

Interview with
ALMA ATHELLA (LEAVITT) HUFFMAN

March 29, 1969

**VOICES OF REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

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ALMA ATHELLA (LEAVITT) HUFFMAN

Alma Athella (Leavitt) Huffman was interviewed on March 29, 1969 in Bunkerville, Nevada, by Fielding H. Harris, a representative of Voices of Remembrance Foundation. She related her personal history of living in various parts of Nevada and California. Her mother, Ivie Jones (Cox) Leavitt, also participated.

FH: What is your full name?

AH: [My name is] Alma Athella (Leavitt) Huffman.

FH: Would you spell your [middle name]?

AH: [It is spelled] A-T-H-E-L-L-A.

FH: What is your birth date?

AH: [I was born] May 2, 1909.

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

AH: [I was born in] Bunkerville, Nevada.

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

AH: [My father's name was] Alma Decator Leavitt.

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

AH: My mother's [name was] Ivie Jones (Cox) [Leavitt].

FH: [What do] you remember from your early childhood?

AH: The first [thing] that I remember is seeing my father come home with the freight wagon and hearing the chains right along on the harness hooked up to the wagon. [I remember] running to the window and looking out and dancing up and down because I was excited. I remember my girlfriend I played with [at that time]. She was about a year older than me.

Another incident about that time: my mother sent me across the street to borrow [some yeast]. We did not [really] borrow the yeast. We always had a little bit of sugar in a cup to pay for our yeast. [Mother] had put some [sugar] in a [small] one-pound lard bucket and sent me across the street to get some yeast. I got it and started home. I had to taste it and it tasted pretty good. [Laughter] Before I got

across the street, I drank it all. When I went in [the house] my mother asked me, “Where is the yeast?” [I said], “I drank it.” She wiped the bucket out and put some sugar in it and sent me back for some more. There was an old man who [lived] there [and] he was quite grumpy. He was quite put out to think that I would bother him to get some more yeast. [Laughter]

Another [time I] was [at] this same place. By the way, this house right here that I painted was the house I was born in. There was a fig tree leaned up against the shed in the back. There was a cottonwood shed at the back of it for shade. This fig tree leaned up there. I climbed that fig tree. I climbed over and stood in front of it with my hands like a monkey. My mother was so excited. I could not see anything to get excited about. That was a lot of fun.

Later on, we moved into a house down in the field. One morning, it was a lovely morning, [and] an old black hen came out on the ditch bank. She had a flock of little chicks. She jumped that ditch and left those chickens behind and was trying to cluck to them. [She was] wanting them to come across that ditch of water. I did not think they could get across that ditch of water. They would drown. I went across to pick them up to help them across the ditch. She flew right on top of my back. I screeched and screamed. My mother came running out. To this day, I hate black chickens! [Laughter]

FH: [Laughter] What about your [education]?

AH: I went to school down on the corner in the rock school building. One morning I woke up and they said the schoolhouse [had] burned down. I went down and [there] were still flaming embers. It was a rock building. So they moved us up in the church house. They put a muslin ceiling in [the building]. It had [a] high roof or ceiling originally. They lowered the ceiling with unbleached muslin. They put a stove [in there and] partitioned it off for three classrooms. The youngest students went in [the school] after the oldest ones did. They had six grades [in there].

The teacher was reading to our class one morning. We heard this awful roar. I had only seen one car up to that time. I guess it was a Stanley Steamer. I remember a yellow car puffing down the street [and] everybody [was] chasing after it. We were all standing up to look out the windows. They were high windows and we could not see out of these windows without standing on our desks. I think some of us did [stand on our desks]. The teacher got after us and said that if we did not sit down, she would not read another bit and we would go right to our lessons. Just as I sat back, I looked up and here was this big ball of fire coming down over our heads. The last [thing that] I remembered was [that] I yelled, “This house is on fire!” The teacher and my girlfriend pushed me out [of the building]. The rest of them all went [out]. The fire came so rapidly that lots of children had the sparks fly on their heads and coats. They did not save their coats or anything. Their coats were still left hanging up. There was nothing saved, [but] they all got out safely.

Then we went to [school in] Mesquite [Nevada] on a truck. [There was] no [school] bus. [It was] a truck. We sat on the side. It was cold going over the sand dunes. I guess we went over there until we [started] high school. We had a high school down here at the time.

FH: [It] looks like you almost did not get any [education]. [You] tried to burn all the schoolhouses down.

AH: [I] tried hard. Before this building burned up, I [completed] the third grade there. I had a [very] good teacher in there. Her name was Juanita Pulsipher. I had not received, actually, much [education] in my first and second grades. [I had] no foundation. I liked to cut paper dolls. I was allowed to cut paper dolls because that is what I wanted to do. I [had] my first, second and third grades under Juanita Pulsipher. Later, she was known as Juanita Brooks. She had been Juanita Leavitt.

FH: Yes.

AH: I [also] had an aunt [who] taught me there. [Her name was] Thelma Cox. After [starting] in high school, I participated in [sports, but] I was a very poor athlete. I had to take part in volleyball and baseball. My sister [Anna Leavitt] outdid me always in baseball. She would knock home runs and I was always knocked out. I was always batted out or tagged out. [Laughter]

IL: [You were] fanned out.

AH: [I was] fanned out. I liked to ride horses. I could ride horses with anybody. I liked to swim. I could swim with anybody. I learned to swim when I was about six years old. I could swim like a fish and I really loved that [sport] and still do.

In about the second year of high school, a girlfriend of mine thought I liked the same fellow that she did. She started snubbing me. We had played together and been closer than sisters for years. That about broke my heart, so I kind of stayed away from the activities of the school. I did not go to any of the dances. For my junior prom, my mother more or less bribed me to go to that [dance]. [She] bought me a beautiful dress. I went long enough to keep my part of the bargain and then [I] went home and read.

I would read until two or three [o'clock] in the morning. I shut myself up in my lessons. I studied hard. I was not brilliant, but I studied so hard that I kept up with those that were considered brilliant. In my sophomore year, I was taking a class with seniors. I took a European history class, an American history class and an English class. I was exempt from examinations [and] did not have to take them because I [had] straight 'A's. All of this came [about] from this hurt. I [just] wrapped myself into my studies and reading. I preferred a good book.

In the summer, when I was a junior, I was a Primary teacher. We used to give little dances for the children when I was a young girl. They were having a Primary dance and there were some older boys standing around. I grabbed one of the boys and pulled him onto the dance floor. I said, “Come on, let’s dance.” I did it just for mischief because he had never danced before. I did it just to be funny. Then they started having politician dances. He started dancing and I started dancing.

The winter [when] I was a senior, I had a wonderful time. I had the grandest time. There were seven boys and two girls. [Laughter] I really had a good time. One time the boys bet the girls [that] they could find us no matter where we went. If we went somewhere for a picnic or party, they could find us. We bet they could not [find us]. It was kind of a Mutual [Improvement Association] class. We selected a place. It was down at the graveyard. They went down to the [Virgin] River and looked up and down. [They] looked up on the hills and all over trying to find our smoke. They heard we were going to have a little campfire. We called it a What You Can Find Party. Some [brought] corn to parch. Some [brought] potatoes to throw in the fire. Some [brought] dried raisins. [Laughter] We just had a hodge-podge. It was not really anything [very] fancy. It was just to show them that we could hide from them.

Finally, when the party was about over, one of the girls saw something in the bushes. She grabbed up a rock and was ready to throw a rock. It looked like a cat or something there in the bushes. It was her brother. He had gone home and gone to bed. [He had] given up the chase. His bedroom was upstairs [and] he saw the smoke. [Laughter]

We did not get to go on big, long field trips like they do now when we were seniors. We went up to Beaver Dam [Arizona]. We had a good time. [We had a] big picnic [with] homemade ice cream. The boys bent the black willow trees down. We had carnivals at different times. We really had a lot better time than they do now-a-days. [We had] candy pulls.

[They made both taffy and honey candy and then pulled it.

— Added during editing by Laura Macdonald, granddaughter.]

FH: Do you think it was so much fun because you engineered it?

AH: We made it [and] we enjoyed it.

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

AH: We never missed anything because that is where we had enjoyment.

FH: Was [this your] social life?

AH: Yes. [It] was [our] social life as well as church life. You did not think of not going [to church].

FH: Tell about your father.

AH: I remember that he was a grand [fellow] and loved his children. He loved his wife. He would pull her over on his lap. He always had fun with singing songs. He would jiggle her on his knee. We would all want to get in on it. Each one of us would try to sit on [the] other knee. They would pull up one on top of the other until we were two or three or four out trying to get on there. He told stories. He read the [*Holy*] Bible.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

AH: This particular winter he was home. So many times he was away from home. Every night we had to listen to [him read from] the [*Holy*] Bible. [On] Valentine's night we did not think that [it] was quite right that we had to sit and wait before we could go send Valentines. We had to sit there. We were quite frustrated about it. This is the height of our vulgarity in those days. When he read that Mary rode the ass, we had to giggle. That was not very nice to giggle, but we [did]. [Laughter] He turned to us and said, "Any more of that and there will be nobody going out for Valentines tonight." [Laughter] That was that. When dad spoke quietly, we knew enough to mind. As long as he shouted and yelled, we did not pay any attention to him because that was play. When he lowered his voice, we jumped.

