

Interview with
MARY (HAFEN) LEAVITT

November 15, 1968

**VOICES OF REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION
ORAL HISTORY COLLECTION**

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MARY (HAFEN) LEAVITT

Mary Hafen Leavitt was interviewed on November 15, 1968 in St. George, Washington County, Utah by Fielding H. Harris, a representative of the Voices of Remembrance Foundation. She related her personal history of living in various parts of Utah and Nevada.

FH: Would you please give your full name?

ML: [My name is] Mary (Hafen) Leavitt.

FH: [When were] you born?

ML: I was born on November 5, 1877.

FH: Where were you born?

ML: [I was born in] Santa Clara [Washington County] Utah.

FH: What was your father's name?

ML: My father was John George Hafen.

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

ML: [Her name was] Mary Ann (Stucki) [Reber] Hafen.

FH: [Can] you tell something about your early life?

ML: Yes. I was born in a little home down at the end of the lane in Santa Clara, a very humble place. We had one neighbor; our next door neighbor, Sister Graf. I remember mother enjoyed visiting back and forth [with her]. I remember when my first sister was born after me. She was four years younger, so I was old enough that I remembered her birth. My Aunt "Rosie" [Rosina Stucki] came down each morning to take care of mother while she was in bed. Generally, [new mothers] had to lie in bed nine [or] ten days. They couldn't think of getting up before then. They would surely be in a bad way. She [would] come down, cleaned me and the baby, take care of mother, make up the bed, comb her hair, put on the dinner to cook and then go back home. She spent half the forenoon, it seemed to me, each day while mother was in confinement. I always remembered that. I liked seeing her come.

FH: Was she an aunt?

ML: She was my mother's sister, but she was also my father's wife later. They both married the same husband. They had been married [earlier], both of them, and lost their husbands. Then they both married my father.

FH: Who are they sealed to?

ML: My mother is sealed to her first husband, John Reber. He only lived ten days after they were married. They went to Salt Lake [City, Salt Lake County, Utah] to be married. [It happened] the day after he came home. He had another family besides my mother then. She was the second wife to him. They went out in the field to see the crops after they had been gone ten days. On the way back they stopped at a little stream of water [because] the horses wanted a drink. He caught his bridle on the wagon tongue and ripped it off. That scared the horses. They had blinds over their eyes. As soon as the bridle was off, [the horses] were frightened and began to run down the lane as fast as they could go. [They] went over a wood pile and almost tipped the wagon over. It threw the husband [John Reber] out and a [wagon] wheel ran over him and crushed him. He died that night. None of the women were hurt. They all hung onto the rack. It was just a hayrack they were riding on. [Inaudible] Mother was a widow for a year or so; then she married my father, John [George] Hafen.

I remember lots of little things in that first home down here. I was looking over this book awhile ago. My mother was a very congenial woman. The young folks often came there to spend the evening with her. She made the most beautiful valentines you ever saw. They would come, maybe three or four of them, to get the valentines made for their best boyfriend. Each could have one of mother's valentines. They thought that was all they needed. They would often do her work while she [made] them. She taught them to crochet and to knit. So many times they would come and spend the evening with mother. I will always remember those lovely evenings.

FH: How much [education] were you able to get?

ML: My first school teachers were in Santa Clara. Levi Harmon was my first teacher. He was a very strict teacher [and] he always kept a willow up over the door.

FH: A willow?

ML: A willow. Most often, the boys would get switchings.

FH: Did the girls get them too?

ML: Yes, once in awhile. Not many [times], but he would [have] other ways of punishing them. He would have us lean [put] out our hand like that. Then he would go along with a ruler and tap [our] hands with a ruler, just like that. [Laughter] I never was punished, though. I remember he called me up once. I

don't know what I did, maybe [I was] whispering. I began to cry. He sat down, took me in his arms, kissed me and told me to go back and sit down. [Laughter] He didn't ever give me any punishment.

FH: You were already punished when he [called] you up there.

ML: [It] was enough to call me there. Melvin Harmon was also one of my teachers. [Also] John T. Woodbury, Edward H. Snow and one more, [but] I can't think of his name now. Peter Graf was one of my teachers in Santa Clara. Then we moved to Bunkerville [Nevada].

FH: How many years of [education] were you able to get?

ML: I was fourteen years old when I left Santa Clara. I must have [been in] the sixth grade when I left. I only had two more years in Bunkerville and that [took me to] the eighth grade.

