

Interview with
MABEL (STEPHENSON) McCONKIE

December 7, 1968

**VOICES OF REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

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MABEL (STEPHENSON) McCONKIE

Mabel (Stephenson) McConkie was interviewed on December 7, 1968 in St. George, Washington County, Utah by Fielding H. Harris, a representative of Voices of Remembrance Foundation. She related her personal history of living in various parts of Utah, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon and Nevada. Her husband, George Wilson McConkie, also participated.

FH: Would you please give your [full] name?

MM: My name is Mabel (Stephenson) McConkie.

FH: What is your birth date?

MM: [I was born] February 5, 1912.

FH: What is the place of your birth?

MM: [I was born in] Holden, Millard County, Utah.

FH: What was your father's name?

MM: [His name was] Simeon Thomas Stephenson.

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

MM: [Her name was] Emma Louisa (Ashby) [Stephenson]

FH: Could you tell some [events] from your early life?

MM: I will start by telling [about the] early days of my childhood. One of the [events] I remember most is the fact that my father was gone from home practically all the time. My mother had to take over the rearing of the family, except for short [periods] when we moved to the farm in the summertime. Our farm was about twelve miles from town. [The area was] called Whiskey Creek and Last Chance; it had all kinds of names. [My father] would come home over the weekend to get more food and clean up — about once every two weeks is about all. For that reason, my mother played a big role in our family. She had lots of responsibilities. When I think back on it now, I wonder how she ever did it all. She was a real friend to us children.

I remember in those days The Church [of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] wasn't set up for young people like it is now. We had quite a bit of time during Sunday afternoon. Our Sacrament Meeting was in the evening. [When] Sunday

school was over in the morning, we children had all afternoon without anything special to do. There was quite a group of us girls [all] the same age, mostly cousins because about everybody was related. We would get together and come to our home quite often and sit around the table. My mother would play Rook with us. We would make candy and have candy pulls. We would go for walks. My mother was a good hand to play games. We would play checkers [and] pop corn. It was a real treat when our father would come home. It just seemed like it was so special. I think [for] every child there is something about a father that is extra special. Even when he is home, a father has a special place in a child's heart.

In the summertime, when I was a child, my father would hitch up the horses to a hayrack. He would have hay on the hayrack and we would spread old quilts out. We would all get on there with the belongings that we would need. One [item] would be our old washing machine that we ran by hand and what clothes we needed. I remember my folks would stop the old grandfather clock and, I think, lock the doors. The only time they ever locked the doors was when they would leave for the summer. We would [take] this trip north of town, where we would spend the summer.

When I was a teenager, my job out there was to ride the derrick horse when my father and brothers hauled hay. I rode "Ol' Shorty." He was a good old family workhorse. I had four brothers older than I was and [there was] an older fellow who was a cousin, Cliff Stephenson, who lived with us out there most of the time. He and my folks worked together on the farms. I never had to do any boy's work, unless it was something I wanted to do. They took over all the chores and hauled the hay. I did help [during] haying by riding the horse.

GM: [Inaudible]

MM: [Laughter] I [received] a penny a load. I didn't ever see the money because when school started, it went for school clothes for me. I was [very] proud to earn that money and ride the horse. My younger sisters helped my mother with the cooking and [housework].

My mother did many things to help me when I was a young girl that have carried over into my [adult] life and into my children's lives. For instance, she taught me to crochet when I was a small child. I spent hours with one of our neighbor girls, making lace. I even made booties when I was about twelve years old. [When] my youngest sister, Donna [Stephenson], was born, my mother taught me how to make booties for my little baby sister. Later, I even made dresses for her when I was very young. My mother was very patient in helping me learn. She always let me use her sewing machine. I know, when my daughters grew up, some of their friend's mothers wouldn't let them use a sewing machine or wouldn't let them do a lot of the things that my mother was just thrilled to let me [do]. I have always been thrilled to let my girls do, because I believe in it. I think it is good. When I was very young, I must have had a desire to play the piano from listening

to my cousins play the piano. I thought that would be the greatest thing. I remember that our old coal cookstove had a metal rod across the front of it. I would pull the kitchen stool up to that and pretend that was my piano. I would just play that piano and [received] so much enjoyment. One day, I don't know whether I was eight years old yet or not, but I might have been, a real, true piano was delivered to our door. My father and mother were so thrilled. They said, "This is for you." I will never forget that day; it was one of the happiest days of my life. I just couldn't believe it was true. It was like a dream. They brought this piano inside and left it there. My parents arranged for me to take piano lessons from one of my cousins. Through the years I had piano lessons. At first, [the lessons] were \$.25 a lesson. Then they [went] to three [lessons] for \$1.00. While I was in high school I took a few lessons for \$1.00 a lesson. Now-a-days it is kind of different [cost more than] that. [Laughter] By the time I was twelve years old, I was playing hymns pretty good. My uncle, John Charles Bennett, who married my mother's sister [Susan (Ashby) Bennett], was the ward chorister for all the different organizations. He let me play the piano for Sunday school, so I was Sunday school organist, even though I wasn't very good, I am sure. In those days, we didn't have televisions or radios. In a little town, anyone who could play an instrument at all really had a big opportunity for service, growth and development.

I remember at that time the Sunday school [members] marched to their classes. I played a march [for them]. Besides the hymns, I always played some march music for the people to march into their classes. While I was a girl growing up, after I learned to play the piano some, there were two or three other girls about my age who were taking lessons. In those days, there was no distinction between the town and the ward. We were just all members of the church. We had all kinds of programs. They had more programs in a different way than we do now. It seemed like for all the national holidays [like] the Fourth of July and the Twenty-fourth of July we had programs. [Very] often, we girls would be called on to play solos or duets. I played with the girls in lots of duets in those days, [and] they had us also sing songs. [The time] was all happy memories. I remember how much fun it was to play duets with those girls.

FH: Tell about your [education].

MM: The elementary school that I went to has been torn down now. Some of the things I remember were: there was a hill right back of our school house where, in the wintertime, we would sleigh ride. The boys would ice skate out on the ditch that was in the front. Every spring, on May Day, the whole school went on a May Day hike up in the hills. There was always Indian paintbrush blossomed out at that time and we hunted for those. We dug Sego lilies. We knew the pioneers ate those in the early days of the church, so it was interesting [to find them].

GM: [Inaudible]

MM: Yes. The kind of overshoes we wore, at least in our family and I think some of the

others did in those days — the mothers knit real wool, heavy stockings. My mother would pull these over our shoes to keep us warm, because we didn't have real overshoes. [Laughter] That was the way we [went] to school in the wintertime. Our family was rich in lots of ways, but I don't think anybody had much money in those days. Since my father was trying to get established on a farm and [with] cattle, we didn't have much to go on.

FH: Tell about your school activities. How far you were able to go in school?

MM: When I was in high school [we were] taken in school buses over to Fillmore [Millard County, Utah]. I don't have anything outstanding [to say] about high school. I didn't especially enjoy going over there in those buses. I did play the piano in an orchestra for awhile, but I wasn't quite good enough to play the type of music that they were doing so I wasn't [there] too long. We did travel around some.

FH: Did you graduate from high school?