FH: [Did] you know [that] he meant business then?

AH: Yes. He never raised his voice when he was mad [at] us.

FH: That was a pretty good system.

AH: When he was playing, you could hear him shout and yell. It did not bother us a bit.

FH: Tell what you remember about his activities in life. What did he do?

AH: He freighted [for a living]. That kept him away from home a lot. He did not have time [or] a chance to take much part in church. He was away on freighting trips around mines [and taking items] to the railroad. I remember that every once in awhile we would get a box [with] something [very] nice in it. [It may be] a nice dress. One time he sent my mother a beautiful dress on the Fourth of July. [He sent] popcorn balls. [Those were] the first popcorn balls we ever saw with fans in them. Every once in awhile there would be something like that [that he would send]. [It would be] a little surprise. He had marvelous taste. [He had] good taste in choice of clothes, too.

FH: Do you remember his parents?

AH: I do not remember my grandfather [Orange Decater] Leavitt too much. I remember him [being] sick in bed more than anything else about him. I was old enough to remember, [but] I just was not around him much.

My grandmother [Thirza Helena (Leavitt)] Leavitt was a midwife. I remember getting up in the night many a time when some of my brothers and sisters were born. [It] seems like it was me. Maybe it was not me. I know that I was [very] frightened to [get] up in the middle of night. We lived at one end of town and she lived at the other end of town. [We had] to get her to come when one of my brothers and sisters was being born. She was quite a jolly [woman and] the kind [of woman] you wanted to be around. She liked to play cards. In those days, that was wicked. [People] did not play cards. [Laughter] She would hide her cards. She would have a deck of cards [and] play solitaire. When someone would knock, she would brush those [cards] under the pillow [of] the bed [where] she was sitting. She [would] say, "Oh, come on in. I am having a game of cards." That was the height of her wickedness as far as [I know]. [Laughter]

We liked to go there. She would tell our fortunes. She told my fortune before I met my husband. [She] told me I was going to meet a tall, dark, handsome man. We thought this was all just fun, which it was, [and] I did not think that she meant any of it. [It was] just something I felt.

IL: [There was] something in the tea.

AH: She told [your fortune] with tea leaves. She brought a lot of children into this world. She walked many miles in the night. [She went] many times to sick places. One time she said that she had to go to Mesquite. She [hitched up] a team and went to Mesquite. There was a man standing there crying. I do not remember whether it was his wife or one of his children [who] was terribly sick. She said, "This is what I had to come for. I don't know why I had to come to Mesquite." In a wagon, it took quite a lot [of] time to go from here to that distance [of] five miles. She stayed there and nursed and doctored that person until they were well. There were many times that she had just hunches. She was more or less susceptible to hunches and feelings that she should do something like that [and would travel].

FH: This is the inspiration of the Spirit of the Lord.

AH: She was set apart as a midwife by somebody in the church. I do not remember who it was. She went to school and studied [to be] a midwife. She was set apart for this [position] and she did have a lot of that [to do].

FH: Tell about your mother.

IL: She ought to know about me by this time.

AH: She is a wonderful woman. She has a lot more patience than I have and a lot better —.

IL: No.

AH: Right now she has more patience than [emotional] [I do] with the little children. As I get older, I get out of patience quicker. [Emotional] She takes things so calmly. They do not seem to bother her. I get quite out of patience sometimes. She taught all of us all we ever knew. She taught us that we had to go to church [and] expected us to go. She and my father, a lot of times, could not go to church themselves because they did not have clothes. They always managed somehow to keep a presentable dress. A lot of times we only had one dress from Christmas to July Fourth. Then [we had] a new dress on July Fourth. That [dress] was for Sunday [and] was kept special. We did not [wear] it for anything else. Sometimes we only had one or two dresses for school. Sometimes that eliminated [my parents] from [being] seen [because] they didn't have the proper clothes. They do not come any better [than my parents].

FH: With as many children as they had, this was quite understandable.

AH: It was quite a problem.

FH: Do you know anything about her parents?

AH: Yes. [I knew] my grandma [Annie Elizabeth (Jones)] Cox. I stayed with Grandma Cox at night. I do not know anything about [my mother's] father [David Jehu Cox]. I do not think I ever saw him. I spent the nights with Grandma Cox almost until I was married [or] until I graduated from high school. Many times I would take my little bucket of milk and go up there. Bread and milk always tasted better up to her place than it did at home. [Laughter] Nothing against my mother and father because lots of times I carried a bed up there, too. It was kind [of] nice — just the two of us. [It was] kind of like a little picnic.

She would make me get up early in the morning to study. Lots of times she would get me out [of bed]. She would say, "You go on to bed now. You get up [early in the morning]." She would get me up sometimes before the sun came up. She would say, "You go out there on the side of the house and do your studying." She preached to me, too. For a person [who] had such a hard life, she was a pretty good woman. She was pretty fine.

FH: How many children were there in your [parents'] family?

AH: [There were] eleven [children].

FH: Can you name them?

AH: I was the oldest. My name is Alma Athella (Leavitt) Huffman. Then there was Anna, Ruth, Lucille, Ivie, Raoul, Iris, Robert [Emerson], Irene, Dorothy and Verna [Leavitt].

IL: [That was] Dorothy Jane.

FH: [Her name was] Dorothy Jane. Is there anything about this family that you would like to [mention]?

AH: Some of them are highly gifted. Anna and Ruth are great musicians. They are all wonderful people. They were all raised in the —.

IL: There are some of them, [like] Athella and two or three of her sisters, who are almost artists. [They are excellent at] sewing. There are some of them [who] can repair a dress or a suit.

AH: Ivie is quite a seamstress.

IL: Jane and Verna [are also good seamstresses].

AH: They all are [good seamstresses].

FH: [By] the way [that] their lives have turned out, do you think that they are fulfilling their destiny?

AH: I think most of them are.

FH: [Are] their lives full and good?

AH: I think most of them [lead good lives].

FH: Have they scattered all over [the country]?

AH: [They are] not too far [away]. Ivie [lives] in Fremont [California]. I think the rest of them [live] are right around [here and are] close by. Some of them [live] in Overton Valley [Nevada], Moapa Valley [Nevada] and Las Vegas [Nevada]. Just the one [lives] in California. I lived in California for eighteen years after we were married.

FH: [Are] your teachings that prayer is effective?

AH: Yes.

FH: [Do] you believe in this [concept]?

AH: Yes.

FH: Have there been any faith-promoting experiences in your life?

AH: Yes. [Emotional] These [events] are hard for me to talk about. My husband [Donald Kelly Huffman] was a non-member when I married him. He told me before I married him that if he still loved me as much in two years as he loved me then, he would join the church. I told him, "I don't want you to join the church for me. When you join the church, I want you to join the church for the church itself." I never pushed him. He [was] the one [who] suggested that we go to Sunday school after our first child was born. He said, "We have to start [her] right. We have to start going to Sunday school." So [with] the baby, [she] was still in arms, [we went to Sunday school]. When we went, we went at his suggestion.

He took a missionary class. We both started to take this missionary class. [The baby] would [start] fussing and I would have to get up and go out with her. I had to walk through the adult class. That was the older folks. It disturbed two classes. I started staying in with the adults so I could slip out the front door and go outside when the baby would fuss. He stayed on with [the] missionary class.

He started going with the missionaries. He went out with the missionaries, [even though] he was not LDS. [This] had gone on for some time. Finally, one day the partner that he went with said, "Now "Don", you have been going out acting as a missionary, don't you think it is about time that you were baptized?" Maybe it was the bishop. I cannot remember. He stammered and stuttered for awhile. He was a very shy and bashful person. He said, "Yes, I guess so."

FH: He converted himself.

AH: Yes, so he was baptized.

FH: Do you suppose that this had something to do with your prayers?

AH: Yes. [Emotional] Actually, that is all I did. I do not take any credit for it. [I give all the credit] to the Lord.

FH: [You do] not [give] a bit [of credit to yourself]?

AH: No.

FH: I do not think I will agree with you, but that is your privilege.

AH: He worked in the bank and was inside all day. He did enjoy getting out in the sun. We lived in Santa Monica [California] at the time. It was so pleasant for him to go

and lie on the beach in the sun. He wanted to go down there. Usually, it was after work on nice days and on Saturdays. We would try to go at his suggestion. [If] he said, "Let's go down to the beach today," I went with him. I did not say, "Oh, we better not." My grandmother [Annie Cox] came down there once and she got after me about [the situation]. I said, "Look Grandma, "Don" is inside all week and he does not get any sun. I don't want to nag him in the first place. When he is ready to go to Sunday school, we will go." She did not say any more. Yes, there have been many instances in my life [where] prayers helped.

FH: If you were to do it over again, do you think you would change some of those things?

AH: [I would] not [change] that. No.

FH: What did you do just for fun when you were growing up?

