finally found a woman to come in and help take care of Brother Hirschi. But I had to go home.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

VG: My folks lived across the street from the doctor. I went home and went to my brother and his wife [Andrew Norington and Jacosa (Burke) Isom] and told them that I had the flu. I said, "Don't come where I am. I will go upstairs to my room and cover up good." There was no heat up there. It was in November. I said, "You can bring [food and water] to the door and I will come and get it." She just threw a tantrum! She wasn't going to let me stay there. She was scared of it. She [found] the health officer and told him about it. She was even going to have me arrested. I said, "This is my home and I have no other place to go." She threw such a tantrum [that] I threatened to leave. I said, "I will tell you what I will do. If some of the boys will pack some quilts up the road a ways by the hill, there are some caves up there in the hill that the Indians used to live in. If the boys will carry me some [items] and some food and bedding up there I will go up there and stay until I get better." It made me so mad! She carried on and made such a fuss about it.

Finally my uncle, Samuel Isom, heard about it. He was the bishop in Hurricane. He came up there and went right to my sister-in-law and said, "I heard Verna has the flu. Where is she?" "She is upstairs." He said, "I will tell you something. You get the boys to put a bed in the front room, get that heater going so she can come down in the front room where there is heat." I had two sisters younger than me there, Ida and Reeta. He said, "If you don't do that, I will take her home with me and take care of her." I said, "I won't go down to his place." I told him right there, "I can't go down to your place, Uncle Sam, because you have had pneumonia two or three times and you have a bad heart. I wouldn't go down there for a million [dollars]. I would die first before I would go to your place. I appreciate what you want to do for me and [in] helping me." He made her fix me up in the front room. [Laughter] He said, "If you don't want to go near her, just stay away and let the girls wait on her."

I was there in that room and the girl [who] had been working in the house with me over at the doctors, she got [the flu]. She didn't want to go home to her folks and give it to them. I was good enough to let her come in and stay with me. I was getting over the flu and some of the [others] were coming down with it. My two little brothers [Waldon and Rulon Wright Isom] got [the flu] and I had to help take care of them. Then my two sisters [Ida Mary and Reeta Vernell Isom] got [the flu] and I had them all down. I was weak and coughing and I had to take care of them and get them over it. This girl came in with me to stay [and] she got over it. When she got over it she went home. She never even stayed there to help me. [Laughter] That was funny. I will never forget that. She left me [as] my youngest sister [Reeta] was coming down with [the flu]. She went outside and talked through the window to my brother's little girl and gave [the flu] to her. [Laughter] I was so weak I couldn't wash a dish. I couldn't sweep a floor. I couldn't do anything — only cough, cough, cough. They would keep coming down with it. Then my brother [Andrew] came down with [the flu] and he had pneumonia. My sister-in-law [Jacosa] got [the flu]. She was pregnant and lost her baby. I had the two [of] them down and their little girl. My brothers and sisters were in the other room and nobody to help me. The doctor told me, "Just look at this medicine here

and get it down in your mind. Don't you miss giving one dose to your brother. Just give it when it is supposed to be and he will be alright. But if you don't, he won't be." That upset me so. I was so weak and tired. [He was] sick and I thought he was going to die and his wife [was] in that condition.

I sure had a time. But I got over that and I had a chance to go all over the [area]. Because I had had the flu they —

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

FH: You didn't go all over the [area].

VG: I didn't go because I wasn't well enough. I was too run down. I went to the doctor and told him I wanted to get a checkup. I said, "I haven't got any zip to me. I just cough until I cough right down." He said, "Gosh, that flu has made your heart bad. That cough is wearing you out. I'll tell you what you do. You come here and stay. You won't have to do much. I want to take care of you and doctor you up." So I stayed there. He doctored me up. That was in November when I had the flu. My husband, "Barney", came home from the [United States] Army.

FH: Wait a minute. Are you married?

VG: No, I wasn't married. That was about the time I met him. He came home that winter.

FH: Where had he been?