FH: Did you graduate from the eighth grade?

ML: Yes.

FH: Did you enjoy school?

ML: Very much, I loved school! I loved the spelling matches. [Laughter] We would have spelling matches.

FH: Were you good at [spelling]?

ML: I will say I was. I don't mean to boast, but I would be so thrilled when I [could] spell down some great big fellow twice my size. I was often one of the four [students] left standing in the room. The whole school entered, not just one class, all grades. They had the whole school lined up on each side of the building. It was really fun.

FH: That was an accomplishment to stay up there.

ML: I enjoyed it.

FH: Did you have anything in your growing-up years that you considered amusing to you?

ML: It may not be amusing, but we loved to make baskets. We learned to make baskets when we were children.

FH: What did you make them out of?

- ML: There was a man who came from Switzerland. He lived there. Rick Sickel was his name [and] he taught all the young folks to make baskets. [This area] was great fruit country and everybody had to pick fruit, so they had these baskets to fill up and dump in the wagon. We would often go [to pick fruit] before sunrise in a big double bed. Do you know what a double bed wagon box is? We would take these baskets along, fill them and dump them in the wagon. [When] the wagon was full, [we would] go home and spend the rest of the day cutting. It would take all day long to cut the wagon load of peaches.
- FH: Did you cut [the peaches] to get them ready to dry?
- ML: We cut them in halves and put them out on scaffolds to dry. We would fill one board at a time, and put on another board and another board, until we had the whole yard full [of scaffolds]. Then my father would take these to Beaver [Beaver County, Utah] and exchange [the peaches] for clothing and cheese. [He would] come home with all kinds of nice [items].
- FH: Was this the way you [obtained] the [items] you needed?
- ML: We also made a little wine. Mother always had a barrel of wine made for him to take and trade the same [way]. Some [times it would be] whole bolts of cloth. He had three or four families. He had quite a little cloth, but he was in the mercantile business. He had a store [and] kept the store supplied quite a bit that way. [Inaudible] buy the goods.
- FH: Was your father an enterprising man?
- ML: Yes he was. He was a very enterprising man. He did a lot of peddling besides tending his store. Of course, his wife took care of the store when he was gone. He had a big family. He had about ten children [in] his first family. Arthur K. [Knight Hafen] is one of the grandsons.
- FH: What about activity in [The] Church [of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints] during the years you were growing up? Did you participate in church activities?
- ML: Yes. I always went to Primary and Sunday school and Mutual [Improvement Association]. I always remembered the nice lessons. Our first Primary teacher was Mary Ann Leavitt. [She] was Uncle "Lem" [Lemuel] Leavitt's wife. She always had a huge book [on] the life of the Prophet Joseph Smith and his first vision. I will never forget how impressive [the books] were and how we enjoyed hearing those stories.
- FH: Did you have visits from some of the general authorities of the church [who] came down in the wintertime?

ML: Yes we did. We had Eliza R. [Roxey] Snow and Zina D. [Diantha (Huntington)] Young who organized the Primary. I can remember that well. They came down and spoke in a public meeting [one] Sunday. It happened that my mother entertained these two women for the night. My father's first wife had the bigger family and was too busy [and] father brought them to mother's place. They slept in her bedroom. I remember as a child peeking through the keyhole to watch them go to bed. They were kneeling at the bedside in pretty white gowns. They just looked like angels to me. It was marvelous. I was thrilled through and through at how lovely and sweet they were. Mother gave them breakfast and we went to church during the day. I was always proud to know that we entertained Sister Eliza R. Snow in our house.

FH: Do you remember any of the brethren of the general authorities coming [to your home]?

ML: Not so much to our house. Generally, [father] took the men folk to his first wife's place when they came. Father was a bishop for thirty years.

FH: You participated in Mutual, Sunday school and Primary. Was there a religion class also?

ML: Yes, but not [for] very long. I moved away before [it] was here very long. Brother Goddard was the one [who] organized the religion class. [It is spelled] G-O-D-D-A-R-D.

FH: Do you know his first name?

ML: Was it George Goddard? I couldn't say for too sure.

FH: There is a J. Percy [Goddard] and I believe his father's name was George.