AH: We had lots of fun. We lived on a ranch, [which was] ten miles from here. We had to go down in a wagon or a horse. One day we [were] on the horses [and] there were some cattle bothering the ranch. My sister [Anna] and I each [were] on great big, old work horses. They were huge [animals]. We took these cows across the river and up into the sand hills. There had been a flood just previous to this particular incident. So there were a lot of clay slicks across the [Virgin] River. Coming back, we [inaudible] up those horses and came across that old river. They just skated across it because the mud was slick clay. That was a lot of fun! [Laughter]

As I was older, our main fun was school activities. [There were] dances, parties and candy pulls. When I was going with my husband, we went for hikes. I went up to work at the [Key West] Mine after I graduated from high school. There was a job opening up at the mine. I was working in the school as a secretary for the principal as well as the librarian. This job came up at the mine. A lady cook needed a helper. [It was a job for] a dishwasher and a waitress. So I dropped the other [job] and went up there. They were very exasperated with me, but I was looking out for myself. [Laughter] I wanted to go to college the next year. I had not gone [to college] that year because I came home. [I came] from Provo after that summer and [I] found out that my mother was going to have another baby. I thought maybe I better stay here because it was too expensive. College then was a lot of money. I forgot what I was going to tell [you].

FH: [Did] this job at the mine pay pretty good money?

AH: Yes. I [was paid] \$20.00 a month. At the school, [I was paid] \$1.00 a day [and] I [was paid] \$1.50 [a day at the mine]. I [received] six days pay up there, which was quite a lot of money. That would make quite a difference in me being able to go to school that fall.

IL: You were supposed to graduate —.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

AH: I belonged to a dancing class one year. We had a very good dance teacher. He taught us ballet, Russian dancing and quite a number of dances. They gave a recital. Another girl and I did a ballet number. Then they took [us] to Las Vegas. They showed this [dance] recital in Las Vegas. That was a long trip for us. The cars then were [considered] fast if they went fifty-five miles an hour. [There were] dirt and gravel roads. We had a long, hard ride there and back. [It was a] treat for us to get to go places.

FH: [You have had a] nice variety. Tell about music in your life. Has it meant a lot to you?

AH: Yes. I loved to listen to Anna play the piano. Ruth did not play piano at that time. She started [playing] after I left home. [She] was quite a bit younger. Anna would play and practice before the dances. I would dance and be already warmed up. I did not have to wait until I got to the dance to get warmed up. [Laughter] I was ready to start dancing when [we arrived] there. Yes, I loved music. I liked to listen to the violin, the classics [and] opera music. I am very partial to opera and classical music. I cannot stand some of this [music] they have now-a-days. [I like] good classical music. I like all [music].

IL: The girls used to come there. Our girls would play and they would dance.

FH: Although you did not ever play much, you had a few lessons. [Did] you say [that] you wrote a song?

AH: [Laughter] In 1942, I had a major operation. I developed pneumonia. The doctor gave up [on me]. They sent word to have the children come up. I was in the Queen [of] Angels Hospital [in Los Angeles, California]. The nun came to see if I would like to have a priest or someone from my church come and administer the last rites. [She told me] that I was going to die. She told me point blank. I said, "No, I have too many [children]. I have too much to do." That sounds kind of foolish, but that is just the way I felt [about it]. I could not [die] because I had these children. She sat and talked to me for about an hour. [Before], they had never done anymore than maybe stick their head through the door and ask if everything was alright and then be on their way. She sat and talked to me [for] about an hour. She told me about her brother who died.

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

AH: I did get better. After about six weeks, I went home. I still remembered it and thanked my children. They thought that was so wonderful. They learned [the song] and sang it. A year ago, I was singing it. One of the little grandchildren said, "That is cute." I had never put the verses to it. It was more or less just

[some] thing that I had written. So I wrote a couple of little verses and put to it. When I put it on this record, it sounded so funny. [Laughter] [My voice sounded so funny]. I do not know why I did [it]. I cannot write a note. Actually, the timing is not very good. Anyway, I did [write a song].

FH: I think that is wonderful. [Laughter] Not very many people have written music of any kind. [What] about reading? [Do] you like to read?

AH: Yes. When I was eleven years old, I was reading the [*Holy Bible*] because we did not have anything else to read. I like the stories in the Old Testament. I never read Proverbs and Psalms too much, they were boring. [Laughter] The [other] parts are filled with so many good stories. The Old Testament [had good stories about] Queen Esther, Job, Noah, Lot, and Sodom and Gomorrah. I liked to read all those stories.

I started reading the [*Holy Bible*] [when] one of my friends had something [to read]. I guess it was a magazine [that] one of her older sisters had been able to buy or smuggle in. My mother said, "Take this and read [it]." She handed me the [*Holy Bible*]. I said, "I don't want to read that. What [part] would I read?" She said, "You can turn to such and such." I took it down under the [pomegranate] tree and laid in the grass. It was in the summertime. The libraries were closed. I started reading. When the libraries opened, I read everything they had there. I read all of Shakespeare's [inaudible], Emerson, Poe and Edgar Guest's poetry. [I read] everything they had there.

FH: This was probably the means of a great education [for] you.

AH: I loved it. I just could not leave it alone.

FH: Tell about your courtship and marriage.

AH: They started the Key West Mine [in the Bunkerville Mountains]. My father and an uncle and some of them came down [to work in the copper mine]. They said there were some young boys up there. I had gone with some boys here, but they started talking about one [fellow] in particular. One my uncle's said, "Best looking [fellow] I ever saw. Big, tall, slim fellow." I think I [had] a case on him right then before I ever saw him. He came down to the junior prom. He had not planned on coming because he did not have his suits. He had worked in the bank before, but he had left them stored. He only had one pair [of pants] and they had broken out in the crotch. John Leavitt said, "We will fix that for you." So they pinned it. [Laughter] He came down to [the] Junior Prom dance. We were all excited about all the new fellows coming in. There were a circle of girls. Between the dances, the girls would stand in one corner and the boys over in the other. John Leavitt brought "Don" over and introduced him to every one in the circle but me. He just kind of skipped me [by me]. We had cards and pencils.

[We had] programs. [My program] was full. Mine had been full before the dance started. He came back and said, "I guess I have met everyone in the dance hall but you." He told me his name. He said, "I would like to have a dance." Instead of having him on my program, [as] we always did, I said, "Let's see. I can give you such and such dance." It happened to be a cousin of my mother. He was a little bit older than me.

[This] was a little dirty and a little crooked [to] give someone else a dance. [Laughter] I figured that this way [I could dance with him]. I wanted to dance with him [and] I wanted to meet him. I wanted to dance with him, so that was the only one I could get by with [putting him on my program]. Besides, he [my cousin] lived over in the other valley and I was not going to see him ["Don"] very much. [Laughter] I danced with him. I [was] in a little trouble the next day because my mother's aunt jumped onto [her] one son for not dancing with me. He said, "I had a dance with her and she snubbed me."

The next time he ["Don"] came down to a dance, I danced with him and he asked me if I would walk out with him. [He wanted to] walk outside to get some fresh air and we did. The moon was pretty and he kissed me. He was a city slicker and from the city. If he thought he was going to come and kiss a little country hick from the country, he was mistaken. So I slapped him in the face and made his nose bleed. [Laughter] We had to wipe that off of his face and off of his shirt before we could go back in. I really would have liked [for] him kiss me again, but after that I could not. [Laughter]

IL: Was this Arlene?

AH: No. It was "Don."

IL: [Inaudible]

AH: I was still working at the school then. It was after this [that I went to the mine]. It was in May when I went up to the mine to work. Of course, he was up there, too. We had gone together a few times after this [incident]. There was another girl that his friend was going with [at that time]. He wanted "Don" to go with her sister, so he fixed up a date. They went out a time or two.

I was working up here and they brought them up there for dinner one day. That made me mad for him to expect me to wait on them. They took pictures. "Don" kept insisting that I be in [the] picture. I was not about to [be in that picture]. We did not go out together for quite awhile.

Then he went up to Yellowstone [National Park in] Wyoming. When he came back, he came up to the cookhouse where I was working. He brought me a picture of a girl in a slinky, black dress. He said [that] it was his girlfriend from New Mexico. He had come from New Mexico originally. He moved to New Mexico

when he was three years old with his folks. When he was seventeen [years old], he [moved] to California. From there, [he came] up here. Anyway, he brought this picture of his girlfriend. He was not going to get the best of me, so I made a big fuss about how good looking she was, what good taste he had and so forth.

He kept coming up [to see me]. Eventually, we started going together. We started coming to town for a root beer. He asked me one day if I had a nickel I would loan him to buy a pop. [Inaudible] [Laughter] I did not believe in the girls treating the men in those days.

There was another girl [whose] father was [the mine] superintendent up there. She started going with [a] boy [who] talked “Don” into going with her sister. So this Dorothy, I, “Don” and Everett came to town quite a bit. We had quite a good time. One night he asked me to marry him. We were sitting in the car right in front of my father and all these men. It was after dark, but they were sitting in front of the bunkhouse. The car was about seventy-five feet in front of them. Actually, they could not hear what we said. He asked me to marry him. We were married September 13, [1938]. [Thirteen] was a lucky number for me.

FH: Where were you married?

AH: [We were married] in Bunkerville by Bishop Abbott.

FH: Where did you make your home?

AH: We went to California. He [found] a job [there]. He had worked for a milk route company before he went to work for the bank. So he got a job with [the milk company] again. It was a very scarce time. I was nineteen [years old], but everybody took me for a lot younger than I was.