MM: I graduated from high school. I had no intentions of going on to school after that. I had no intentions whatsoever. I started working in a home or two in Holden. I had no idea what I was going to do. The future just looked — I had no idea what I was going to do at all. It was at a time when things were really bad. It was during a depression and a drought period. At that time, my two oldest brothers had married and had moved to the city to survive, because there just wasn't enough income from the farm to supply them and my father's family too. [Edwin] "Ed" [Ross Stephenson] and Mark [Stephenson] both [moved] with their families up north. "Ed" [went] to Provo [Utah County, Utah] and Mark [went] to Salt Lake [City, Salt Lake County, Utah]. Mark's wife's [Bertha Bushnell] sister was going to Salt Lake [City] to get a job. First, I went up and stayed with "Ed" and Lohree [(Nowers) Stephenson], my oldest brother [who lived] in Provo [Utah County, Utah]. I worked there for awhile the first winter after I graduated from high school. I worked in a couple or three homes up there. Previous to this, though, I had gone up to Provo with a group of girls from Holden in the summer times [to] pick berries. We were called berry-glommers. That was my first experience away from home.

[My] first year out of high school, I lived with "Ed" and Lohree and worked in Provo. Mark's wife's sister, Alice [Bushnell], who is Blake's [my brother] wife now, [found] a job in Salt Lake [City], working for Wallace Bennett's wife [Frances Marion (Grant Bennett), who was a daughter of President [Heber J.] Grant. She wrote to me in Provo, "Come on up." She [found] a job for me at [the] Judd's [home]. [She was] another one of President Grant's daughters, Mary (Grant) Judd. I went up there on the train or the bus; I don't remember which. First, I went over to Bennetts to see Alice. Lo and behold, she had quit her job. The reason she quit— this is so interesting I will have to tell it. She was sweeping [and] vacuuming one day and the children saw her picking

things up off the floor and putting [them] in her pocket. They told their mother and Sister Bennett called Alice in and said, “I understand you have been putting things in your pocket. We want it understood that any girl we have here has to be perfectly honest.” Alice was so taken aback, because she was so honest [and] she couldn’t take it. She said, “Sister Bennett, this is what I have.” She pulled out the scraps that she didn’t want to go into the vacuum cleaner, and yet she didn’t want to chase to the waste basket. It was just little scraps that she had put in her pocket to try to save time. That hurt her. She was the type of person who just couldn’t [stand for that]. She said, “If you question my honesty in the least, I just can’t stay here. My mother needs me worse than that.” I think she was kind of homesick anyway, but she quit on the spot and [left]. I went up there [and] here I was in this big city, a little country girl, and she wasn’t even there. I will never forget, in all my life, the feeling I had. I was so lonesome, but I went on down to Judds. It wasn’t very far away. Those were the most lonesome, homesick days I have ever had in all my life. I never got over it, really.

I stayed there; I had too much pride to quit and go home. My room was in the basement, all to myself. I was just a young girl. They were people who had been used to having a maid. I went in [and out] the back door and I ate with the family; but if they ever had company, I didn’t [eat with them]. I was never used to that. I was so homesick. I remember waking up in the morning, lots of mornings, thinking: why couldn’t I have just died in the night? [Laughter] I just didn’t feel like I could stand it. I don’t know why I didn’t quit and go home. I would have been welcome [at home]. I don’t think it ever entered my mind to quit. Luckily at this time, another cousin, Lenore Stevens, came up. She went to work with another family, [the] Orville Adams family. We decided to get our patriarchal blessings. That was the thing that saved me and it is the thing that helped me all through those years, and still does. It was the most wonderful thing that ever happened to me up until that time. In that blessing, Patriarch [Eldred G.] Smith had never seen me, yet he brought out in the blessing all the things that were in my mind, the questions of what was going to happen to me. I always had the idea I wasn’t going to live too long. Maybe it came from the idea [that] I didn’t know whether I wanted to or not. The surprising [idea] that it brought out was that I was to get more education.

I had never thought of it, except for the fact that my brother [Edwin Ross] and sister-in-law [Lohree] in Provo lived right next to BYU [Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah County, Utah]. They had tried to encourage me; they said there are lots of students working their way through school. After I [received] my blessing, the Judds also talked to me about it and gave me courage that I could do it. I started thinking about it. First, I wanted to do the things that were in my blessing. It was just as plain as day and night that I should. I started saving my money so I could go on to school. I didn’t know for sure what I was going to do, whether I was going to business school or take music [classes]. That was always one thing that I [had] considered, going into music. I had taken typing [classes] in high school and liked that. That made me think maybe [about] a business course.

When I about had enough to consider it, the banks went broke all over the country and my money was all lost in the bank. I worked a second year to save money to go to school. By this time, the Judds had some friends [in] Logan [Cache County, Utah]. [He] was president of the college [Utah State Agricultural College] up there. Elmer G. [George] Peterson was the president of the college and they were friends of Judds. I guess they told Petersons about me, and Petersons said that if I wanted to [I could] come up there. They always took a girl and let them work for their board and room while they went to school. Even though they had only been taking a girl one or two years at the most, I was there all four years. They treated me just like their own child. There was never anyone who has been better to me then they [were]. She [Phoebe Almira (Nebeker) Peterson] is still alive and is my second mother. That is where I met my husband. I graduated in Home Economics.

FH: [Did] you graduate from [Utah State] AC [Agricultural College]?

MM: Yes.

FH: Tell a little bit about your father.

MM: My father was a very, very good man. He was strong and healthy all the days of his life. He lived to the age of ninety-three. He was the same age as President David O. McKay. My father was so healthy and strong until my mother died. I don't ever remember seeing him in bed a day in all of his life, but after my mother died, he really went downhill. He spent several years [at] the last of his life here in Dixie [St. George] with us during the wintertime. He would stay with some of the other children [during] the other parts of the year. He wouldn't leave his home in Holden as long as he could care for himself. Allen and Algie [(Brunson) Stephenson] were next door to him. They did a lot for him.

FH: Talk about your mother for a little bit. I think we need to get acquainted with her.

MM: I would like to tell more about my father. I think the outstanding thing about him, if I could pick just one thing, would be his complete honesty. Sometimes, I wonder if he didn't lean over backwards being honest. That was his outstanding [characteristic] and he was a [very] hard worker.

GM: He took pride in everything.

MM: He took pride in everything that he did. When he planted a garden, the rows had to be perfectly straight. He put a string down the rows to make his [rows straight]. Everyone in town always said there was never a weed in "Simi" Stephenson's garden. His fence posts had to be sawed off to a certain level [and] his haystacks had to be made perfectly. Everything about [all] he did was just to perfection. The firewood even had to be cut just so. He was just that type of man. There are so many things that I could tell about him, because he tried over and over. There were three different farms. It was during times when there was drought and

depression [and] he had to start over again.

One of the things out at what they called Whiskey Creek, I don't know [how] it got its name because there was never any whiskey there, he had the most beautiful orchard [during] our childhood. [An] orchard [with] all kinds of fruits [and he grew] melons. He took melons by the hayrack full, back to town. I think everybody in town [received] a melon before the season was over. He hauled loads of wood to the widows in town. This beautiful garden [and] orchard [became] so dry that he finally hauled water to water his trees to try to keep them growing [during] the drought years. But he finally had to give up. He went down to what was called McCormick [Millard County, Utah], down west of there. There was a thriving community there at one time. Things [were] so bad that most people had to pull out of that area. My brother, Allen, took that over and also [the farm] at Whiskey Creek. He owns that now. My father didn't ever give up, he tried over again. He probably would have been a wealthy man if conditions had been right. He was a hard worker and knew how to manage things on his place. It was just the conditions of [the] drought years that licked him. He didn't have a chance to go to church throughout his life. It was very seldom that he was able to go, but I consider and I think everybody does, that he lived a life that was every bit as good or better than lots of people who went to church. In his later years he was very spiritual; he showed it more.

FH: What about your mother?