VG: In the [United States] Army. I went to a party in Hurricane after I [was] better [and] I could get out and help the doctor. I went to a party at my cousin's place in Hurricane, Tom Isom. There was a big crowd of young folks there. That is the first time I saw my husband. I had been there quite a little while before I was introduced to him. He kept looking at me and looking at me. Finally, I guess he asked somebody. They introduced me to him.

FH: What was his name?

VG: Freeborn Gifford. That was in April [1919]. He had come home from the [United States] Army in December or January. I think it was [in] January [when] he came home. He was down [in] Hurricane visiting around. He went to his cousin's place and they took him to this party. I met him there and he had a girlfriend with him. He never took any notice of her after he met me and she [was] jealous as the dickens. He said that he had his mind made up to ask to take me home that night. He was going to change partners. He wasn't going to take her home because she was flirting around with somebody else anyway. [Laughter]

While we were having the party, the doctor came and called me out. I had to go to Leeds on a confinement case that night. I [went] back to the doctor's [office] with him and got ready to go to Leeds. So [Freeborn] didn't get to take me home. That was Sunday night. His uncle was [the] choir leader, chorister, of the [church] choir and he was resigning. They were having a party for him. "Barney" [Freeborn Gifford] was going with this girl. Every time he came [to] town he had been taking her out. That night he got in late and he didn't go after the girl to take her to the party. He went to the party with his cousins. When he came, I was there at the party and so were these other girls and the girl he had been going with. He was teasing her. She had a ring on her finger. She was engaged to a [fellow] in Idaho. That is the way she did. She would be engaged to somebody and run around with another [fellow] and flirt. She wasn't settled down. He would tease her about that ring. "What I don't like about you is that ring," he said. When he came to [the] party that night she put her hand over on the back of his seat where he was sitting to show him that she took her ring off. Her ring was gone. [Laughter] He didn't take any notice of her.

UV: Who was the girl?

VG: Mina Atkins. He took me home that night and asked me if he could see me [on] a certain date. He came down to see me and kept coming. The next week or two after that, his cousins, they were sisters, asked me to go to Springdale [Washington County, Utah] with them. I went up there with them and that is when "Barney", my husband, asked me to marry him. I call him "Barney." It is a nickname. He says I asked him! [Laughter] He said, "What I liked about getting you alone, I don't have to ask your pa and ma for you." [Laughter] Old coward! He kept coming to see me. We set the date when we were going to get married. He [came] down one day to see me and said, "You are going to quit. I ain't going to let you work here any longer." He went to the doctor and told him that I was quitting on a certain date. The doctor was up in arms about that. He said, "I don't want her to quit. I can't afford to let her quit. I need her." ["Barney"] said, "Yes, you need her alright. You would kill her off working so hard here." [The doctor] said, "If she quits, I won't pay her what I owe her." I said, "I don't care whether you pay me that little old \$7.00 or whatever is coming to me or not." I decided to quit [and] told him I would quit at a certain date.

We were married on June 25, 1919 in the St. George Temple. We went to Springdale and that summer we went to [the Zion Cable & Saw Mill]. When we got up to the saw mill, [we] didn't have any house to live in. There was a cave in the side of the hill and we set up a stove and a table. [We] had some chairs and cupboards to put our dishes in and our bed. It was protected from the storms. We lived in that [cave] until my husband built one big room and then [moved] into the house. He said [when] we moved into [the] cave, "How are we going to pray outside here? Do you want to kneel down in the dirt?" I said, "I have some rugs. We can kneel on them." We would back our chairs up to the table and had our

family prayer when we were first married. We have always had it. We taught our [children] to take their turn in praying.

My oldest daughter [Cassie] was going to high school and seminary. She came home one day and said, "Oh mama, I am sure thankful." I said, "What are you thankful about now?" She said, "You and dad taught us to pray. I would be so ashamed to tell anybody I didn't know how to pray." There was a girl [at school who] didn't know how to pray. She [had] never prayed in her life. She thought that was awful. We taught all of our children to pray and let them take turns, one [would pray] one morning and [another] one the next [morning]. We would always kneel down [at] the table. The next year, on May 25, 1920, our first baby was born, our oldest son. His name is Raymond Isom Gifford. Then we went to the saw mill the next year. He was a baby. We would send all of our bedding, dishes and grub up [the] cable that they ran the lumber on and we walked up the trail. [We] rode horses when we could.