ML: I was thinking about some of my Sunday school teachers — Julia Graf especially. She was a great hand to teach singing. They always had a song or two along with the lesson. Before the lesson we always sang. During the week she would even have appointments for us to practice so when Sunday came we would almost know the songs. Every Sunday they had a nice song or two. I still remember those little cute songs all through the years. [Laughter]

In the evening our crowd would gather on the steps of the schoolhouse and sing. The boys would play the guitar and we would spend the evenings that way. We did have candy pulls more in the afternoon. In the evening we would go in crowds and do singing. That is how we learned every song on the market. As [the songs] would come along, we kept a book. I had a book that I filled full of songs. I would write [the song] down and learn it.

FH: That book would be [very] valuable now.

ML: Yes. I am sorry it burned. We had a fire. But I still remember most of the songs. I made a copy and my son has them in Idaho.

FH: What do you remember about your father?

ML: I remember when he took us to Bunkerville. Santa Clara was a little town. My father had four wives. [Rosina Stucki, Anna Maria Elizabeth Huber, Mary Ann Stucki and one other.] The first wife had about five mature boys ready for homes. There just wasn't room for all of us. There was sort of a migration [of people] going to Bunkerville. It was a new country [area] and new people [were] making new homes. So he took us down to make a home there. I remember the one boy was already married. He came to our place twice to see just what day we were leaving so he could move in [the house we were leaving]. They were anxious to get settled. They [had] lived with his mother awhile. You know how it is. They would rather be by themselves. We moved out and they moved in as soon as we left.

[The] trip down there to Bunkerville was quite an event. We had two wagon loads of goods. My brother drove one wagon and my father the other one. One of the first wife's boys went along too, and my brother drove the second wagon. We were about three days going from Santa Clara to Bunkerville. When we [came] down on the end of the Santa Clara Creek [River] there was a place they called the Conger Hill and it was [very] steep so we had to double up [on] that hill. [We had to] take the team off of one wagon and go back and get the horses. We all walked up the hill. When we [were] on top we thought it was [very] —

FH: — an accomplishment.

ML: By that time, it was night and we camped for the night on top of the hill. I don't know if the next day we went quite to Littlefield [Arizona] or not. I think we did go to Littlefield the next day and then the next day on to Bunkerville. We were three days on the road.

FH: What did you do for a home in Bunkerville?

ML: Father had already [gone] ahead and bought the home there. It was just a two-room house. One room had a floor in it and the other [room] didn't. So it was awhile before we could even get a floor in one room. Later, we built another two rooms on the back, so we had a [fairly] good home by the time we had been there five years.

FH: Were you there nine years?

ML: No, we were there longer than that. I lived there the rest of my life [and] I married a husband [Dudley Henry Leavitt] and had eleven children born there. My

husband died [December 2, 1944] and the children were married and [had] left me, [so] I came back to St. George.

FH: Do you have several children [living] in this area?

ML: I have the two girls here in St. George, Eva [(Leavitt)] Miles and Juanita [Leone (Leavitt) Pulsipher] Brooks, and one boy, Dudley Leavitt, in Cedar City [Iron County, Utah]. He is quite close, [but] the others are scattered all over.

FH: What do you remember about your mother?

ML: Mother was a real lady. She could do most anything. As I said, she would teach the young people how to knit, sew and crochet. As children, we all had to do this [handiwork]. We couldn't walk around the streets and play. We had to have our hands busy while we visited. [Laughter] We learned to braid straw to make straw hats. Mother made hats by the dozens and dozens. She was a hat maker. I would braid the straw for a lot of them, not all of them, but a lot of them. I was always braiding straw in the summertime. We would wind it around our arms and braid some more and wind it until we had all we could carry. We [would] go up to the field and get the straw before they threshed. Some farmers allowed us to do that. They would give us a basket. We could cut the heads off [of the wheat] and put them in the basket and then we could take the straw. They [kept] the wheat. We would take [the straw] home and tie it in little bundles, soak it in water until it [was] good and tender, and then you could braid it.

FH: Did you do this to get the long straw?

ML: Yes. The long wheat straw was the only kind. We couldn't use barley straw. She was a real hat maker. She told me one time, "I have made a wagon box full of hats if I had had them all piled up." She did that for years. [She made] sun hats, some fancy hats, little straw hats called a sailor hat, little short-rimmed ones, just beautiful hats for men and women, too. I even have a picture of a hat on the side of my [head].

FH: How many children did your mother have?