MM: My mother grew up in Holden. She came from a big family [of] brothers and sisters [who] were there in Holden. I remember that they were all [around] us. Her father, grandfather [William Hardin] Ashby, would come around and visit all the families after my grandmother [Nancy Maria (Badger) Ashby] died. I think the most outstanding thing about my mother would be patience. I know when each of the daughters-in-law came into the family, they said they had never seen anybody [who] was as kind and patient as she was. I never remember hearing her complain or raising her voice. To think of her getting [angry] ever, I can't even feature it. She was that kind. She was so patient and sweet all the time that it was remarkable. Yet, her life was [very] hard, I know, because my father was gone all the time, especially in the early years before my brothers [were] old enough to take over the chores. She would have to feed the pigs, milk the cows and do all of those jobs. My father always left wood chopped; she didn't have to do that.

Our folks built one of the nicest homes. [It was] one of the first modern homes in our community. That was when I was about four years old, I guess, I can't remember for sure. She did have the advantage of a nice home, although it was never furnished nicely until later years. My father was always putting any money that he could back on the farm. With the expenses he had of machinery and so forth, that amounted to [quite a] lot. My mother was very, very saving. That is one of the things I remember about our childhood. We just didn't have money; we had plenty to eat because she bottled [canned] fruit and vegetables. My father would

kill beef and pigs each year. We had plenty of milk and cream. There were very few things that we had to buy. I think I had the greatest parents in the world, for me.

FH: How many children did they have?

MM: They had nine children. The first four [children] were boys and I was the oldest girl. One of the funny stories they tell was that they were so tickled to have a girl the morning after I was born, that my father went up to the store that my uncle John Wood owned and ordered 500 yards of blue ribbon for me. That was just a joke, but he was quite a joker, my father was. [Laughter]

FH: Tell about your brothers and sisters.

MM: [Edwin Ross] "Ed" was the oldest brother. There were four years between "Ed" and Mark and between Mark and Allen. After that, there were about two years between each of [the] children. For that reason, I can't remember "Ed" except as a grown boy. All my brothers were very hard-working boys. I have heard that work can't kill anyone, but I really think that "Ed" worked himself to death. [It was] probably through overwork and not getting regular meals that he needed. His body got things wrong with it that caused his death. The year that I lived with him and his wife [Lohree] in Provo, I very seldom saw him because he would be gone.

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

MM: He ran a service station after he left the farm. He ran it himself because he needed every bit of money he could get and didn't feel like he could hire anybody. There may have been times [when] he had extra help. He opened his service station at 6:00 in the morning and he would get up and go to work. I didn't see him because I wasn't up. He took his lunch and it was way late [when he came home]. Usually, I didn't see him at night because he wouldn't get home until after I went to bed. It seems like it was about 12:00 midnight. When he got enough sleep, I don't know. This went on seven days a week. He was a [very] good [fellow] and I really appreciated what he and his wife did for me. His wife is really nice. He married Lohree Nowers from Beaver and she is a wonderful woman.

FH: Did they have some children?

MM: Yes. Their oldest son, their first baby, died when it was born. It had a heart defect of some kind. Their other son was killed in a car accident after he was married. They have two other children who are girls. One, Mary, lives in California and Eleanor lives up close to Provo.

FH: [Who was] the next one?

MM: The next brother was Mark [Stephenson]. [He was] just the same as "Ed." I have heard my father say many times that Mark and "Ed", in their early years he didn't

know what he would have done without them helping him on his farm. The others did also, but “Ed” and Mark were older. Mark had to move away with his family. He married Bertha Bushnell from Meadow [Millard County, Utah]. They didn’t have any sons and I know Mark would have liked to have had one. They had three daughters; Valeta, Margene and Gloria. Mark [and] Bertha were very, very happy together, but Bertha wasn’t well. She had arthritis [very] bad and also a lung condition. I can’t remember just what that trouble was. She was a [very] remarkable person. After [George] Wilson [McConkie] and I were married, we lived in Salt Lake [City] for a year and a half. We used to visit with them. People would go there, but never did they leave there feeling that they had done the cheering up, but they would go away being lifted up by Bertha and Mark. He worked at two or three jobs in order to keep his family going. They were just [very] great. After Bertha died, then Mark remarried. He is dead now too. He died of a liver ailment.

[Bertha (Bushnell) Stephenson died March 31, 1946 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah. Mark and Vera (Wagstaff) Stephenson were married January 30, 1948 in the Salt Lake Temple, Salt Lake County, Utah. Mark Stephenson died November 28, 1958 in Salt Lake City, Salt Lake County, Utah.]

The next brother is Allen [Stephenson]. He is the one who lives in Holden now and he took over my father’s farm. When Allen [graduated from] high school, he was the valedictorian of his graduating class. He was sort of the brain of the family. My parents sent him to BYU where, I think, he was [for] three years. He was taking journalism, but before he graduated he went up to Logan where I was for awhile. Before he was able to graduate, my father had gotten to the point where [he needed help]. Blake [Stephenson] had married and had to go to Provo to raise his family. I think “Tom” [Stephenson] had gone on a [LDS] mission and into [military] service. My father had gotten to the point where he couldn’t run the farm himself.

Allen, bless his heart, gave up what he thought was for the time being, gave up completing his [education] and went back to help my father so he wouldn’t have to give up the farm. It turned out [that] he stayed there and bought the farm and the cattle [and] that is where he spent the rest of his life. He loves books. I remember when he was a boy — my father, I don’t know why [maybe] it was because he hadn’t had much [education]. He thought just hard work was the main thing. Anyone [who] spent their time reading books [was] to him like a waste of time. [Laughter] He used to catch Allen reading books, which he loved to do. My father thought that was a waste of time. Allen always had a [very] strong desire for books. I am sure that he could have really gone on and made a success of that, but it just didn’t seem to be his lot. He still does lots of reading, especially in the wintertime. He has had some [writings] published; I don’t remember just where. He probably could have gone on [with] his writing if he had had the chance. He married Algie Brunson from Fillmore. They have three daughters and a son. Their son, Sherman, is on a [LDS] mission in Texas now. One of the outstanding things

about Allen is he is like my father, honest to the nth degree.

One thing that I think is very interesting about [this] is [that], during the past years, the government [has been] passing out money for farm subsidies. Allen [doesn't] believe in that and hasn't taken one nickel from the [United States] government. He could have [received] thousands of dollars. At one time, some of his cows had a disease [and] the government was paying the farmers [to] get rid of the cows. Allen had [the cows] killed [but] didn't accept any money. He had ditches built, drilled a well, made ponds and [has] done all kinds of things to develop his farm. He could have [received] money. He could have put some of his land in the soil bank and received money from that. He could have [received] thousands and thousands of dollars from the government, but he hasn't accepted a penny. I am [very] proud of him; we all are.

FH: [Was] there another [brother]?

MM: The next brother is Blake [Stephenson]. He is just older than I am. He married the sister to Bertha Bushnell; Alice Bushnell. She is sure a wonderful girl. She is the one that wasn't at Bennetts when I went to Salt Lake [City]. They have been very happy together. Alice and Blake live in Provo and it is the crossroads between where the family and friends, so many of her family, go through Provo in order to come south, north and every direction. Their home through the years, while they have been in Provo, has been the stopping-off place for all the friends and relatives. I bet if they could count the people that they have served meals to and bedded down for the night [it would be many]. They are the most wonderful, congenial and sociable people. Alice is a wonderful cook and Blake has had a good job; he has made pretty good money. They have spent, I don't know how much of their money, to feed people. They take time off to visit with you and make you feel like [you are] the most special person in the world while you are there. They always encourage you to stay as long as you can. They appear to not have anything else to do, but just visit with you and make your visit enjoyable. They have one son and two daughters. They had one little girl [who] died.

FH: Were you the first of the girls?

MM: I was the first of the girls. I think I have told most of the things about me.

FH: What about the next one?

GM: You have another brother that is younger than you.