I got on the streetcar one day. I had never been on the streetcar before without him. He had always taken care of the transfers. I asked the woman, “Is this [the] right transfer?” I was sure it was, but I wanted to get off in the right place. I was going to meet him [for] lunch. She thought I was a school child sluffing [school]. She took me under her wing and asked me if I had enough money. I tried very hard to convince her that I was older and that I was married. You can get wedding rings a dime-a-dozen from the dime store. [You can] make believe. She did not believe a word I said. She was taking very good care of me. That was [very] embarrassing to me. I was nineteen years old and to have someone act like that [with me]. [Laughter]

Another time he came by [to get me]. He drove a buggy-wagon. [It was a] one horse [buggy]. He would leave at two o’clock in the morning. It was quite lonely for me down there in Hollywood [California]. We [had] an apartment in Hollywood. It was quite lonely because he would get up at two o’clock in the morning. I insisted on getting up and getting his breakfast just for the simple

reason that I wanted to be with him awhile. Then he would be late because it took so long to deliver milk in a buggy. One day they sent him out with a special delivery in the truck. They had a few trucks up in the Hollywood hills. That was a wonderful trip. [We had on] rose-colored glasses and all that [nonsense]. [It was wonderful to] see the beautiful homes and orange trees. We had just been married not very long. We had some fights.

IL: [Inaudible]

AH: That was later [in my life]. [Laughter] This was after our first baby [Alice Huffman] was [born]. He quit the milk route and we [moved] back to Nevada. He worked [at] the mine [until] it closed up again.

Then we went to New Mexico where his folks were [living]. He worked in a Piggly Wiggly [grocery store] there. Safeway bought them out later. In July, he quit again and came home. That was a [very] long way from home. That was clear around the world. I [was] so homesick that [we] had to come back.

We [moved] back and he [found] a job in Las Vegas. The only [job] that he could find was [as] a garbage collector. [The company] had just started. They were two white men, my husband and another [white] one. One day in July or August [there was an incident]. It was a [very] hot day in August. The other fellow said, "Let's stop in here and get a beer." My husband went with him to get a beer. Each one treated the other one. The boss came in and they treated him. They had about three or four [beers]. This was [a] payday, too. That is the reason they could afford to buy [beer]. The bartender slips out a little glass of whiskey to them. [Drinking] that on top of [the] beer and [having] no lunch [left them in quite a state]. I was ready to go bed with the baby. It was later than August because I was ready to have my first baby.

I worried that somebody had hit him in the head because he would always come right straight home. He had never lingered. I could almost set the clock by him. I knew that somebody had hit him on the head because it was going on [a long] time. [I thought somebody had hit him on the head for] his paycheck. [I told] the neighbors [that] I just had to get out and leave the house because I was so nervous. [Laughter] I got over there [and] then I saw him drive in. We had a little two-room house. Our bathroom [with a] shower and toilet was outside. The shower had a little diamond shape in it. I went over. I saw him come home and he had gone in to take a shower right quick. [Laughter] He looked through that little tiny window and said, "Honey, please give me a towel." [Laughter] I was mad! Oh, I was mad! I gave him a licking with a razor strap afterwards. [Laughter]

IL: [Inaudible] with his belt.

AH: He said, "Oh, honey, don't." [Laughter] He did not drink. It just happened that way. He [inaudible]. Our first baby was born at home in that place. Then we

moved [back] to California and he went to work in the bank. It was after we went there.

FH: Before you go on, tell about the children. [Did] you have six girls?

AH: Yes.

FH: Tell about each one of them.

AH: Alice [Huffman] was born in this little house in Las Vegas. Norma Lou [Huffman] was born in Santa Monica in the home.

FH: Tell about the first one's life.

AH: She [Alice] was quite an adventurous child right from the first. She wanted to go places and do things. She sure kept me on the run. [Laughter] She was on the bowling team in high school. She enjoyed that [sport]. Her father went with her. At the bowling place, they had target practice. She was very good with guns. I could not hit anything. [Inaudible] She graduated from Overton [High School] after we moved to Overton [Nevada]. Later on, she went with a very nice young fellow from Overton, but he [was] killed under a [tractor] caterpillar.

IL: Who was it?

AH: [It was] Art. She met another fellow and was going to marry him. He lived back east and she went back there to marry him. Then she walked out [on him] because they were very wealthy, society-type people. [His] grandmother kind of wanted to rule things. She walked out and went to another town. She moved into the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association]. Then she [found] a job in Cleveland [Ohio]. She met Mark Raymond, [and] later on, she married him and [they] had one girl, Jodie. When the Sands Hotel [in Las Vegas] opened, Alice danced [inaudible] there. She was in one [motion] picture.

IL: [She was in] two [motion pictures].

AH: [It was in] *Come Back, Little Sheba*.

IL: [She was also in] *Million Dollar Mail Bag*.

AH: [She was also in] *Million Dollar Mail Bag*. Later, she divorced him and married a man named Joe Lane, but it did not work out either. A few years ago she divorced him. She worked for awhile as a waitress. Now she [has] something that she really enjoys. She is doing varityping in the school over here. She wants to write and she is learning newspaper work, as well as [the] varitype machine.

FH: Is she getting her life straightened out?

AH: Yes.

FH: What is the second girl's name?

AH: [Her name is] Norma Lou. She had quite a beautiful voice. She took the lead in some of the operas in the high school here. She went to school in Bunkerville at the Virgin Valley [High School]. Then she went up to Cedar [City, Iron County, Utah] to [College of Southern Utah] school. She [had] the lead in one of the operas up there. Then I had a tractor accident and she came home. She missed [some] of the practices and dropped out. [She] did not go back [for] the end of that [semester]. She does have a good voice.

She eventually married a man [named] John Mull. She went to work in the courthouse in Las Vegas. She met him through his mother. His mother worked there. He was in the [United States] Navy and cheated on her. We sent her back because he put on an act about how crazy he was about her. We had to see him knock her down before we realized what she was really going through before [we would let her leave him]. Just before her father died, we saw this happen. She went on with her husband. We went down there to see how she was [doing] just before he died. Afterwards, he whipped her again and I went down and got her. She is now going to school in Las Vegas. [She is] learning [???business???] machines and library work. She has five children to support. She has it rough.

FH: That is not easy.

AH: No.

FH: Probably the future will be better.

AH: I hope so. [The next girl is named] Athella Loretta [Huffman]. She had a similar experience. She [married] somebody that was not just right. She had two children [and then] things went hay-wire. She married again thinking that she could stay home with her children. [She thought she] would not have to work [and] she could be home with them. That was the wrong thing. We tried to talk her out of it. We tried to talk her out of the first [marriage]. Eventually, she went to college. We talked her into going to college. She went to college and has been teaching school. She has been doing very well. She is teaching school in Las Vegas [and] doing very well.

Marilyn [Huffman was] the next girl. She went to high school [and to] one year of college. She worked in a bank and in another office in Las Vegas. Then she married and [they] had four children — two girls and two boys. She works in the Sunday school in the church. I guess she still does.

Then there is Dawn Marie [Huffman]. She married a very nice boy from Mesquite. His name is Kent Hardy. They just had their sixth child. They have three girls and three boys. She was quite a dancer, [but] married too young. There was another boy [who] had a case on her. His background was the kind that I did not want her to end up marrying [into] and [have] something happen to her. He lived close to us on this ranch. When Kent started going with her, we were glad. Kent was older and wanted to get married. She had not turned sixteen [years old] yet. We said yes and we liked him, but we wanted him to wait until after she graduated. [He said], “Oh, no.” He wanted to get married then.

They [were] married and she had a baby. They put her in Mutual [Improvement Association] to teach dance. She had thirty-one children [in the class]. Some of them were older than she was [at the time]. She taught that group of thirty-one children I do not know how many dances. They gave a recital. There was one dance that she had not had time to teach the group. They had enough to fill the whole program for a full evening. [There was] an hour [program] of dancing. The young folks insisted that she dance this one dance that she had not had time to finish teaching them. When she finished dancing, she got a standing ovation. [Emotional] Everybody stood up and clapped because she did [the dance] so beautifully. She was just a little over sixteen years old [at that time]. I guess she was seventeen [years old]. Some of the students were still in high school [and] were going to graduate. She was only seventeen [years old because] about a year later her baby was born. She was getting close to eighteen [years old]. She [inaudible].

FH: What is her husband’s name?

AH: [His name is] Kent Hardy. He has a big trucking line over here.

Then there is Gloria [Huffman]. She married a very nice fellow [named] Kenneth Petersen. We like him very much. There was a little contention at first because another fellow came in and started going with her. He gave her a diamond [ring]. It was quite flattering to get this great big, beautiful diamond. She kind of dropped “Ken” because he [was] a little bit sore about it. His folks were very unhappy about this [that] a boy [would] come from St. George [Washington County, Utah]. [Laughter] Just because he came from St. George, they were quite bitter about it. [Laughter]

IL: His mother [inaudible].

AH: After awhile, she decided that she had made a mistake and they [were] married. His folks still thought this [about the boy from St. George] because she had gone with this other one and hurt their boy. After they were married, he had a scholarship to go to [the University of Nevada at] Reno. They went up there and he was put in as [a] counselor in the Sunday school up there, which pleased us very much. They came back to Henderson [Nevada] and he went to work [there]. They had a baby after a year.