Our baby boy was little and we had to hold him in our arms while we were riding the horses. We went to town one Saturday to spend Sunday. Sunday evening we started back to the saw mill [by] going up this trail. His cousin [Howard Ruesch] was going up and said, "I will catch you before you get halfway. I will let out a yell and you [will] know I am coming so you can wait for me." We [went] up the steepest hill and down the canyon and we heard something yell. We were walking [and] leading the horses. ["Barney"] was packing the baby and leading the horses. We heard this yell and he said, "I guess that is Howard a-coming. We better stop here and wait a minute." We sat there a few minutes. He kept yelling [and] yelling. He said, "[It] doesn't [seem] like Howard ought to keep yelling like that. When he tells us he is coming, we know he ought to be coming." Finally, he yelled again. He said, "That is not Howard coming. That is something else." He never told me [his concern]. He grabbed a hold of me and made me get on the horse. He got on the horse and held the baby and we traveled out of that canyon up on [the] top of the mountain. When we got up on top he turned to me and said, "I think I am better now. I'll tell you what it was. It was a cougar. He wouldn't have hurt me or you but he might have hurt our baby. That is what I was worried about." We got to our camp alright.

The next year I was going to be confined with our oldest daughter [Cassie Gifford] and I had a nervous breakdown. [I] was sick and they sent me up to the mountains to stay. I [knew] a lady [Rebecca (Stout) Dennett] in Rockville [Washington County, Utah and] she would use herbs. She told my husband to take me to the mountains and take the bark off an aspen tree. There is a big tall weed and [it] had kind of [inaudible] leaves on the bottom of it. She said, "You dig that up. Take the roots and wash them good and steep [them]."

FH: The roots and the bark?

VG: “[The] aspen bark will cure her nervousness and build her blood up.” I took that and [Rebecca] said, “You know what blue cohosh root is?” I said, “Yes.” “Get some of that. I want you to have your wife drink that all the time.” That was for [the] kidneys and heart. I was carrying the first little girl and stayed there at the mountain. He [”Barney”] doctored me with that all summer long. The doctor said, “I don’t know whether you will make it this time or not.” That is what he told me when I went up there. When I [came] back, he said, “You are so much better. You are a different woman.” He wanted to know what I had been doing and I told him. He said, “She had no business doing that.”

FH: But it made you well.

VG: It made me well [and] my daughter, Cassie, was born.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

VG: [She was born] January 27, 1922. I never told you that my son was born in Hurricane.

FH: What was his date of birth?

VG: [He was born] May 25, 1920. My daughter, Cassie, [and] the rest of our family were born in Springdale.

FH: [Would] you give me their [birth] dates now and then go back and tell [about] each one.

VG: Raymond [Isom] [Gifford was born] May 25, 1920 [in] Hurricane, Washington County, Utah. [He was] married [on] September 6, 1948 to Ruby Hogan of Manti [Sanpete County, Utah].

Cassie Lorraine Gifford [was born] January 27, 1922 in Springdale. [She was] married [on] February 7, 1938 to Clayton Edwards.

Dorothy [Gifford was born] January 4, 1924 in Springdale. [She was] married [on] February 7 to Jack [Follis] of Lincoln, Illinois.

FH: What year was she married?

VG: It says 1938 here but that isn’t right. I think it was about 1941. She met him while she was working in the defense plant in California. He was in the [United States] Navy.

Elaine Gifford [was born] May 25, 1925 [in Springdale]. She was married [on] May 7, 1940 to Bud [Woolsey] of Escalante [Garfield County] Utah.

Lillian [Gifford was born] December 8, 1926 [in Springdale]. She was married [on] October 15, 1949 to Vernon Williams of Cedar City.

Frank Howard [Gifford was born] July 19, 1928 in Springdale. He was married [on] August 15, 1950 to Shirley Garner of Murray [Salt Lake County] Utah.