MM: Yes. After [my parents had] their first daughter, they had three daughters all in a row. Beatrice [Stephenson] was the next daughter. She married my husband's brother, Andrew [Ray] McConkie. I think we have the best husbands in the world!

FH: Do you think you could be a little prejudiced?

MM: I don't think so! [Laughter] We were very close. One time, while I was going to school in Provo, she [Beatrice] came up there. That is where she met "Andy" [and] where I met Wilson. She also worked for Judds after I went up to Logan to school. While she was working there, [she went] home over the weekend with [Leonard] "Len" [Glenn] Wood and his son, or maybe it was just "Len" Wood's son. On their way back to Salt Lake [City] they had a car accident around Payson [Utah County, Utah]. Her back was broken in seven places and her pelvic bone was broken. They said she had a black-and-blue spot on her hip. It was about as black as a stove; they expected it to fall out, but it didn't. She had so much faith. This was while I was up at Logan, so I didn't see her much during the time that she was having this trouble. But she had so much faith that she wouldn't let them give her pain pills, if you can imagine it. She had the idea that she would get better quicker, if she didn't have these drugs. I don't know where she got the idea, but I know she would have been a lot more comfortable if she had [taken the medication]. Now-a-days they would have put her in a cast, but they didn't. She had so much faith that she would get better. When they let her go home, my aunt Nina Wood, who lived on the same block was [very] handy with sicknesses and she would [come] down to our home. Everyday, she would massage Beatrice's legs. Beatrice was on her back for months and months. It seems like [it was] six months without turning over.

FH: That is the usual [treatment] for broken backs.

MM: It must have been just horrible. The town people were so wonderful. Everybody was related; it was one ward and like a big family. I remember [this] from the letters my mother would write to me. My mother always wrote to us, before and after I was married, every week. I looked forward to her letters so much; I really missed them after she died. She would keep me informed of everything. She would tell me about the ward sending people over to do things for my sister to help her pass away the time. The Priesthood administered to her and she was made well. The doctors always said there wouldn't be any chance she would never walk again; she had to learn to walk all over again. They said she would never have children. When she met "Andy" and he wanted to marry her, she told him [that] she didn't feel like she should marry anyone because the doctors had told her she would never be able to have children. He said, "We will adopt our children." The funny thing about it is, she had more children than any of us in our family, until my brother "Tom" married. They have five children. "Bea" and "Andy" had five children. She still has some problems from it, but she got so she could even dance. The year she was [in] Logan when I was there, Mrs. Peterson took her to a chiropractor, named Dr. Hale. He was a remarkable man. He combined the Priesthood with the abilities that he had in his hands. He did a lot for "Bea" so that it really hasn't been a great drawback to her. She has fulfilled many wonderful duties in the church. She has been a Relief Society president and [has] worked in the Mutual [Improvement Association]. She has had all kinds of

[positions] throughout her life, as has her husband. Andrew is a [United States] Forest [Service] supervisor [in] Vernal [Utah County, Utah] now. He started out being a forest ranger and has [been] very successful. "Bea" has had lots of experiences and she has been a wonderful gal.

My next sister is Irene [Stephenson]. Irene is just as good as anybody in the family. She was the best secretary. She was, and still is, an outstanding secretary. When she was in high school she took secretarial training. She had a [very] good teacher and [received] some expert training. She turned out to be an expert secretary and has worked through the years off and on. She married Newell [Frederick] Wasden from Scipio [Millard County, Utah] when she was only eighteen [years old]. He was older [and] had been on a [LDS] mission. He had a [United States] government job. When they first married, they came up to Logan [and lived] there one year. Their oldest daughter, Janet, was born [the] next summer. They just had Janet and Bob. She [Irene] had quite a bit of trouble with her health. She had an operation for goiter and had an endless amount of miscarriages and different problems which made her health bad through the years that they were married.

Since I don't understand all the things involved, [maybe] we will someday, she left the church. Before she left the church, she did some of the most wonderful things. After her health [was] better, she had time to spend studying. The outstanding thing about Irene is she has so much willpower. When she decides she wants to do something, nothing will stop her. Sometimes it is to her good and sometimes it may be to the opposite. She studied and knew more about the church than anybody in the family, by far. Something happened and she left the church. While she was strong in the church, she wrote and presented a genealogy program in Cedar [City, Iron County, Utah]. She was in the stake Mutual. They produced [the program] and put it on in the new high school auditorium, which is a huge place. President [Harold S.] Snow of the St. George Temple and a lot of the temple workers went up to this production. It was about genealogy and it was just marvelous. Wilson and I went up too. She did many things like this.

She wanted to learn more about the gospel and wanted to take some institute classes. She went to the teachers, Rodney Turner was one [and] Dale somebody was the other one, just young fellows. They told her if she could get a small group of adults together [that] they would rather start a night class. And so she did. She got so many people interested, doctors and influential people in Cedar [City], [that] it worked into a [very] big [class]. They moved from one room into a bigger one, from one building into bigger building. At the last, I think there were 500 people attending that class. In the spring when they were ending [the class], they turned it into a testimonial meeting. You can't imagine what it was like; people jumping up and bearing their testimony and invariably they would give Irene Wasden credit for bringing so many inactive people in. With the money that she earned from working as a secretary, she bought a tape recorder and taped all the talks that they gave, wrote them up in pamphlet form and sold them to people just

for cost. Many, many she gave away. She sent them to men in the [military] service [and] missionaries. I have stacks of them here in my home. That was the sort of thing she was doing.

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MM: A little later, people encouraged Irene to publish the talks that seminary teachers had given into book form. She took them to some of the general authorities to have them look them over and see what they thought. I guess she wasn't willing to accept their decision on [the project]. As I remember, [what] happened next was that she still wanted to teach; she had a real strong desire to teach people the gospel. She was [very] sincere [about] it. She turned to another source of trying to use a method of teaching. [From] the methods she used from then on, she gained so much knowledge about the church [that] she would get up at 4:00 in the morning to read and study. She had book after book underlined [and] knew so much about it [that] she decided the way she could be effective was to get some inkling of what people out of the church felt. She felt like she couldn't understand them unless she studied their beliefs and studied the things that they had against the church. For a period of time there, she was studying books which had been written against the church to try to get some understanding of people out of the church, so she would be able to see both sides and be able to teach them.

The thing that happened was, as she studied these books she said, "I don't blame them for not believing in the church. Look what happened." I guess there are things in the church, like everything else, that really aren't right. It is just like each of us; we have things in our lives that aren't up to par and we have to overcome. There are things that have happened by members of the church, and even some of the leaders, through the years that have been written in books that were true. Those are the [times when] she would say, "No, I can't believe it myself." During this time, Newell was [at] his wit's end. Because religion was such a big part of their lives at that time, and there was this contention, he was trying to keep her in the church, along straight lines. Eventually, it separated them.

The whole family felt [very] bad, because they were both such wonderful people. Irene is [very] outstanding. There is nobody kinder and more generous. She is generous to a fault; she gives everything she owns away. She has been that way and always will be. They separated [divorced] and it was [very] hard on both of them. Finally, before too long, Newell remarried. Irene, in the meantime, has done all kinds of things to try to fill her life, because it has been [very] hard. The last few years she has been traveling a lot. She has seen the world and done a lot of interesting things. Just recently, she married Perry Leland, a [very] fine fellow. The whole family feels [very] good about it. He [is] a very active Lutheran from Ogden [Weber County, Utah]. They seem like it is going to be a very happy marriage. I am sure Newell is happily married. What is in the future, we just don't know. I personally know that things will work out the way [they are] supposed to.