Her father and I kept talking and urging him to go on to school and go into electronics. I wanted my husband to get out of the hard work that he was doing [and] get something that he could [inaudible]. He had been [inaudible] for two or three times, but he was afraid of it. He had been a carpenter for years. When he left the bank, he went into other things. It was quite a number of years after he finally left the bank [that] he became a carpenter. We urged him to [go into electronics]. He finally [went back]. [She and] "Pete", went to Salt Lake [City]. She worked while he went to school up there. Now they are in [Las] Vegas and he works [at] Mercury [a World War II test site in Nye County, Nevada] in electronics. They are doing very [well]. She has worked as secretary in Mutual [Improvement Association] and now she is secretary in Primary. He has worked in Mutual. Or was it the Sunday school and now he is in the Mutual? [It is] one way or the other. They are very active. They just left with their first new car this morning. They were so happy. [Laughter]

FH: Let's talk about your own life since you married. [What] you have been doing? You carried on steadily in your church activities. [What are] some of the things that you have done? Do you remember?

AH: Do you mean from the time that I was married?

FH: [I mean] after you were married.

AH: In Santa Monica I was put in the singing mothers group and we sang [at] the conference. President [Heber J.] Grant was down for that conference. That was quite a thrill for me to get to see President Grant and hear him talk. I did not do too much after we left Santa Monica because we were building and we had financial setbacks.

He left the bank then because he wanted to get a job out [on his own]. First, he [had] a bakery route and that did not work out. We had to buy our own equipment. Then he eventually went to work at the gas company [for] \$.50 an hour. [He worked] two or three days a week sometimes. One time, before he did this, he went to work for a farmer for \$.25 an hour. All the rest of the men were Mexicans. When the man went to pay "Don", he said, "I am not paying any white man the same that I would pay any Mexican. You are worth two or three of those Mexicans." So he paid him \$.35 an hour. That bought bread for the family at the time.

We had three children then and [we were] trying to build this house. The bank president liked "Don" real well. He was a good old fellow. He had [made] his money in Virginia City [Nevada]. He was a good fellow and when "Don" left the bank, [he] gave us an old building to tear down. [It was] one they wanted moved out. We got a lot of [the] plumbing, doorbells, a lot of 2 x 4 [lumber] and things like that [for our building]. It helped them and it helped us a lot. We started

building with that [material and] hope and a prayer. We [put] the walls up and the roof [was] on. We lived in the tent [and] he put up an arbor [with] some boards across it for shade. That was the shade we had for the summer. He finished the back porch first and we moved in [there] to eat and cook. He finally finished off one bedroom so we could [move] into that [room] out of the tent.

When our fourth girl was born, I was in the hospital for two months. I had terrible phlebitis. I saw them [bad veins] coming and going and coming and going. They said, "It takes time. They are sometimes in here for a year." I was paralyzed from the waist down. It was not any fun. I had two diseases to fight.

[The first disease was] homesickness, which I think is worse than any other [illness]. One day I saw the bed pan coming. I said, "I am getting out of here if I have to crawl out on my hands and knees." So he ["Don"] took me home in the ambulance and ended up taking me back after I saw the family for awhile. After a couple of weeks, the doctor came over. He looked at me and said, "We won't have to take you back." I kept getting better and pretty soon I was able to get up.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

AH: My husband had a very fine family. I always prayed when my family was young that if anything happened, let it be me. [It] seemed like I was sick and everything did happen. I could always stand that when I could not stand the other.

FH: [Did] the Lord kind of take you at your word?

AH: Yes. It was better that way. I do not know what I have said.

FH: You have not talked about that at all.

AH: We went to Overton and we traded places with my father. We were in the dairy business. My husband went up to Utah to get some cows. I drove a school bus. It was a station wagon. Because of [World] War [II], it was almost impossible [to get a real bus]. I think Dixie College and I got one at the same time. They were priorities. We got to drive our school children. I had that job to do. While he was gone, we milked the cows. The girls were very good about helping. I brought them home from school. I said, "You girls go on in and I will go get the cows." A couple of them popped up and said, "We will get them, mom." I said, "No, I will go get them while you [go in]." We had a horse. I went out and found the first thing that I could [find] that resembled a bridle. It was not a bridle, but it was handy. It was an old, old work bridle with everything gone [and] a bailing wire tied on it. I put it on [the horse] and I jumped on. Just two days before that [day], my brother-in-law had been over and he had clipped off the horse's mane. [He had cut] all of it [and] trimmed it up.

[END OF RECORDING TWO.]

AH: [Laughter] The horse was trotting. I guess the bridle wire hit him on the neck. He had been spooked some time or another by an electric wire and he broke and ran. I was not expecting it and I fell off and landed on my hip. It broke the artery cap. I could still drive with my left foot to use for brake or clutch if I had to. I tried to keep on driving. My oldest daughter came. She was still going to school in Overton. She had been in two schools. If she had come over here, it would have been another school. It was her last year, so she stayed over there and went to school. She came over and drove the station wagon for me. [It was] the school bus. I went up to St. George to see the doctor.

FH: Tell about that trip in the car when you had the injury. You started out from here in the car. [Were you] driving the car while you were injured?

AH: I went ahead and drove the car to St. George. They stopped me. It was a new station wagon. We had just got it and had not had a chance to get the license for it. They stopped me in Santa Clara [Washington County, Utah] to check for my car license. I said, "I have not had a chance to go get it. I had [an] accident." They said, "What accident? You look alright. You are driving the car." I said, "I fell off the horse and hurt my hip. I can still drive this car." They said, "Fell off a horse? You mean the horse threw you?" I said, "No, I fell off the horse. It didn't throw me." They laughed and said, "Well, I think I would tell a more likely story than that." I said, "That happens to be the truth. I did fall off the horse." I had always prided myself with my horsemanship. Then to fall off and face somebody, I was a little embarrassed, but I went on. [Laughter]

The doctors put me in the hospital for two weeks. They said, "You would have been a lot better off if you had busted your leg rather than bust your artery cap this way." It was solid black and blue from my hip down to my thigh and [the] calf of my leg.

A little later on, my husband had gone out to work at Mercury. I was alone again. This other boy that I was talking about that had liked Dawn Marie, came to ask if she could go with him up to get his sister. They had gone to Primary. They were not LDS, but they had gone to Primary. They wanted to meet them. [He wanted to] go up and get them from Riverside [Nevada]. So I said, "Yes, but don't go over the new road that they are building." Of course, they went over the new road that they were building. It was very steep and [had] soft sand spots. They got stuck right at the top of this hill. They came back and he wanted to use my tractor. He did not know how to drive my tractor. It was a different type of tractor than his [tractor]. I said, "No, you can't take the tractor, but I will drive the tractor and go up see if I can help you." I went up and we hitched on. It just pulled the tractor right over on top of me.

The first thing I started to do was pull it over. It was black and I thought it was a lot different than they say it was to be dead. [Laughter] There was just enough subconscious there to think I was dead and there is nothing to what they say

[about death]. It is just black. Everything is black. I came out of it and I heard my daughter screeching and screaming. I said, "Go up to Riverside and get Mr. Benson. Get some help." The boy broke and run, but my daughter stayed with me.

She tried to pull me out away from the tractor. She could not [do it]. We got out a little ways and I had to turn the tractor off. The switch was still on. I was afraid of fire because it was leaking gas. Mr. Benson went up to Mesquite to get a crew of men and a doctor. There was a doctor in town at that time. They came down and gave me some dope. Harley Leavitt and Warren Pulsipher took me to Las Vegas to the doctor. They gave me dope there and again at Riverside. I kind of wanted to lie down and go to sleep, but I could not [sleep]. I had to sit up.

I got in the hospital. There was a fellow [who] sat down and started cleaning the dirt out of my leg. I was dirty. I had just taken a bath before the children came [to the house]. This is what I hate to tell in front of [everybody]. I had run out of underwear and I had put some of my husband's underwear on. That was the funny part about it. [That was] the only time in my life that I ever did that and I got caught. [Laughter]

[In] the hospital I heard them laughing. This young doctor started to clean [the wound] out. I thought he was just some young [fellow] there. I picked at him. I said, "Leave that alone. The pain is up here in my stomach." It was embarrassing when they took me into the operating room. I did not look like I had ever had a bath. I was so dirty. That did not bother me. What bothered me was [that] I was embarrassed. I guess it was because we were [very] busy and I had not had time to do my laundry lately. I was so embarrassed. That bothered me more than the other. This doctor did not think I would live. They told me later on that this doctor said I would not live because I had a mashed liver.

The next day, two men from our church came in. That is the first time. I never asked for them because [it] did not enter my head. Before [this time], I always knew I was going to get well. They came in. I think it was Brother Loveland from Las Vegas and Earlin Tobler [brother-in-law]. I believe he was a bishop. He administered to me and said, "Get well quick and tell of it." You know that doctor shook his head. Every time he saw me, he shook his head. He said, "I can't believe it." None of the cuts and breaks hurt. The liver hurt so terribly bad that I could not feel anything else. That did hurt!

FH: [What else was] wrong from this accident?

AH: I had two breaks in my spine, a broken pelvis and a break in my hip bone. There is still a lump there on that hip bone. The doctor would shake his head. He was concerned over the break in the pelvis more than the others. I guess under the x-rays it [looked] worse. He said, "Doesn't that hurt at all?" I said, "No." None of these cuts hurt until they took some stitches out down around [my] toes. [I had stitches] the full length of my left leg.