ML: She had seven children. After we had gone to Bunkerville, she lost one child [Wilford Hafen] when he was eight years old. He had the measles. During the night, he went outdoors and got himself a drink of water. We had a [small] bench outside and a bucket of water and a dipper. He went out and drank all the cold water he could. That just finished him. It sent the measles in and he was very sick for two or three days and died. Bishop Bunker came. He was our town doctor [and] often came to help us. I remember him coming to help mother make a poultice to put on his chest. Mother didn't know how to make a poultice, so he taught her how. He said, "You just boil these potatoes with the skins on, mash them well and then put in a spoonful of salt and a spoonful of mustard, mix it all

up and spread it on a cloth and put it on his chest.” We did that all through the years. We would make those potato poultices when [anyone] had [a] bad cold. We would put it across the shoulders, around the chest. It really worked. It really helped.

FH: Would this draw out the poisons?

ML: It would draw out the poisons. We thought it was a wonderful thing.

FH: Did your mother have to be the doctor [along with] everything else?

ML: We lived too far away to call a doctor. We couldn’t get a doctor. We just depended on the Lord [to be] our doctor.

FH: Did you have the elders come and administer when there was sickness?

ML: Yes, always. We always [had] good results. I never had a child born with a doctor. They were all born in my own home. The midwives would come and take care of me. Generally, my husband was there and he was the one [who] would take [the] lead and, maybe, call another man to administer before the baby was born. We always [had] good results.

FH: Latter-day Saint people have so many blessings like this that sometimes they fail to remember them.

ML: They neglect to take an opportunity to use them. It seems to me like they depend on the doctors and they don’t think the Lord could do better than anyone. My husband was a very faithful man. He was called all over town in Bunkerville to help with the confinements. The midwives always called him “Uncle Hen”. “Send for “Uncle Hen”” [and] he would always be there to help.

FH: Tell about your brothers and sisters.

ML: I had one brother older than me. His name was Albert Hafen. He had to take charge of the farm. He was only seventeen [years old] when we moved to Bunkerville. I was fourteen [years old] and he was seventeen [years old]. That is right. He had to take care of [the] farm. It wasn’t a big farm, but he would have to haul hay, plow the ground and do the watering. I would most always go with him to help, especially when he was hauling hay. He would have to have help and I would go. I would get on the load and he would pitch it up to me and we would go through town. He often said, “Now when we get to town, you lie down so the people won’t see you in the wagon. I don’t want them to see I have to have a girl help me haul hay. [Laughter] Bunkerville girls don’t have to do that.” I said, “Lots of them do.” He was a little self conscious. He had it tough to have his sister help him haul hay, but I was proud to help do it!

FH: Who did he marry?

ML: He married Ellen Leavitt. [There is a] strange thing about my mother's family, she had seven children [and] one died. She had six living children and we all married Leavitts, except one, Dr. [LeRoy] "Roy" [Reuben] Hafen. He is the youngest child [and married Anna "Annie" Woodbury]. I don't know if you have heard of him or not. They called him L. R. Hafen. He is at BYU [Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah County, Utah] now. They all married Leavitts, either brothers or cousins.

FH: What about the second child after him?

ML: I was the second. I married [Dudley] Henry Leavitt. The sister next to me, Bertha [Hafen] married Edgar [Dudley] Leavitt. My next sister was Salena [Hafen] and she married Franklin ["Frank" Samuel] Leavitt.

FH: Were these brothers and sisters?

ML: My husband and "Frank" were brothers. You might say polygamy brothers. They didn't have the same mother, but [had] the same father. Edgar Leavitt was a nephew of my husband. My sister, [Martha] Lovena [Hafen], married Parley Leavitt. He has been blind for about thirty years now. He lost his eyes when he was a young man.

FH: Does he still live in Bunkerville?

ML: He is living in Mesquite [Nevada]. He has been blind all those years, but he still goes around and works what he can, water lawns or use his shovel [It is] marvelous what he can do.

FH: Tell about the rest of the brothers and sisters.

ML: Do you mean the first family?

FH: Your brothers and sisters [of] your mother's family.

ML: That is all of them, and Wilford [Hafen, who] died of the measles when he was eight years old.

FH: Have these children all had good families?

ML: Yes. They all had big families, ten and twelve children. My brother, "Roy", only had two [children].

FH: This accounts for the many Leavitts and Hafens in the area.

ML: I suppose [so]!

FH: This is a prolific family! Are there any faith-promoting experiences that you would like to mention?