These things come into people's lives and at the time we can't understand it, but I have all the faith in the world that whatever is meant [will be] because they are too good of people [for it] not to. I am sure they will be blessed and will work out whatever is meant for them. I guess I probably overdid it on Irene. I hope I haven't said anything that I shouldn't, because I love her with all my heart. I wish I could be more like her in so many of her good ways.

The next [child] is Thomas "Tom" Ashby Stephenson. My folks [had] another little boy. When he grew up to be of help on the farm, he developed an allergy on his legs that would break out. It looked like he wasn't going to be able to be a farmer. My father was still in debt at this time. Something that I failed to say [earlier was] that, all through my childhood, I remember a debt that my father had. I can't remember if it was \$2,000.00 or \$3,000.00. Now-a-days, that is nothing, but in those days, and with his honesty, he wouldn't think of not paying that off. He got in debt in the winter of 1919. He had to take his cattle to Delta [Millard County, Utah] in order to save them. He had to pay \$40.00 a ton for hay, which was a ridiculous price at that time. That is [what] put him in debt. I remember it was a terribly cold winter and he didn't get home all winter. I was quite small at that time, seven years old or so. I remember one night mother and [we] children were seated around the dining room table making valentines to send to our daddy. She would pink the edges of the valentine [with her pinking shears] and we put our picture in the middle to send to him. It seemed like all through the years he never [was] rid of that debt until my brother "Tom" was on a [LDS] mission. I remember the night the bishopric came to ask father and mother if they could send a missionary out. Donna, [my sister], tells me that they really came to ask her to go on a mission. I don't remember the details, but it turned out that "Tom" went instead. I remember [when] they were there, my dad said, "How can I send a missionary when I am in debt and can't even pay my debts off?" They promised him that if he would, that he would be blessed financially. It was during the time that "Tom" was on his mission that he paid off his debt. That was a great testimony to all of us.

As soon as "Tom" [was] off his mission, World War II was on and he [was] called into [military] service. I think he spent three or four years in the service. There were five or six years right at that time, that he wasn't any help on the farm. Something else interesting: "Tom" had this girlfriend, Bernice Turner, who lived kitty-corner across the street from us. She waited all these years, working and waiting for him, and they married. When he [was discharged from] the service, he was entitled to [an education]. This was a great blessing to him because he wouldn't have been able to go on to school without this [assistance]. He still loved cattle and farms, so he decided to go into veterinary work, and [received] his doctor's degree. They went back to Ames, Iowa and they were [in] Logan before that. He is now a very successful veterinarian in California. They have a lovely family, one boy and four girls.

My baby sister was Donna [Stephenson]. While I was growing up, I was the

oldest girl and she was my baby sister. There was something very special between us. I made her little dresses and made booties for her. She was pretty young when I went away to work and to school, so I wasn't around when she was [growing up]. I have always admired her so much. She is a wonderful little gal. She had some college [classes]. All of my sisters had some. She married Evans Woodbury from Hurricane [Washington County, Utah]. She met him in Alberta, Canada and married him in the temple there. He was on his way home from his [LDS] mission. They have a lovely home in North Ogden [Weber County, Utah]. We love to go visit them.

FH: I asked you earlier about faith-promoting experiences and you indicated that you would like to make a statement about that.

[END OF RECORDING TWO.]

MM: I have had many faith-promoting experiences. I surely have a testimony of prayer. I think most people have. One of the outstanding [experiences] was [when] I think I was about twelve years old when my mother was very, very ill. She [has] told me since that she felt herself slipping that night. It would have been a lot easier for her to have slipped off to the other side, rather than have stayed, but there was some power that made her feel that she had to stay to raise her family. I know that very night that she told me about, I was on my knees praying. [Emotional]

FH: The power of prayer is very effective in such times.

MM: This is something I wanted to say about my mother and also about Irene. Irene did a lot for our parents. My mother had a stroke at this time; no, this was years after. She lived at this time, when I was twelve [years old], to raise us. Years later, after I was married, she had two or three small strokes and then she had this bad one. At this time, Wilson was surveying in Nevada and Donna had just [found] a good job over [in] Fillmore. Either she had to give up her job or one of us other sisters had to come home and take care of mother. George, our oldest boy, was about two [years old] then. Wilson brought me home and I was there with mother for awhile. My other sisters and I took turns taking care of her.

Irene and Newell were living in Cedar City then. Irene had been going to a doctor, a chiropractor named Dr. Sargent. The medical doctor, Dr. Evans, over in Fillmore had done everything he could for my mother. He admitted there wasn't anything [more that] he could do for her. She had always had a dread of ever being helpless and being waited on. She waited on everybody all of her life, and she even told us, if the time ever came that she had something wrong and couldn't take care of herself, don't pray and try to keep her like some families that she knew of had done. "There is nothing that would make me more miserable, so please don't — let me go." Irene said, "Mother, I know Dr. Sargent could help you if you would come down." Since it was a stroke, the doctors and people in Holden said, "If she goes to a chiropractor, all they will do is get [a] blood clot

rotating and it will kill her. She won't last any time."

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MM: She said, "I don't care; I surely don't want to live like I am. I am willing to go." She went down there for about a month and took treatments. He gave her colonic [irrigation] treatments and all kinds of things. I was down there for a little while with her and they weren't easy treatments. He sent her home on her feet, and she was able to live then until she died, by going back to him every six months for a series of treatments [of] about a week. He did marvelous work. I knew him quite well. He told me about his patriarchal blessing — that he was visited by one of the three Nephites [LDS folklore] when he was a boy. He was not a member of the church, of course. He was sitting, playing an organ, when a hand touched his shoulder. He looked around and here this old man was. This man told him that someday he would be visited by two men who would bring him the truth. He went to the door and disappeared; he couldn't see what direction he went. He wasn't there. He says it wasn't until after he married that two Mormon missionaries came to his door, bringing this book that one fellow had told him about. He and his wife stayed up most of the night reading this book. They read the book and were ready for baptism.

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MM: Dr. Sargent let me read his patriarchal blessing one day when I was there. It told him that he would learn to use his hands in a way that would work miracles for people. This is the reason he went into this work; he was guided to it. He said that he never started a day [of] helping people without [a] prayer that he would be guided in [what] he did for them. He worked miracles, and I know it was a miracle. My mother was just getting ready to go for another treatment when he died and she didn't live another six months. I am sure she might have lived longer if he had been there to help her.

FH: I would like you to tell a little bit more about your own life.

MM: Like what?

FH: Tell more about the things you did for fun when you were growing up.

MM: I think I have already told some of the things about my mother helping me with these things when I was in childhood.

FH: There are some things that you have missed. For instance, you belonged to a club when you were young. I think you ought to talk about [that].

MM: [Laughter] That is ridiculous! There were a bunch of us girl cousins in town [during] our teen [years]. We used to goof off quite a bit. One thing we had was an old-maids club. I remember one Halloween party we dressed up like old maids

in our long pioneer dresses. We had old-fashioned glasses down on our eyes. One of us had a basket of knitting; one had a cat that we let go in the middle of the party and [one had] a broomstick. [Laughter] We just did silly things. We were really quite serious most of the time.

FH: [Did] you have a lot of fun doing it?

MM: Yes, we had lots of fun.

FH: Tell about music in your life. You mentioned about how you got a piano. Has music meant much to you?