They took stitches out between my toe and that hurt [me]. [Laughter] When he did this, he opened the door quickly because he thought I was going to faint. He mentioned the fact that he was afraid of that [happening]. He started me walking in his office. He said, "Let's try it with a crutch and then let's try it with a —." This was after I [was] out of bed. I [was out] of bed sooner than they expected. It was just a miracle. He shook his head. "I cannot explain it." I could explain it. I remember trying to walk the first time without the crutches. Beads of sweat just rolled down my face. He said, "Are you going to make it alright? You will do alright." That was an experience that was faith-promoting because I know that the doctor could not believe it. It was the Lord. He had said, "Get well quick and tell of it." And I did.

FH: That is really something.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

AH: We finally prepared ourselves and went to the temple. When my husband first joined the church, he had been in [the church only] six or nine months. Usually, they have to wait a year before they allow them to go to the temple. They were going to make an excursion down to [the] city of Mesa, Arizona to the temple. They came and told him that he could go because he had done his missionary work. [He] had been so faithful, had [done] so much before and they knew him so well. They would give him a recommendation. We had just started to move to Van Nuys [California]. We were [moving] on faith and prayer. We did not figure we had the money to go, but we made a big mistake by not going. [We should have] just gone and let the house building go. We did not go then. It was years later [that we went to the temple]. It was after this accident that we finally got ready and went [to the temple]. By that time, our three oldest girls were away from home. They were gone and were married. [Emotional] The three younger girls were sealed to us. The older ones were not [sealed to us]. [Emotional]

FH: That will take some doing to get them there.

AH: Yes. They all want to go, but circumstances have happened [that have not allowed them to go]. Norma Lou asked to go at one time. She was still married to this man. The bishop said, "You have to have his permission." It just is not done. He had joined the church once, but he did not follow through [with it]. It just went from bad to worse. So we have our three youngest ones sealed to us. I think that if we had gone at first when we could have gone to Mesa, they all would have been sealed to us. They all would have had a little easier [and] better lives. I think it would have affected them that way. Actually, that is the way I feel about it.

FH: I would say you have some work cut out for you to do.

AH: Yes, I know I have. That was a very happy occasion and at the same time [it was] sorrowful. One night I had a dream. I woke up and I did not know who I was or where I was. It [did] not seem like it was in the hospital room. I kept wanting to know who I was and where I was. After awhile, a couple of women in white came in and I felt like I was not in a hospital. I did not know what it was, but I kept asking this question. Pretty soon there were two men [who] came in. I can still remember [that experience] and that was quite a number of years ago.

[I can still remember] the way one of them looked. They conversed among themselves and then he came over and said, "You are in New Philadelphia and your husband has been —. It has been so many years since —." [Then] my husband turned over and hit me in the ribs and woke me up. [Laughter] I was so mad I could have murdered him! Because I did not know what it was [that they were talking about]. It had been seven years. I studied and thought about that so long. All of a sudden it came to me. It had been that number of years since he joined the church.

New Philadelphia, in the [*Holy*] Bible, is the church of God. At first, I thought New Philadelphia was New Philadelphia, Ohio, but there is no New Philadelphia in Ohio. I thought it was his ancestors wanting him to do some work. Then I picked up the [*Holy*] Bible one day and it said that New Philadelphia was the church of God. There it was all together there. I still remember this [experience]. I started doing genealogy work. [I was] hunting [for his ancestors]. At first, it seemed like a drag [and] then I [became very] interested. His brother [Minor Huffman] was [very] good about helping. What was it you asked me a second ago? I have forgotten.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

AH: My husband's brother [researched] the biggest share of my genealogy. None of his folks were LDS that we know of. They all pitched in and helped. I wrote to his uncles and aunts and all of them responded. After my husband's father died, I [put] all his genealogy in [line]. [I did] my husband's grandfather's work and his family. [That] would be my father-in-law and his father and mother [George Gregg and Flora Winifred (Stewart) Huffman]. Their work was done in the temple a year ago.

FH: [Is] this brother-in-law [Minor Huffman] a member of the church?

AH: No. He is not a member of the church, but he is very —

FH: Is he helping you?

AH: — fine. Yes. His mother and all of them were very good about [helping]. They are very good people. They were [very] proud of "Don." He was president of the High Priests. "Don" did not talk about this. I told his mother one time that he was

a High Priest. I actually did not realize that he was president of the High Priests here until my uncle, Washington Leavitt, brought it up awhile back. He was very faithful in his work. He was very bashful and shy. He did not want to talk. He would do other things, but he did not want to be a front man.

One day they asked him to give a talk in church. He had come [home] from Mercury on Friday night. They came and asked him. He said, "No." [Laughter] Norma Lou was here. They had asked our family to give a program. I told them, "I can't speak for him, but I will do what I can." Norma Lou would give a talk. She kidded him about it and he kind of sulked about it. [On] Sunday morning, before Priesthood, I went into the bedroom. We had a fireplace in there. He stood in front of the fireplace looking out the window at the sun. I said, "What is the matter?" He said, "It makes me so mad to think that I am such [a] boob and coward." I said, "Well, don't let it worry you. We will do the best we can." So he went down to church and ended up [not talking]. Brother [inaudible] told him, "I will talk today." He did not have anything prepared, but he bore his testimony. I could not prepare [for] a month and give as good a talk as he did. It was beautiful [and] right from his heart. A lot of people complimented him on it. It was not long. It was short, but I think we have too many long sermons anyway.

FH: It does not have to be long.

AH: No. He never said anything about anybody. It was always something good. Most of his family was that way. They have helped me with the genealogy. It has been [very] good. There was something else that I had in mind that I wanted to tell, but I cannot think of it.

FH: You were active in a lot of different [organizations] here in the ward. [You were a] visiting teacher [and the] literary teacher in Relief Society for awhile.

AH: Yes, [for] a little while before I went to Mercury.

FH: Were you also the second counselor in the MIA?

AH: I was second counselor and everybody knows that is [the position that is] over the teachers. If a teacher does not show up and there is a lesson that has to be given, I had to give it. Maybe sometimes there would be two [teachers gone] and I would have two classes to teach. [Laughter] At the same time, I was [the] drama director. We put on quite a [few] plays and road shows. We took first place in the stake and went to Cedar [City] one year. You would have thought that my husband had the world by the tail. He was just as proud as a peacock. He went up with me and enjoyed it. He did not have a lot of chances to [go with me] because he worked away [from home] quite a bit. He went along [and he was] tickled about it.

FH: [Can you] give a little more [information] about your husband's background?

AH: My husband's family all have Mormon names: Stewart and Cox, which is in my background, Hodges [and] Eastons. Huffmans originally came from Germany way back. They settled in Kentucky and in Illinois. His folks [came from Illinois] and settled in New Mexico on a dry-land farm. Before that, they had had lots of rain. People had written [to them] and told them how wonderful it was and how you could get all this acreage for \$1.25 [an acre]. [You] just [had to] plant it. Then they had a drought and things were quite hard for them. [They] belonged to the First Christian Church. They were very devout [and] very good people.

FH: [Were they] good, religious people all the way through [their lives]?

AH: Yes. His father had a magnificent bass voice. My husband had a beautiful voice, too. His father had a wonderful bass voice. I sang alto and he liked for me to sing with him. The thing I cannot understand [is that] they all lived to a ripe old age. His grandfather died when we were down at the ranch at the age of ninety-one [years old]. His mother is about eighty-nine [years old] now. She is still alive. His father was eighty-nine or something like that [when he died].

FH: What happened to your husband?

AH: He had a heart attack. I was very, very bitter for a long time. Sometimes I am still bitter at his ancestors because I figure that is why he died. [He left] to go preach the gospel to them. Sometimes I get very bitter about it. [Laughter] They could have waited another ten or twenty years. [Laughter] They have waited this long. I have felt that way sometimes.

FH: There may be some other reason that you do not quite understand.

AH: I will understand some day.

FH: How long has it been since he died?

AH: It was five years ago this May. [It was] the day after my birthday.
[Donald Kelly Huffman died May 3, 1964 in Bunkerville, Nevada]

FH: [Did] he fixed this home up that you are in now?

AH: Yes. We had a fire down at the ranch. We went out to buy some calves and broke down out on the mesa. Everything happens at once. [I] lost my wedding ring right after that [happened]. [The fire] was right after Christmas. Just before Christmas, [I talked to] a friend of mine, [who] had been raised here. He said, "Athella, do you have any insurance on that house?" I said, "No, don't talk to me about insurance at Christmastime." He said, "I will be over after Christmas." Right after Christmas everything [happened].

We had new furniture besides that old house. It was a [very] old [building] anyway. It would have been good if we had set the furniture out and set fire to it. We did not have any insurance on it. [If we] had [insurance], they would have said we set it on fire for the insurance because I think that somebody set it on fire for us. There was an Indian, [who] was a pretty [good] neighbor. He worked for [another] neighbor. [He was] pretty good when he was sober, but when he was drunk, he was crazy. Another neighbor had seen a truck that was the color of the fellow that drank with this Indian. The house burned so quickly after we left and we were broken down on the mesa. I had always been afraid of fire because I had had several experiences with fire. [In fact, I had] quite a number of them. I saw all this smoke.