Maxine [Gifford was born] July 2, 1930 in Springdale. She was married [on] March 5, 1950 to Franklin Ira Branin of Orem [Utah County] Utah.

I had a little girl die when she was five years old, Vinetta. She was born December 2, 1931 in Springdale and died November 11, 1936.

UV: She burned to death.

VG: Elvan Isom Gifford [was born] April 13, 1933 [in] Springdale. He was married [on] August 4, 1956 to Carol Wood. He was divorced and on February 9, 1964 married Mary Lou Leah, a Spanish girl.

Owen Steven [Gifford was born], August 21, 1935. He was married [on] June 27, 1958 to Rosa Costa, another Spanish girl.

That is my family.

[END OF RECORDING THREE.]

FH: Let's go back to [the] time right after your first little girl was born.

VG: My husband continued to go to the saw mill every summer. I didn't go up very much to stay after I had two children. He did and worked and worked and put in his time. He [put up] half [the money and] bought the saw mill with another man. [Dave Lemmon]. ["Barney"] was supposed to have half [of the money] they made. Everything he [earned] went to pay for his half of the saw mill. He didn't get much out of it — only [enough for] our bread and butter and [the] few rags we packed up to wear. He worked there for quite awhile. This fellow wouldn't give him anything for his work and took everything for the saw mill. He was in debt to my husband for thousands and thousands of feet of lumber that we never did get. He didn't have [the] money and we were supposed to take our share of the lumber beside the payment on the saw mill and sell it for our livelihood. He worked there for four or five years, I guess, and finally he quit. But he lost the saw mill. He didn't get anything out of the saw mill. This man died owing my husband thousands and thousands of feet of lumber. He never did get anything for it. Then I just rebelled and told him he wasn't going up there to work anymore.

Then he got a chance to work for the [National] Park Service. He was foreman on a lot of jobs and had men under him working. They were building walls and straightening up the [Virgin] River so it wouldn't cut in and building dikes. He

worked [at] the park in the summer. In the winter he didn't have much to do — only odd jobs. When they built the Zion [National Park] tunnel he worked there. He worked for the men [who] had contracts for the walls and bridges that they [have] along the road. He did [the] mason and rock work and [had] foreman jobs. He did that for quite awhile.

FH: Was he working for the [United States] Government [at] this time?

VG: Yes. Before we moved to Cedar City he worked for the government. Finally they got the CCC [Civilian Conservation Corps] in there and he was put in as one of the foremen by the park superintendent. He had a bunch of men under him, the CCC boys, to work and take them out on the jobs. He worked at that and his wage was \$125.00 a month at that time. [Laughter]

FH: That was [fairly] good wages at that time.

VG: He worked there for two or three years. His general foreman [who] was over all the CCC's was [Frank] Rozelle and the other fellow was Owen Johnson. [Frank Rozelle was project superintendent for two CCC camps.] Every six months they had these foremen make out papers and sign up to [continue] on [for] six months or a year. They had to come down here to [sign up] before the sheriff or [an] officer in St. George at the county seat. The sheriff [who was] here then was [William] "Will" Brooks. He is alive [and] lives here now.

UV: No.

VG: Sheriff Brooks isn't dead.

UV: Oh yes, he is alive.

VG: I saw him not long ago. I was going to say if he died [that] he died just lately. [Laughter] "Will" Brooks is not dead. He was the sheriff and my husband came down here and made out his papers in front of him. They were to say what their politics [political party] were. That was the year [1933] that President [Franklin Delano] Roosevelt went in office. Nobody could hold an office unless they were Democrats. That is a fact. They had to be a Democrat. The superintendent of the park gave my husband [a] job and recommended him as a good foreman and they had to go down there and answer all these questions. One question: What [is] your politics? ["Barney"] said, "My politics [is] I vote for the man that I want in office. I don't vote straight ticket. If I want to scratch a ticket I scratch it." That is the way he answered his question. This fellow [wrote] it down.