ML: In my own family, it was all faith-promoting. Every child we had was almost a miracle. We had thirteen children [and] had some serious sicknesses. One of my children, Dudley [Leavitt], had a siege of sore eyes. He nearly lost his eyesight. He was blind for six weeks and couldn't see a thing, nothing but darkness. We came to St. George with him. The doctors didn't seem to know what to do. He said, "Bathe them in boric acid." It didn't seem to help much. We would go back home a week or two and come back again. The second time my husband said, "I am through with the doctors. They are not helping one bit. I am going home and call in the elders and we will see what we can do." I think there were ten or twelve men at the town and they had a prayer circle. Each man gave a short prayer and they administered to him. He was just wild with pain. He was almost blind, I mean, [he was] frantic. The doctor told us he might not live more than a week when he was there the last time. Sepsis was running out of his eyes. As I said, my husband took him home and he brought in these elders.

The next day I was sitting with him on my lap in the front room. I darkened all the windows [because] he couldn't stand to be in the light. The first thing I noticed he said, "Mother, this is the same linoleum we had down on the floor before I was sick." I said, "Can you see that linoleum?" He said, "I sure can."

FH: How old was he?

ML: He was eight years old. He turned [had] his eighth birthday while we were in St. George with him. He was quite a husky little boy, but I held him on my lap most of the time because we couldn't hold him down; he was so frantic. He was always scared —

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

ML: — [that] some wild beast would come in or [he might] fall into a hole. We almost had to hold him down until after the administration. He quieted right down and slept the rest of the night, just peaceful. The next day he could see, but [with] only one eye. He lost the one eye entirely.

FH: He was able to see though?

ML: Yes, yes, very good. Later, he went on a [LDS] mission to Europe. While he was there, they had some specialized [doctors] there for eyes. They took out [his] bad eye and put a glass eye in. He has always worn a glass eye ever since.

FH: What is this boy's name?

ML: Dudley Leavitt. He [lives] in Cedar City. He is still alive and doing fine.

FH: Are there any other particular stories you want to mention?

ML: We haven't had [anything] too serious. We always got by with administration.

FH: What did you do as a young girl growing up to have fun?

ML: We would have candy pulls nearly every week, especially during molasses time. We would go to the molasses mill while they were making the molasses. We would take little buckets along. Have you ever heard of skimmings?

FH: Yes.

ML: We would always get the good skimmings, just before they were finished. We would take that home and make our candy. That happened about every afternoon while the mill was cooling and we would go to one place or another. If you had any kind of a cold, mother would put a little ginger in the molasses [with] a little butter and vinegar. It was [very] good candy and we thought it helped us.
[Laughter]

FH: Did you ever do any dancing?

ML: Yes, I sure loved to dance! We didn't have much enjoyment [entertainment] — only [the] dances in Bunkerville. Sometimes [during] school we would have a play, maybe once or twice during the winter. The main recreation was dancing. Every Friday night we would have a dance.

FH: What kind of music did you have [for the] dances?

ML: We had, sometimes, just a violin and the organ. [There was] a man they called "Pidger" [Elmer] Barnum. He played the accordion and would play all night long. Oh, we would just dance our heads off! [Laughter]

FH: Was he good?

ML: He was very good. My oldest brother, Albert, played for dances awhile. He played the violin and I played the organ. I couldn't dance very much, but I had a sister [who] changed off [with] me. We both played [the organ]. There weren't very many [dances] we played for, maybe just a very few. When they couldn't get anyone else, they would call us. We always went serenading on holidays, [the] Fourth of July. We would get up before sunrise and get a wagon load of singers and [take] instrumental music along with us, especially violins. They would put the organ in the wagon and go around town to every home and sing national anthems. Other times we serenaded at night. That was our hobby to go serenading at Christmas and New Year's. We would sing until after midnight.

FH: [Did you] sing carols?

ML: That is what we called it, caroling. We put the organ in the wagon and the boys would heat big rocks [to] put all around the wagon. [We would] put a few of those hot rocks over a burlap sack and be comfortable as we could be with coats on and sing to our heart's content. I just loved to do that!

FH: Did you enjoy singing?