The cattlemen would often go down to the [Virgin] River and burn out the tamarisks [trees] so that they could get their cattle. I thought that was [what was burning]. We all checked that [out]. We had a wood heater as well as an electric heater. We had [the] wood heater in our kitchen. We had an electric cook stove, but we still [used] this wood heater. We had all checked that because we all were afraid of fire. Our son-in-law [Kent] hunted and found us and took us [home].

They were fixing this house. This house had belonged to the church. They had bought it for a widow and she had lived in it. When she moved out, it was vacant [and] they were moving us in. They had not saved anything at all from the fire. It was burned up before they ever got down there. They were fixing it up for us to move into. We lived here a year or so and then we bought it. He added this on. The last year, after he had his heart attack, he kept working. He lined the family room in here with rock. [It was] red rock from St. George. [He] hauled that down [here]. I got after him time and again to slow down. He said, "I want to fix things up nice for you." I said, "You mean for us." He said, "For you." I said, "You mean for us." He said, "Yes, for us, but for you."

FH: [Did] he sort of have a premonition?

AH: He had been told by the doctor, he would not let me know that [the doctor had told him]. He had had a heart attack a year before he died. He slept in that chair sitting up because he could not lie down. He could not breathe lying down. [He] slept in that chair for over a week in an upright position before he got to where he could lie in the bed. He had nervous energy. He always wanted to be doing something. He thought he could go back to work. I think he had another attack out there. He told me he had been sick out there and had had to go sit down. They had sent him into the doctor. They would not have sent him [to the doctor] unless he had been [very] bad. They have doctors and a —

FH: [Do you mean a] dispensary?

AH: [They have a] dispensary there with nurses. This doctor set an appointment for him with a specialist in Las Vegas. When he went to this specialist in Las Vegas,

[he] told him that he had had a heart attack. My husband said, “It wasn’t very bad. If it had been bad, he would have died.” He said, “It was a bad one.” I wanted to talk to that doctor. I wanted to know [what had happened] and what I could do. The nurses said that I could talk to him in a few minutes. I think that “Don” told the doctor not to tell me because they locked [the] door so I could not get in. When I went to open the door, it was locked so I never did get to talk to that doctor. I have always resented that, too. If I had known, I might have driven him crazy. [Laughter] [You] cannot tell because I would have fussed at him. He kept wanting to go back to work. He did try. Before he died, he said he was going to get his pickup. He [had] let our daughter take the pickup. She went to school in Cedar [City]. [She was] teaching. We made this trip to California a day or two before he died. We would go along and be silent and all of a sudden we would start talking. The other person seemed to know. It was like —.

FH: [Was it like] mental telepathy?

AH: Yes. We knew what each other was [thinking] about. We stopped actually saying it. We would start talking out of the clear, blue sky about something and then we would laugh about it. Actually, that was the best honeymoon that we ever had. We had gone down to see [the] girl that I mentioned [earlier] because we were so worried about her.

On the way back, it was my birthday, and he had bought me two little rosebush plants at the nursery. I like those things [and] he did, too. The next morning, [May] 3, [1964], was [a] Sunday morning. He nearly always went to Priesthood whether he felt like going to Sunday school or church or not. This time, he did not [go]. I did not say anything to him.

I have to go back a little ways. I have to tell you how he was about Priesthood. Lots of times, we would get in his pickup and go to the mountains. That was really our luxury car to just get out and go places. One morning we got up early before the [children] did. There were some of our children and grandchildren [staying] here. We got up early in the morning before they did and got in the pickup and went to the mountain. [We] got some black mountain soil and a little wood and some rocks to go in the yard. We came back in time for him to go to Priesthood.

He did not feel like going to Priesthood this morning. We had gone into the art museum down there and I had bought a book [there.]. I am interested in art. I bought a book on one of the great painters. He laid here and read that [book] that morning. I thought that was kind of funny for him not to try to go to Priesthood.

He had planted two rosebushes and that is all he did. He kind of laid here. After noon, he said, “We are going to go to Cedar [City] and get my pickup. I am going to go to work tomorrow.” I said, “Honey, you can’t go to work tomorrow.” [He said], “Well, I am.” I said, “Let’s not go today. We have been driving and you are

tired.” We had just [returned from California]. [I said], “Let’s wait.” He said, “No, I have to get my pickup. I have to go back to work. I can’t sit around.” I said, “I will let you take my car.” He had given me this car for Christmas just before he died. He had been worried that it would not get here on time, so he [also] bought me a cedar chest. So I [received] the new car and cedar chest both on Christmas Eve. [Laughter]

I said, “I will let you drive my car.” [I was] just being funny. He said, “I know, but I want my pickup.” We went over and stopped at Dawn Marie and Kent’s [house]. Kent said, “You can take my pickup.” I said, “Yes, he can take my car, too. But he is determined to go to Cedar [City].” A heart patient sleeps a lot. We [were] just outside of St. George [and] he said, “You know, I am sleepy.” I said, “Move over and I will drive.” Usually we would argue [about the driving]. I would say, “You are a better driver than I am. I am tired.” This was before he had this heart ailment. I did not like to drive.

That time, I said, “Move over.” I drove and he slept all the way to Cedar [City]. Of the two [of us], I always drove faster than my husband. After we left St. George, [on the way home], he drove faster. He lost sight of me. He went ahead of me. He waited for me down on the slope. He came back. I said, “My word, honey, what in the world is the matter with you? What are you driving so fast for?” [He said], “I am in a hurry to get home. I want to get home.” I said, “My word, I lost sight of you. I wondered what happened to you.”

He went ahead and was at Dawn Marie’s [house]. We had her two children [and] he had dropped her two children off [already]. He is usually the one to go in and visit, but he did not [this time]. He dropped them off and came over here. He had some bacon and eggs cooked and some strawberries fixed by the time I came [home]. I guess he had one [of their children] and I had one [of the children]. I had stopped and spoke to [them]. I think he got gas in his pickup on the way over, too.

[At] eleven o’clock that night, he came in here and turned all of the lights off. [He] just flashed [them] off, except for this one light we left on in here. He asked for his nitroglycerin pill. He said, “I haven’t had any since before we went down to California.” I said, “Honey, it has been out in the car pocket.” Ordinarily, I would jump right up and go get it. I do not know why, [but] I did not. I did not think about it. I thought he went after it, but he did not [go for it]. He came in and turned off the light. I heard this thud. I listened and I thought: oh, my word, he stumbled into that chair. I did not hear anymore. Pretty soon I called and heard a funny noise. I cannot describe it. I know since then what it was [now]. It was something in his throat. I called out again. I heard it again. I jumped up and came in and he was lying here. He body was dead, but his spirit was not [dead]. When I picked him up, I saw a look on his face.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

AH: [Emotional] [It is] not just because he is gone, but they do not come any better. I worked out [at] Mercury for a year. I did not have to [work]. We were getting out of debt and [doing] pretty good, but I had a chance to go out there. [There were] these two women [who] cut ahead of me in the union hall and that made me mad. [I was mad that] somebody stepped up in front of me. I went in after they did and got a slip to go over to the rentals.

[END OF RECORDING THREE.]

AH: [Inaudible] the morning. Then they put me on the night shift. I got up at two o'clock in the morning and [was] out there about eight o'clock. I was out there all day and processed. Then I went to work that night and worked all night. I enjoyed it up there because we were together. He worked in the daytime and I worked at night, but still we could have [time together]. We dressed up and went to dinner together and that was fun. [Laughter] I enjoyed it, but I kind of got tired. He kept fussing at me that he did not want me working. So I quit [that job]. One girl was going to have a baby and that was a good excuse.

FH: What have you done since he died?

AH: I wanted to buy some property that was going to come up for sale out of [Las] Vegas. [It was] off the Kyle Canyon Road in Tonapah [Nevada]. At first he said, "No. We would have to borrow the money for it." One day we were out in the yard. It was about this same time of the year. He came up and said, "I have been thinking. You go ahead. Go to the bank and get the money and go ahead and do what you want on that [land purchase]."

I took mom and we went down [there]. They had this sale. [They were] bidding at the convention center. That was kind of fun to bid. [Laughter] I [bought] a piece of property out there. After he died [and] after the insurance [money] was gone, I needed some money. So I sold a piece of that [property]. I sold half of it. Then later on, I sold half of what I had left. [I] got as much for it as I did for the half. Then later on, I sold the other half.

I found out they were going to sell some land out at [inaudible]. I borrowed money and went out again and bought that [property]. I did not make a lot on that [property]. A church out there offered me \$1,900.00. I said that if they paid the escrow and everything, I would sell it to them for that [amount]. I went out there and [checked] around. Practically everybody else with the same kind of property was asking \$5,000.00. But I needed the money and I made \$800.00. [It] was not a lot, but it helped out a bit. [There was] just one thing and another [that happened]. I sold here and there. Then I got this little JP [justice of the peace] job. [It] is not much, but it has helped a little bit. [I received] a raise this year.

FH: Are you the justice of the peace here?

AH: Yes. [I am also] the coroner. You are automatically the deputy coroner. I have a card and it has the best looking picture you ever saw. [Laughter] It is as black as — I do not know why they had to leave it black.

FH: [Have] all these things helped to fill your life and also to make a living?

AH: I feel like life is pretty empty even though I have all this [in my life]. I do not have any dull moments. I have plenty to do, but it is still empty. I think I will never get over him.

FH: It can never be the same.