That was Friday night and Saturday and Sunday they didn't work. They went back up to the park on Monday morning and all of them handed [their] papers to the general foreman, Mr. Roselle. My husband was the last one getting there that morning and he handed his paper to him. [Mr. Rozelle] said, "Well, we are going

to see if “Barney” lied like the rest of you have.” That is the way he said it. He read [the papers] and said, “No, “Barney” is the only one [who] told the truth.” “Barney” said, “I was taught by my father to always tell the truth and especially if you have anything to do with the government to tell the truth.” My husband went on to work and about six weeks [later] the general foreman came down [on a] Sunday evening. [He] called him outside and told him he didn’t have a job. His politics weren’t right.

So he lost a job and we had that big family. The next year the [Great] Depression came on. We had Raymond, Cassie, Dorothy, Elaine and Lillian all going to high school in Hurricane. They rode a bus to Hurricane and my husband didn’t have a job. Some of the [children] graduated [from] high school and some of them didn’t. They dropped out [of school] because we just didn’t have the money to keep them going. My husband worked around and then he took up a farm down on the [Virgin] River to run for a [fellow]. He thought [that he] would take up farming. He used to herd sheep a lot before [we] were married.

There was a man [in] Cedar [City who] wanted him to come and help him with spring lambing. [But] we had already started to run this farm. So he left his brother [Anthony Gifford] to be there with me and help take care of things on [the] farm while he went [to] earn money to buy our groceries, hay, grain and [items that] we had to have for a team to work this place. We stayed with [it] two years. It just got so bad, so bad. I tried to get my husband to move out of Springdale twenty years before but he wouldn’t go. He said, “No, I don’t want to go and leave pa and ma [Freeborn DeMille and Amelia Jane (Hepworth) Gifford]. I have had to help take care of them all my life and see after them. Not while they are here [alive], we won’t go.”

His father [became] sick in 1933, I think. He had cancer and lived three years with [the] cancer. July 6, 1936 he died [from the] cancer. I said to him one day, “Let’s go. Let’s move.” He was working then. He had given up [the] farm and had gone to work for this sheep man, Jack Hopkins of Cedar City. I said, “Let’s go. We don’t have anything for the boys to do here, no work. They are in high school and we have to get them out of here so they will do something for themselves.” We stayed there until his mother passed away [in 1942]. Then we left. We left [for] Cedar City. He went in March 1948 and I went in May. I moved up there with the [children but] we didn’t go until school was out. On May 2, 1948 of that year our second boy, Frank Howard, was called on a [LDS] mission. We knew we had to get out and find some [work] so we could keep him on his mission. So we moved to Cedar City.

FH: Where were you living?

VG: We [were living in] Springdale. He went to work on a ranch for Henry Jones in Cedar City. We lived there eight years. We never moved anywhere. I had two daughters at home, single girls. Then we had two boys. I raised two of my

granddaughters [Sandra and Gaylene Woolsey]. We moved down on [a] farm and put them through high school. This boy went on his mission. We kept him there. My husband always said, "I don't know how we did it." We had that big family [and] only \$150.00 a month, but we didn't have to pay rent. The man gave us our [home] rent free and he furnished us a cow.

FH: Money was worth more then than it is now.

VG: We had a garden spot and whenever he had any fresh meat he would let us have fresh meat and [that] helped us out. He was real good to us that way. We stayed there for eight years. My two granddaughters went through district school and through high school and graduated. My two youngest sons graduated from there. My daughter, Lillian, [was] married then. She was twenty-two or twenty-three years old. She married while we were living there and Maxine was in her last year of high school. She started [attending] high school [the] first winter and then she [became] sick and had to drop out and never went to school anymore. She never finished high school. She was in her last year of high school. She [was] married next. Lillian [was] married in October and she [was] married the next March in 1950. Our son, Frank, [was] married the next year in 1951. He came home from his mission in the meantime and married.

FH: Where did he fill his mission?

VG: In southern California around Barstow, Lone Pine, Victorville and around there. The boys [went] through high school and two boys worked for Mr. Jones. He had a lot of cattle and sheep to feed and they fed stock in the wintertime. They would get up about four-thirty in the morning with their dad and go out and feed hay, grain and silage to the stock. [They would] do the chores. They would come in and clean up, change their clothes, eat their breakfast and ride a bus into Cedar City to high school. The two little granddaughters went to district school. The two younger boys graduated.