MM: Music has meant a lot in my life and in our family. I told about my desire to play the piano when I was young. One of my favorite instruments is [the] violin. After I had taken piano lessons, there was a German fellow, Mr. Hilgendorf, and his wife [who] came to town. He taught violin lessons and she taught piano lessons. Ed Dobson, who had married my cousin Lula Wood, aunt Nina's [daughter], came from Oregon. His father was in the violin business. He made violins and Ed made some later, too. Ed loaned me a violin and my parents let me take violin lessons from Mr. Hilgendorf. I was evidently doing [very] well and he hated for me to give it up. He offered to give [lessons] to me free, if it was a matter of expense. A violin is an instrument that takes a long time to learn. In the process, you get a lot of squeaks and squawks out of it. Evidently, my older brothers didn't appreciate all the squeaking and squawking that I was doing around there. They thought I made much better music when I played the piano. That, and the fact that my parents really couldn't afford to buy a violin and we didn't want to keep using Ed's. We either wanted to get one or not. We all decided that maybe it would be better for me to stick to the piano. My parents had me take lessons from his wife on the piano and I gained a lot from the lessons that I took from her. She was really an accomplished pianist.

The best thing about it all was what it has done [for] our children. Even though Wilson doesn't play an instrument, he has been so thrilled [and] has encouraged me and the children in [our] music. All of our children have fairly good voices. None of them have sung solos, but they have sung with other people. They sing parts; George, especially, has used his voice a lot since he married. He is branch president back in Ithaca [New York]. He does group singing back there a lot. When we were living in Elko [Nevada], we bought a second-hand piano for \$75.00. [It] had been in a flood [and] had had a lot of use. The way the keys were worn, it looked like it was used in a dance parlor. We didn't know its history, but we just imagine what it was like. All of our children, except Paul who could have done if he liked to, [played it]. I started them out myself and then they have taken lessons, except [for] George. He more or less taught himself. Donna also played the clarinet in the high school band. Linda didn't seem to want to play another instrument.

George started [playing the] violin before we [had] our piano. There was a [very] good violin teacher in Elko. We [found] a medium-sized violin for him when he was about eight or ten [years old]. He [became] quite good on the violin. After he [was] in high school, it seemed like he [wanted] to try all the instruments. It seemed to be quite easy for him to play most any [instrument] that he wanted to. It usually ended up that he would take an instrument [when] they needed an extra one. If they didn't have enough horns, he would take the horn and learn to play it. He [was very] good [playing] the baritone horn. I remember he played a very nice piece [for] the graduation exercises. I wish I could remember the name of the piece. He played the viola in combos with different people in town, as well as the violin. They all played the harmonica a little.

FH: In other words, music from your life has spread and it has been a [very] wonderful [experience] in your family.

MM: I think that is true of most anything. That is why learning is so wonderful. Any type of learning, anything good, the more the parents know about anything, it passes on to their children. Like education, I am sure if Wilson and I hadn't had a college education, maybe a college education wouldn't have been so important [to our children]. As a result, our children are all getting college educations. College isn't through yet, but we hope it will be.

FH: Has reading meant a lot to you in your life?

MM: Yes, I have always loved to read. I have gone through different stages in my life. I remember one time, when I was younger, I liked to read about the South Pole expeditions. I went through the Zane Grey novels and biographies. I went through a period in my life when biographies of different people were the important thing. The last few years, it seems like the church books [are] the [books] that I want to [read].

FH: [Are those the] most important?

MM: Yes.

FH: [What] about your courtship and marriage?

MM: There isn't a lot to that. I grew up as a girl not having boyfriends. As I said, I was an old maid. In our little town, we were all related and I didn't have a chance to meet boys otherwise. When we went to high school we went in buses and came home. My social life wasn't too much when I was young, not until I went to Logan to college. I went with two or three fellows up there. I think my basic idea of true love and what I wanted in a mate stemmed way back in my childhood [from] some Relief Society magazines that my mother kept way up on a top shelf of her kitchen cupboard. They had the most wonderful stories about — it is so different from literature now. There are no comparisons. It had uplifting stories

that made you want to be like the characters in the stories. They were different than so many stories now-a-days. That is where I [found] the basic idea of what I was looking for. I didn't realize it [then], but afterwards, I knew.

When I went [out] a little with these fellows, they were nice, but I knew I didn't love them the way I wanted to love the man I married. One fellow, especially, I am sure was serious and he couldn't understand why I couldn't be serious also. My girlfriends said, "You are looking for something that isn't. After all, what is true love? It is just getting along with somebody." I said, "No, it is something deeper than that. If I don't find what I am looking for, I am interested in a lot of other things; I just won't get married." In my patriarchal blessing, it told me I would marry. I supposed maybe it would be some widower with a bunch of [children] that I would marry someday and raise his [children]. I had prayed very deeply that if this fellow that I was going with was the right one that I would know he was and that I would feel good about it. If he wasn't, that I would continue to have the feelings that I did, which I did. I also prayed that when the right one came along, that I would know, that there wouldn't be any question. When Wilson came along, that was the way it was. There was just no doubt and there still isn't any doubt. I knew he was the one I should marry and am so grateful for him. I taught my children that they could know. Sometimes, I wondered if I taught them right because it has been so hard for them to wait it out, to pray and get the answer. So far, each one of them has and we think they have the greatest mates in the world. We have the most wonderful children and most wonderful in-laws that anybody could ever have.

FH: Tell about the children, one at a time, and give a little bit about them.

MM: Where do I begin?

FH: Start with the first one.

MM: At the beginning?

FH: Was [the first child] a boy?

MM: Yes, George [McConkie] was born two weeks over nine months after we were married. He was born in my parent's home. I would never do that again. When Wilson and I were married, he was a surveyor. Just before George was born, Wilson was laid off. I [think] the government agency discontinued. It was between two jobs and we went to Holden. Otherwise, we would probably have been in Ogden and I would have gone to a hospital there. My mother had had all of her children at home. Fillmore had sort of a hospital, but in those days a lot of women were still having their babies at home. I just stayed there with my mother and the doctor came over. He had a nurse helping him. She wasn't a nurse; she was just a girl and didn't know much about [childbirth]. I know I would have had a lot easier time if I had had a good doctor and a hospital. What a wonderful little

boy we had. It seemed so wonderful. Just a year [before], there was me alone; then I married Wilson and now we had our little baby. Soon, we got a little puppy for him. [Laughter] It seemed like my life was complete.

FH: Where were you married?

MM: We were married in the Salt Lake Temple [on] September 28, 1936.

FH: We need to have that [information].

MM: We got the puppy dog when [George] was about a year old. I forgot to say, after I graduated from [the] college in Logan the next summer, Wilson was working in Ogden. Later in the summer [he] transferred to Jackson, Wyoming. He was surveying out on an elk refuge at Jackson. That summer I was dead broke and even in debt a little bit to finish my last little bit of school. We weren't planning on getting married until the fall. I worked there at Judds again for awhile and at Bensons, a wealthy family there. Wilson came in from Ogden and we saw each other there until he was transferred up to Jackson. We were tempted to get married, [well] not actually; we weren't tempted to get married out of the temple, but the temple was closed at that time. I didn't know whether other temples were open at that time or not. We had to wait [because] he had to go up to Wyoming and I had to wait in Salt Lake [City]. I went home for a month before we [were] married. He came down from Jackson in September and we [were] married. That was our first home: in Jackson, Wyoming.

FH: They put him to work [there]?

MM: Yes. We spent some time that winter also in Washington and Oregon. His work took him there and the next summer George was born. We were [in] Holden [and] Wilson was helping my father and brothers there for this little while.

FH: [Did] his work cause you to move around quite a bit?

MM: Yes, very much. He was put on a job [in] another department of the government. He has probably told about it in his history. He was out in [a] camp for several months and we were separated. He would come in every two weeks for the weekend and I stayed with my folks until the following Christmas. We got a house trailer and were together from then on. This was our way of life for the next five years while George was small.