AH: No.

FH: Do you feel like you have learned any lessons from life?

AH: Yes. I think everybody learns every day. There is one thing that I know [about life]. Everything that you do that is wrong, [you pay for it]. It does not matter if it hurts anybody or whether it hurts you or whether it is some little thing. You pay a dozen times for it. It does not matter.

FH: It comes back to you.

AH: You bet. I have never done anything drastically wrong, but I have paid a thousand times for everything that I ever did. [Laughter] I do not believe in lying or cheating. I cannot see [doing] that [in my life].

FH: Is there anything else that you would like to tell your children and your descendants about life?

AH: I [like] Shakespeare's quotation, "Never a borrower nor lender be, for loan oft loses both itself and friend." "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" is another one [to remember]. "Do what is right, let the consequences follow" is another [quote to remember]. We do that [one]. We just about have that whipped. Lots of times things happen and we do not feel that it is right that it happened to us, but what do we say [about it].

FH: That is right. We do not know the whole picture.

AH: No. When that house burned, I thought that was terrible. We had a new table and chairs that we had just [purchased for the house]. We had a new electric heater. We had quite a lot of new furniture. [We had] all of our Christmas [presents]. Some of [these things] had never been used. My daughter had brought a lot of beautiful things from Hawaii. We were just sick. I was kind of numb for a long time about it. That was the best thing that ever happened to us. It got us out of there. We would never have left there and I would have been down there alone.

That ditch is out and it would have cost, I do not know how much, to fix that [ditch]. It is out from the bridge down now. We just could not have done it. I could not have done [it], period. That [fire] was a good thing, but we could not see it. That is what I mean. Sometimes things happen that we cannot understand why and [think] what a terrible thing it is. We lost [things]. We had to start from scratch again. A lot of people still have their pictures and antiques and things that we cannot replace. Other things we could replace.

FH: Do you have a testimony of the gospel?

AH: For a while I did not think I did, but I got slapped right down flat [very] quick about then. This is about my patriarchal blessing. I was feeling pretty bad. This was a little over two years ago. I have been in this stake [position] for two years now. I was going through my drawers. [I was] cleaning out my papers and I ran across my patriarchal blessing. I had received [it] before I went up for an operation. I had a lump taken out.

This [patriarchal blessing] stated that I would work for the youth of the church. I had not [been working with the youth]. I had just started in as a drama director just before “Don” died. I had been down there one night when someone came here. [They] had not been able to find him. They came down there [to find me]. Of course, I broke and ran [home]. I remember that [incident]. That is the reason that I remember being back in [as drama director]. He was alright, but he was just in the back bedroom. [He] could not hear from back there. So I picked it up and read it through [to the end]. I thought this thing is nothing but a pack of lies. I threw it on a pile of papers to be burned. I guess I had never seen it [inaudible] on a stack of papers.

Not very long [after that incident], I do not know if it was a few days or a week or two or just how long it was, it was a very short time afterwards. President [Mack] Lyons called me on the telephone and asked me if I would take this [position]. I said, “Yes, but I don’t think I am adequate. I think you have the wrong person in the first place.” That straightened that out because I have had the [position] for two years and have worked to help the youth of the church. I think the Primary is where the work is the most important. [The work is important with] the Primary children. When I was in the Mutual, I thought that was the most important [place]. Actually, they say [that] the foundation years of a person’s life is from three [years old] to eight [years old].

FH: Is there anything else you want to say?

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

AH: I have borne my testimony lots of times. After I was put in as a stake officer, we were told that we [were] to set the example, so I tried to bear my testimony. I

never could really [say] anything close to my heart. [Emotional] I am going to try to do that this time.

I thank the Lord for the father and mother that I had, the wonderful husband and the daughters that I was given. [Emotional] I have never done this in my life. I just could not [say it]. To me, it was something so close. I never liked to cry in front of anybody. That has always been humiliating to me. As a stake officer, I practiced what I preached. I tell my in-service leaders that this is part of the lesson. It was no shame to cry whenever [there is] something hard for me to do. Actually, this is the first time that I have ever borne my testimony of that and to the fact that I know there is a God.

I had two dreams that I did not mention. I will tell this because they were faith-promoting to me. Before this operation that I had, my husband went up to Las Vegas. He came up to Henderson to [work] building [the] power plant in 1942. I woke up one night and there was a witch standing at the head of my bed. She spit on my face. My mother had taught me and I had heard it that if we ever meet up with the devil, we command them in God's name to get out. I started screeching and screaming. I yelled in God's name to get out and it woke my husband up. He said, "What in the world is the matter with you? What is the matter?" My face was cold where that witch had spit in my face. It was cold for a long time. I felt like that was a bad omen. I cried and worried about that for weeks.

Then one night I dreamed [about something else]. Now this was a dream. I know I saw the other [happen]. This was a dream. I dreamed that I saw three personages. That was just a dream. I [know that] it was a dream. But the other [incident], I did see. I thought: well, whatever is to be will turn out alright in the end. It was this operation and pneumonia that I had [at that time]. I knew that I would be alright, so I was [alright]. The dream was to let me know that even though I was going to have a lot of trouble, it was going to be alright. The terrible part about that operation was not me. [Emotional] It was the little children. You know that was a [very hard] thing to tell those children that their mother is going to die. [Emotional] I hated them for [saying] that [to the children]. You better turn that off. I do not like to cry.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

AH: Because they were going to take them up there to see [me], but they would not let them come close to me.

IL: [Inaudible]

AH: The women told them [that] they did not allow children in and they would not let them come close to me. I guess pneumonia is contagious. So everything turned out alright. I never had any troubles from that operation. Some people did. I never did have any [trouble] after that [time]. It just left, so everything was alright. [It

was] like I felt that it would be from that dream. That was a terrible experience. Whether I dreamed it or whether I did not [dream it]. [It was terrible] to see what I saw and have that cold spot on my face.

FH: It was very likely real.

AH: Some people may laugh at me, but I know it was real. My husband came right out [of the bed]. I was sitting up and he came right up out of the bed. [He said], “What in the world is wrong with you? Why are you talking like that?” I never said the Lord’s name in vain in my life. He was quite startled. It was quite a while before I could tell him what had happened. There have been quite a few things like that that have happened. The one thing that I could not make alright was my husband. I guess it was because I stopped praying that things happened to me. It had to be somebody else. That is not the reason. I still blame his ancestors for that. [Emotional]

FH: Maybe when you meet him, you will feel better about it.

AH: Then I will not care because I will be with him. I have to tell you this, too. Some people laugh at it, but I saw my husband several times afterwards. At the time, I did not think —. My daughter [Loretta] had a habit of climbing in bed with me. Mom thinks I am off. I do not like to sleep with anybody since my [husband died]. Even before he died and he would be out to Mercury, I got used to sleeping alone. One night she was sleeping with me.

Ever since we went to the temple, whenever he was dressing, he would hold his clothes together in the back. He got out of bed one night and I saw him. I saw Loretta get up. When she got up, I saw her, but as she passed the foot of the bed, it was not Loretta. It was my husband and he was holding his clothes together in the back. He walked up beside the bed. He went around the bed this way and into the family room. By the time he got in the family room, I realized that he was dead. It could not be him. I jumped and jerked and looked.

Then another time, I was in there asleep and I woke up in the night. Here was this big, white shoulder back to me. That made me [feel funny]. [Laughter] I pushed over on my side. It [inaudible] me out because she had come and climbed in bed with me. There were two other beds in the house. There was one in the basement at the time and one in the other room. She had two little girls and they had stayed over [at] Dawn Marie’s. I could not see anything but her getting in bed with me. It was in the summer [and] it was a little warm anyway. [Inaudible] in another bed. I was quite provoked. After a while, I got up. She was down in the basement. I said, “How come you got up?” I guess I had kind of dozed off asleep again. I said, “How come you got up and came down here to the basement?” She said, “What do you mean got up and came down to the basement? I have been down here all night.” I said, “No, you haven’t. I could not see any reason for you getting in bed with me and getting up coming down here after spending the night with me.” She

said, "I have been here all night, mom." I said, "You have not either." She said, "Yes, I have."

So I climbed the steps and came outside. [I] went out there on the west side of the house. I stood there thinking about it. Then I realized that it was summer and she had just straps over her shoulders. She did not have anything on her arms. This [image] had a cover over the arms and the shoulder. It was white. I thought: that was "Don." I had hardly thought until here she came out yelling and calling. She said, "Mom, Mom." I said, "What in the world is the matter with you?" She said, "Are you alright?" I said, "Yes." She stood around and acted so funny. We talked for a minute or two. I said, "What in the world is the matter with you?" She said, "Dad called you twice."

I came to the conclusion that he called [and] she heard because he wanted me to know that he had been there for comfort. I do think it. I think that they do stay around. I do know now. This is what some of them say and think. Because of this, I thought maybe paradise is close by and they do their preaching close by and then they go to their Father in Heaven after that [preaching].

After "Don's" father's temple work was done, I had a [very] wonderful dream. I have not seen him much since then. I saw him and we held hands and talked. I cannot explain the ecstasy and happiness [I felt]. I had never experienced it in life as then. Then he kissed me and went one direction and I went another. I think that he left then. That was over a year ago. That is it.

[END OF RECORDING FOUR. END OF INTERVIEW.]