My son, Owen, [was] out of high school and went to work for an excelsior company. He worked there until the [United States] Army called him. He went to Camp Roberts in [Paso Robles] California. [He was in the service about six months and then came home. He went to work for the excelsior company.] [Elvan was] shipped to Germany and he was in occupation there for eighteen months. He spent two years in the [United States] Army [and then] came home. [When Owen] got out of high school he started to work for [an] excelsior company and he joined the [Utah] National Guard. He was in that awhile. Finally, [the] excelsior company shipped him to California to manage a plant down there. He worked there in that place in 1952 or 1953. [Then] they sent him to Denver [Colorado] and had him set up a plant to make excelsior. He stayed there awhile. Finally, they shipped him back to Los Angeles [California] and made him manager there. I don't know what happened [but] they closed [the] plant down in Los Angeles and [used] it for storage [of] excelsior. They moved their plant back

to Cedar City. He had a chance to [come] back to Cedar City and run [the] plant but he wouldn't take it.

He stayed in California and found him a job. He tried to get [on] the police force [but] he didn't make the grade. Then he tried to get in the fire department. I discouraged him from that. I didn't want him to. Finally, he found a good job and met [the] girl that he married, Rosa Costa. She was a lady [who] had been married before and had two little girls and a boy. They live very happily but she doesn't belong to our church. That is what I feel bad about. I don't know whether she will ever join. She is one of [those who] likes to look at people's faults instead of studying the scriptures and finding out for herself what is right and wrong.

FH: Judges us by the people who don't live the gospel.

VG: Judges us by other people and what they do. I don't know if she will ever join but she is a [very] nice woman. She makes a good wife [for] him and a good home keeper. That doesn't [inaudible] too good. I wish that she would come into the church but I don't know whether she will or not.

After our son Elvan came back from the [United States] Army he went to work for the Coca Cola Company in Cedar [City]. He worked there for a year or two. There was a girl, Carol Wood, from Emery County [who] came there to go to college. He met and married her. Elvan was living at home with us. We had been down to the farm. We moved back to town and were living in a place that a friend of ours wanted us to move into and rent it. We moved there and [then] he decided he wanted to sell the place. Elvan was a [veteran] so he took out a GI [Government Issue - Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944] loan and said, "We just as well buy the place as [to] rent it. We will be that much ahead [and] we will have a place to live."

He bought the place and his dad and I stayed there. He lived with us until he was married. He married Carol Wood. She went to college and he worked for the Coca [Cola Company]. One day she got a brainstorm about wanting him to go to school. He had a couple of good friends in Cedar City [who were] barbers, [the] Nelson brothers. They kept at him and kept at him. "Elvan, you have to go and learn to be a barber. That is just all there is about it. If you ever want to come back to Cedar [City], and we retire, we will save this place for you. You can come in here." He told his wife about it and that is all she needed. She kept at him and kept at him until he went to California to barber school and graduated. She [found] a job [as] a secretary in the head office of the Safeway Company down there and was making big money. She was saving the money. She was going to save it and set him up in a barber shop. He got dissatisfied with California. She wanted him to quit and go to Salt Lake [City] and go into barbering. He went up there and took the Utah license but it wasn't anything like California. He hadn't studied for two or three years and he didn't know all the questions that they put

before him. He didn't pass on two or three [sections]. So they went back to California and she kept getting worse and worse.

She wasn't satisfied at all. One day she just up and walked off and quit him. [Laughter] He didn't want his place in Cedar [City] any longer. His dad and I were living there alone and he didn't want to make the payments. In fact, we paid him the rent every month, and instead of him paying [the payments], he just kept the money. He was six months behind in his payments. The GI [veteran] man came and wanted us to take it over because my husband was a GI [veteran]. He said, "Well, I might be too old." He said, "You are not either. If you don't get it all paid for before you pass away, your wife will have a home and it is automatically paid for." We talked [about it]. My son didn't want it. He said, "I don't want the thing and Carol has quit me. I don't want the place." We thought he was going to come up and sign it over to us.