We didn't have another child until Linda [McConkie] was born. I think there was six years between George and Linda. In the meantime, I had to have a major operation so I could have more children. Until George was in kindergarten, we were either on the desert down around [Las] Vegas [Nevada] where Wilson was surveying or up in the mountains. When it [was] hotter, they would transfer us up in the mountains where they could do some surveying. For about three months in

the wintertime, we lived in Salt Lake [City] where we would get an apartment. That was the way George grew up, with his dog, his mom and dad out in [a] camp. Some people thought that he would be a selfish boy, but he wasn't; he was just the opposite. I don't know where it came [from because] he was alone.

Wilson chopped some [of his] toes off and that was when I had my operation so I would have more children. That same year, we bought the home in Salt Lake [City]; he [was] transferred because of his toes. We didn't want to go on living [with] him being gone nine months of the year. He transferred over to [a] job where he was measuring water [for] the [United States] Geological Survey [doing] hydraulic engineer work. In Salt Lake [City] that year, Wilson's sister Fay's husband was in [military] service. Ellen [McConkie] was a nurse at the LDS [Latter Day Saint] Hospital. Linda was born while we were there in the home. They lived with us there when Linda was born. It was kind of interesting in [a] way. Wilson was on one of his trips to Nevada when Linda was born. I think in his story he said that was one thing I have never forgiven him for. Actually, that isn't true. I would have liked to have him home, yes, but I also admired the type of man he is because he doesn't like to ask other people to do things when he can do it himself. He was gone when our next three children were born, but he always made me promise that I would wait until he [returned] home before I gave birth to the baby. I always promised, but I didn't keep my promise, so it wasn't his fault. [Laughter] I certainly don't hold anything against him for it. [Laughter] Other men would have had to leave their families and it was cold, miserable work. I admired him for being the kind of fellow [who] wanted to do his work when he wanted to.

The night Linda was born [there] was a [very] heavy snow storm. Up on the avenues where we lived [in Salt Lake City] the taxis couldn't make it up the hill. So Ellen and I started down the few blocks down to the LDS hospital. We would walk along, stop for a pain, giggle and go on. [Laughter] We [went] down there and she stayed with me all that night, even though she had to go on duty at the hospital the next day. That is just the kind of girl Ellen is. She is my ideal. I have always said, if I had to live in polygamy, I think the one I could live it most with [would be] Ellen McConkie, my sister-in-law. [Laughter] [She] would be the only one I could live it with. She is so wonderful. There little Linda was, our first daughter. It was so wonderful. I always wanted a large family and I am grateful for the four [children] that we have had. Linda is extra special. [Emotional] There have been so many [times when it] has been so fun to have the children through their growing up [years]. They have all been so active in their school work and good students [and] always involved in all kinds of things: 4-H, music lessons, church work, just so many things. It has been fun to live the years with them. She married Don Brady. It is so hard to keep [these facts] straight. I didn't say who George married, did I?

FH: I don't believe you did mention it.

MM: I need to go back telling about him. I am so mixed up. [Laughter]

FH: Who was George's wife?

MM: George married Orlene Johnson. I haven't told a million things about him and his childhood. I know I can't tell half the things about the [children] that I would like to. You get a mother talking about her children! George and I had loads of fun when we were out in [the] trailer days. He grew up in Elko. There, it was wonderful the way the church helped the [children]. He had a good background out there. He had good companions and [a] good church. He has always been a good student. After he [returned] home from his [LDS] mission he graduated from BYU in the fall as valedictorian of his class. I think he may have been the very last valedictorian at BYU because, after that, I think, they stopped having them. He went to the Eastern States Mission when he was twenty years old. There he participated in the Hill Cumorah Pageant two different years. The last year, he was chosen to take the part of Christ as He appeared to the people on the American continent, which I think was wonderful. He said it was [an experience that] he will never forget.

He enjoyed his mission back there and saw so much the need of good member families back there. Later he [went] to Stanford University in California and [was granted] his Ph.D. in Psychology. He changed his profession because he had always been interested in just about every subject. He was good in just about everything and all of his teachers, when he was in high school and Dixie College, would encourage him to go out in [whatever subject] that they were teaching because they could see the possibilities and thought that would be good for him. While he was on his mission, Wilson and I took a teacher-trainer class for our Sunday school that was taught by a [very] good school counselor. Wilson [had] the idea that would be something that George would be [very] good [at] and it was something that he had not explored. When George came off his mission, he suggested that maybe he should take a psychology class and see if it was something he would be interested in. George has always been one to take advice. His dad has said he sometimes hesitated in giving George advice, because he took it so seriously he was afraid he might be wrong in giving him advice. George took this psychology class at BYU. At first he said, "That would turn anybody's testimony of the gospel in a hurry," but then he said —

[END OF RECORDING THREE.]

MM: — that the teachers at BYU would take a day a week to explain how it would fit in with our religion. From there, George went into psychology. The reason he chose to go back to Cornell University [New York], he had offers from different schools, was because he felt like he would like to go back in the same area where he was on his mission. He knew that good member families could be of so much help back there in bringing converts and [in] fellowshipping. He has been able to help there because he was immediately put in the branch presidency. He has been

the branch president for two or three years now and doing much good there. During this last summer, he went to Holland for some special [education]. Since they were expecting their fourth child, they had me come back and stay with his wife and children. That was surely a wonderful experience for me and one I will never forget. I can see why they like it back there; there is something special about being out in the mission field and seeing converts coming into the church. There was a spirit there that was [very] wonderful.

There were six years between George and Linda, our second child. George, because of going away to school and [his] mission, his sisters and Paul, his brother, were still small when he had to leave home. For that reason, he always felt like he missed out on seeing his brother and sisters grow up. Orlene is just a marvelous gal, the best little mother; if I talked a week I couldn't tell you all the nice things about her. When they [were] established in Ithaca, they invited Donna and Linda to come back and spend a summer there. They helped them [find] a job at the college doing secretarial work. They both had experience [doing that]. That was a wonderful experience for them. That is where Linda met Don Brady, who had just come home from a [LDS] mission to Germany. He had been to BYU before he went on his mission and had expected to come back to find a wife at BYU and then go back. He was offered this wonderful scholarship [at Cornell University and] he felt like he couldn't turn [it] down because it would put him through school. He had faith that Heavenly Father would provide a wife for him back there. Lo and behold, Linda shows up, and that was where they met each other. Linda is back there now, while Don is getting his degree in biological chemistry. She taught the first year she was back there. They bought themselves a little trailer home and are very, very active in the church. Don is just the greatest [fellow]. I learned to love and appreciate him this summer while I was back there. While George was gone, he took over and did the things to help. George always says that he has helped him so much. He works with the young people, fellowshiping all these young [people] and trying to keep them. He does so many things that are wonderful. His parents are wonderful and they are so good to Linda. I found a close relationship back there that exists between Linda and his parents. It makes me feel so wonderful. Although we would like to have them out here, I can see the good they are doing there and the wonderful life they are living.

FH: You will have to go back and visit them once in a while.

MM: Yes, we will have to do that. Donna [McConkie] is our next daughter. She is extra-special too. She and Linda are different in [many] ways. In [some] ways, Linda and Paul are quite a bit like their dad. Donna and George are quite a bit like me, maybe too much like me in my bad faults, as well as some of the good. They have their dad's good points too. Donna and Linda were very close while they were growing up. They even wore each other's clothes some years, but Donna grew taller and Linda stopped growing any height.

Donna married John Chamberlain, [a member] of some wonderful, wonderful families that we have known. He is such a marvelous fellow that we feel [so] good about him too. John and Donna were over for Thanksgiving this year and it was so much fun. She is teaching [the] fourth grade in Provo. She was one of the lucky wives to get a job right there in Provo while John is going to school. We feel [very] good about them.

Paul [McConkie] is our youngest. He is, at the present time, in England on a [LDS] mission. Did I say he played the trumpet?