We even borrowed money and paid the back payments up and were making the payments every month on the place [when] he up and marries another woman. They said they were coming up to fix it up and sign it over to us. When they got up to Cedar City she talked him into not doing it and putting her name on it and renewing [the] deed. My husband and I lived there for three years happy as a lark that we had a home. We were making the payments and, out of the clear blue sky, this daughter-in-law called up a real estate man in Cedar [City] and sold it out from under us. We lost everything we had paid out. We didn't have a home. My husband had quit herding sheep and retired. He wasn't very well. We went to the mountain that summer and he herded sheep all summer. When she came and sold the place out from under us, we didn't know what to do. We thought maybe we would rent another place in Cedar [City] and stay there. But our folks down in St. George wanted us to move down here. They would help us and do all they could for us. We moved down here and rented a little house here and moved all of our furniture and everything. We get along pretty good. My husband had a partial stroke on the right side of his face and it was bad for awhile. Then it kind of cleared up and went away.

When we came down here, I think he was upset. It upset him so much losing the place and worrying about things. He just went down and down. We lived for nine months in this place here in town. He and I [were] alone [and] we had a good time going to church and [events]. We enjoyed ourselves [fairly] good. One day I was expecting company and I said, "I have to vacuum this floor. The carpets are dirty." "You let me do that while you do something else you have to do." I got him the sweeper, and while he was sweeping, he thought about some scripture that he had on his mind that he wanted to hunt up. Sunday he had been to priesthood meeting. He just dropped that sweeper and sat down and got his book and sat down on the couch to find [it]. I don't know what made him do it, but he had a spell and I had to call the doctor. He called them spasms or something like that. It kind of affected his eyes. That is what he called it, a spasm, but he was alright and in a day or two he came out of it. He just got excited and worried

about that passage of scripture. I don't know what it was he was trying to find. I noticed that the vacuum wasn't going so I went to see. He was sitting there and had that book in his hand and was just sitting there. He looked so funny. I got the doctor there and he told me what was wrong.

[Inaudible] He had to be careful what he did. He was on a diet and under the doctor's care. The next February, about five o'clock [one] morning, he had to get up and go to the bathroom and I heard something falling. It woke me up. I called to him, "Did you fall?" He said, "Yes, I fell. I am on the bathroom floor and I can't get up." I said, "I will get up and come and help you." I thought maybe the floor was wet or slick and he couldn't get up. I went in there and I tried.

[END OF RECORDING FOUR.]

VG: He would get a hold of things and I would take a hold of his hand and try to get him up. I bet I tried for a whole hour to get him up off of that floor and I couldn't do it. So I called his brother, Harry [Gifford], and had him come. We got him up and got him on the bed and I called the doctor. He had had rheumatism for years in his legs and he took [had] a stroke in his right leg. I was there alone with him.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

VG: It went from bad to worse. I had some of the neighbors come in and help me take care of him. Finally, I wrote to my children and they all came. They decided to put us in a rest home, Miracle Manor. I went in with him. We stayed three months and he wouldn't stay any longer. We rented another apartment and moved out and I took care of him. It has been a year and a half now. He went up to Cooper's [Rest Haven]. That is where he is now. He is bedfast and I try to go every day to see him when I can and take the best [care] I can of him. I sometimes think I just can't understand why things have to be [this] way. Then I think sometime, somewhere we will know why. I sometimes feel like giving up.

FH: Everyone has a certain amount of these problems in life.

VG: I feel like giving up, but I think I can't do that. I have to keep going and be as cheerful as I can and do the best I can. That is the attitude I have. I believe in prayer a lot. I pray a lot and ask the Lord to strengthen me and help me so I can go and be with him. I was born and raised in the church and I have a testimony. Some of my children don't and are not living like they ought to. They aren't doing what they ought to [do] but they were all born, raised and taught the gospel. All were taught to pray. They all were taught to pay their tithing. But they just kind of slack [off] and don't do what they ought to do. But I hope some day they can see it. I tell them that anybody [who] was born into the covenant like they were and [who] has a good birthright ought to feel thankful. That is the way I feel about it. I love my children. I tell my husband, "I love you and then the [children]. You come first with me." He does. He comes first.

FH: That is the way it should be, isn't it?

VG: Sure is. Nobody could love their husband anymore than I do. He has been good to me. He has been a good husband and we worked together. I went with him [nearly] all his life after we were married. I went with him when I could. I was with him all the time. While I was raising the family I didn't get to work in the church too much because I had a big family. I had ten children and took care of them. I saw that they went to Sunday school and primary. That was my goal every Sunday morning to see them all in Sunday school. My husband was in the bishopric up there as counselor until we moved to Cedar City for five years, I think it was.

FH: You have had a good life.

VG: I have had a good life, yes. I [didn't] have much [education] but, what I have learned, I have learned by hard knocks.

FH: The university of hard knocks!

VG: [Laughter] I had to learn it myself. I said I had to raise myself. Of course, I didn't. I was raised when my mother died. I just had to take over [for her] in the family. I value that. My youngest sister [Reeta] used to get mad at me because I wouldn't let her go out late at night. She said, "I don't thank you for it." I said, "I'm not doing it to get any thanks from you. Sometime, somewhere my mother will thank me for what I did for you and the rest of them."

FH: I think they will too.

VG: I think they will, yes. I think they just were young and didn't appreciate it but I think they will.

[END OF RECORDING FIVE. END OF INTERVIEW.]

UV – Unidentified Voice

ADDENDUM TO VERNA MAE (ISOM) GIFFORD TRANSCRIPTION

Added during editing – August 2006

Mountain Dell, located on North Creek, a short distance north of Virgin in Washington County, Utah, was first occupied by Joel Hills Johnson. He was the composer of our hymn *High On The Mountain Top*. I believe the name of the place is Sunset Canyon Ranch now. Sixtus Johnson was one of Joel Hills' sons. Other sons were Seth and Nephi, the latter being credited with discovering Zion Canyon.

The California grape used to be the most common variety grown in this area. It is dark blue, very sweet, but has seeds. Pickled grapes were common when I was a child, but I didn't care for them.

I remember rag bees. Rags from old clothes were valuable. If a piece of clothing couldn't be recycled for a smaller person, it would be torn up into rags for use in rugs, carpets, and especially quilts. The bees were for getting rid of seams or unusable parts and saving buttons. There were carpet looms for which the rags had to be torn into the right size of strips. They were social gatherings as were other kinds of bees.

There is mention of George Isom. There were two George Isoms, one of which was my uncle who grew up in Virgin. I didn't know the other one. Could my uncle who married my father's sister be Verna's uncle?

Tithing was paid in produce. I wonder if any money was ever sent to church headquarters in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah. I remember a tithing granary in Springdale, Washington County, Utah, along with a tithing barn. It is my feeling that all tithing was dispensed locally.

The word confined seems to have come into question. When I was growing-up, women never were pregnant; they became confined.

I was unaware that "Barney" Freeborn Gifford was ever a partner in the Zion Cable & Saw Mill operation. His partner would have to have been Dave Lemmon, son-in-law of Oliver Gifford. He was half Indian and became the owner in 1914, taking over from the Petty family in 1907. In 1907 Gifford, Crawford and Stout sold the saw mill to Frank Petty. Oliver Gifford and Dave Lemmon bought it back in 1914. My father, William Louis Crawford, was a part owner prior to the Petty's taking over. My father was never paid all of his shares, although the operation went on until about the time of World War II. Dave Lemmon brought up a fairly large family with some of his children becoming educators. However, Dave struggled to make a living from the mill and died owing several people. I didn't know that "Barney" was one of them.

I do recall when "Barney" was ousted from his job because of politics. That was one of the greatest injustices I am aware of. He had been a very dependable employee of Zion

National Park. He, along with John Gifford, scouted out the routes of most of the trails in Zion Canyon and that involved cliff scaling without modern equipment. There is an existing picture of “Barney” suspended by a rope during the building of the West Rim Trail. A short section of trail, leading to Lava Point, is unofficially called “Barney’s” Trail.

— J. L. Crawford