FH: I don't believe so.

MM: Paul is our baby and there is always a special feeling for your youngest child. One of the outstanding things about Paul, more than anybody that I have known, is the ability he has of getting along with people, putting up with [them] and not complaining. He is like his dad that way, never complaining and putting up with no matter what. We have had lots of young people in our home. He will move over, or even out of his room, to let them have [the space they need] and never complain. He is [very] easy to get along with and it has been a joy to have him. He hasn't taken his schooling as seriously as the other children. I know he has just as much ability and I am sure that he will excel. He had his patriarchal blessing before he went on his [LDS] mission and it was just marvelous. I know Wilson and I have worried some because he hasn't decided what he wants to [do]. We are anxious to have him decide what he wants to do in life.

He and Donna went to summer school [at] BYU the summer that Paul graduated from high school. There was an institute teacher up there, Hartshorn was his name. George had known him down in California when he was at Stanford [University]. George said he was an outstanding fellow, [of strong] faith, and it was wonderful. Paul happened to [have] him as his institute teacher and he inspired Paul so much. We could see Paul grow that summer, spiritually and [in] every way. He also took a class in Effective Studying, [on] how to study. When he came back the next year, he [began] to study harder. Paul had his patriarchal blessing and it says that the Lord will reveal what he is to do for his profession. I thought: there we are, we have been worrying and stewing and the Lord knows and Paul will know. He has a wonderful blessing and I am sure he will live up to it. I think he has an outstanding blessing. One thing about Paul that we have felt good about [is] the kind of girls that he has dated. He has never been with a girl, except [one] that you would be proud for him to marry. I think that is unusual for most young people. He sure has high taste! [Laughter]

FH: Talk about your own activities since you were married, a few of the things that you have done [in] church and civic activities.

MM: When I was a girl growing up, other than being the Sunday school organist, I don't remember any [positions] that I had. In those days, they didn't give young people [positions] like they do now-a-days. I always attended all the church

meetings that I could and should. When I went to work in Salt Lake [City] and Provo, I attended Sunday school and Sacrament Meetings. I attended Mutual quite a bit. I don't think I always went because it was at night, unless I had somebody special to go with, my friends. In high school, I graduated from seminary and in college I graduated from institute. I attended meetings there, but I didn't hold a [position] in the church while I was in college. It was the same here. Now-a-days, they have wards for the young people, but then they didn't. When we were married, Wilson's work took us out away from towns for those five years. We very seldom [were able] to go to church because we weren't where we could.

When we moved to Salt Lake [City], we were just there a year and a half. I was on the Relief Society stake board for awhile and that was ridiculous. I think the name was the thing; when they found out I was a McConkie and the McConkie people in Salt Lake [City] were all great people. I surely wasn't prepared to take a [position] like that, but I did the best I could. I helped teach Primary for awhile. When we went to Elko from Salt Lake [City], I believe Wilson's first [position] was [as] Sunday school superintendent. I was made, right off the bat, president of the Mutual. I had some very capable counselors or I wouldn't have existed. We lived out on the edge of town and it was [very] cold out there. The only way I had to get in was to wheel my baby in the baby carriage. That soon [became] tiresome [and] that was when I decided to learn to drive the car. I had [driven] a little before that. I have been a visiting teacher through the years whenever I have been in town and I worked some in the Primary in Elko. I probably [did] substitute teaching [in] Sunday school. I remember teaching some Sunday school classes.

After I had my three children, or two maybe, I was so tied [to] home that I was released from Mutual. I asked the bishop if he had anything [where] I could do most of the work at home. They needed some extra work [doing] ward clerk work. I have never known of a woman [doing] this work before, but I did some of the ward clerk's work. I kept the membership records and contacted people, tried to find people who were supposed to be in Elko and find out if they were there and [kept] the membership records up to date. It is surprising how [much information] is not kept good on membership records, at least in those days. It seemed like that was a lot of my work. We had a mimeograph machine. Whenever there was ward parties or any special word the bishop wanted to get out to all the members, I mimeographed the message on cards and sent those out. I filled out the form 'E' to send in at the end of the year. Wilson was in the bishopric at the time, so it was a good [position] to have. Wilson had several different positions there. He was on the High Council in charge of setting up [the] Indian work out at Lee, Nevada. [It] was about thirty miles from Elko, I believe. During the winter it [was very] cold [there] — way down below zero. I don't think I would have the nerve to do it now, but we took our little ones with us, bundled them up, over bad roads and went thirty miles each way out [to the reservation]. We started fires in this old, cold building and held Sunday school for those Indian people. We did some missionary work with the Indians while we were out there. Didn't we? We held cottage meetings.

GM: [Inaudible]

MM: Yes, but we weren't called to a mission, were we?

GM: Yes, we were stake missionaries.

MM: We were stake missionaries to the Indians. When we [moved] to St. George, we showed our interest in Indian work right [away], because we were interested and that is where we were put. I was Primary president and Wilson was Sunday school superintendent. For close to the next ten years, we worked with the Indians. They changed our positions, but we did the same work. [Laughter] For two years we were stake missionaries. While we were doing that, we were also going out and holding Sunday school. Wilson was branch president out there; the first branch president. After that, they held Priesthood meetings and Sacrament Meetings and we went to Mutual. I always played the piano and taught a class in all the organizations that we had out there. [We] helped in any way that we could. I was also counselor in the Primary in the First Ward and taught a class there. In the Second Ward, [after] they divided the wards, I have been [the] music director, scouting director and I am now [a] Trail Builder partner in the stake Primary presidency. Wilson and I taught Guide Patrol for about five years since we have been in the Second Ward. I have been Relief Society organist and played for the Singing Mothers in the Second Ward. I guess that is about it.

FH: Have you had some civic responsibilities locally?

MM: I haven't done a lot [of] civic [activity]. I have gone around blocks canvassing for donations [to] all kinds of worthy causes. Last year, Wilson and I [were] involved in teaching Civil Defense classes [and] family survival classes. I don't know how many hundreds of people we have taught. Wilson did the teaching and I [ran] the projector, mostly. We have helped some [with] that.

FH: After all these experiences, I think you can and should try to give counsel to those descendants of yours that will come after you. Would you like to bear your testimony in conclusion?

MM: It is [very] hard to know what to say, but I do know from experience that anything that you do that is worthwhile ends up in greater blessings both to you and your families. I feel like our children are living such good lives. We are so happy with the way they are living and following the teachings of the church and teaching their families. One thing I have always been glad [for] is that I have taken the advice of the church authorities and stayed home when my children were small rather than getting a job. I had a high school certificate through the university [and] I could have made a lot of money if I had chosen to go to work. I suppose maybe I lost out on some things, but if I had it to do over again I wouldn't change. I feel like if I have done any good by staying home, our children have turned out

so well; if I have helped with this, it has been worth so much more than any money I could have earned. I am so proud that our children and their mates want to do the same thing. Linda taught one year before she had any children. Donna is teaching this year, before her [children]. Orlene is the best little mother. She and George are training [their] children so well. Linda and Don have done the same.

The more we can take the counsel of the leaders of our church, that is where our blessings [come from]. I feel that our children are doing this to perfection. They are trying in every way they possibly can. I couldn't expect them to be any different than they are now. If they will continue with what they are doing now, everything will work out well. I do have a testimony of the gospel. It has been our life. I have had so many faith-promoting experiences. I know that to the degree we live the gospel, to that degree, we are blessed. If we don't have some of the blessings we want, it is because we haven't kept the laws that would give us those blessings. I want my children to know how proud I am of them and how proud I am of my husband. He has been wonderful. I know they all think he is the greatest. And he is!

[END OF RECORDING FOUR. END OF INTERVIEW.]