ML: I enjoyed it very much. All through my life I have been a member of the choir [inaudible] during the Bunkerville years. I don't mean to boast, but I was supposed to be the lead soprano. If there was a solo to sing I had to sing it. Byron Pace was one of our teachers and he taught us the notes before we could sing the words. He would go through those notes, do-so-me-do, and [we] learned the whole song by note. [She sings]: do-me-fa-so-la-so-fa-me-la-so-ti-do. Do-ti-la-so-fa-me-la-ti-so. The words would [be], "Merrily, merrily [inaudible] go before [inaudible]. Merrily, merrily sing along improve each [inaudible]. None are so happy and gay as we. May the wind blow. Onward we go. On we go." We always sang the notes before we learned the words. I sang the solo and the rest chanted, "A sailor I'll be and sail over the sea so happy and gay. Not a care for a day. Where love is so cool, the water so blue [inaudible] home on the sea." While I would sing that solo part [in] would come the bass and tenor. It was [very] pretty. I enjoyed it so much.

FH: Did you have wonderful experiences with music?

ML: Yes, we did. We always had music. Even before we left home, my mother saw [to it] that we had a guitar in our home. The boys had the violin and we four girls all played the guitar. The boys would play the violin and harmonica. We would have good evenings. I always enjoyed it. My mother often wanted an organ, but father didn't think he could afford the organ so she got the guitars. I don't know how she got them, but she got them from somebody. So we all learned to play the guitar.

FH: Did you enjoy reading?

ML: [I enjoyed reading] very much. I spent a lot of time reading when maybe I should have done other work. I don't think I slighted mother too much in helping [her].

FH: Did she get after you once in awhile for that?

ML: Not too often. She was so kind. One time I was in Santa Clara after we moved to Bunkerville. I would come back on a visit once in awhile. I met my Grandfather Stucki on the street one day. He said, "What do I hear about you? I hear that all you do is sit and read and let your mother do the work." I said, "That is news to me. I didn't know I did that." He said [that] was what he heard. Somebody whispered it to him. I guess he found that I did read a lot. But that is what helps

you [learn]. If you can't get an education in any way, you can help yourself by reading. It is just the only way when you don't have any other [opportunity].

FH: What [subjects] did you like to read?

ML: [I like] most any good stories.

FH: Were there periodicals or magazines that came to your home?

ML: Not much, only the *Juvenile Instructor*. That always had a song in the back of it. I learned to sing the notes of music. I would learn [the] songs in the *Juvenile [Instructor]* every month when a new [issue] would come. I would go sound it off until I could sing it. Then I got one of my neighbors [who] could sing alto and we sang it together in Mutual. *Count Your Many Blessings*, I remember that one well. It was in the *Juvenile [Instructor]* before it was ever in the book. [There are] two or three others I can remember. That was kind of my hobby — singing.

FH: Tell about your courtship and your marriage.

ML: I didn't have very much [of a] courtship. I was married too young, I guess. I went down [to Bunkerville] when I was fourteen [years old] and I was married when I was seventeen [years old]. The only boy that I really was interested in was my husband. I never went out with many [boys]. I did go to a dance or two, but never, like you say, sit out with a [fellow] at a dance. [They would] go and take me to the gate and [say] good night. [Dudley] Henry [Leavitt] was my main boyfriend.

FH: Did you know him before you were married?

ML: [I knew him for] two full years, anyway, before we were married.

FH: Where were you married?

ML: I came to St. George to be married. I came up in a wagon and a big load of cotton. He brought a bale of cotton along to make [the trip] profitable.

FH: Were you married in the St. George Temple?

[Dudley Henry and Mary (Hafen) Leavitt were married September 3, 1895 in St. George Temple, Washington County, Utah.

ML: Yes. David H. Cannon [married us].

FH: Where did you live [in the beginning]?

ML: Before we were married, he had purchased a little house on a big lot. It was just a one-room house. It was a big room with a slanted roof. We had all our belongings

in that one room. It was a big room [and] we had plenty of room. We got along just fine. It was a good lot and half of it —

FH: Was that in Bunkerville?

ML: [It was] in Bunkerville. About half of [the ground] he put in grape vines before we were married. We had a lovely vineyard. All through the years we had all the grapes we could eat. Then the other half [of the ground] was the garden and fruit trees. We had almost [all] our [food] on our own lot.

FH: Was the climate conducive to [good growing]?

ML: [It was a] very good climate for fruit and vegetables, grapes especially. We had a lot of grapes.

FH: Tell about each one of your children.

ML: We lost our first baby [when] she was only eighteen months old.

FH: What was her name?

ML: Her name was Ortha, O-R-T-H-A, Ortha Ora Leavitt. She died when she was a year and a half old. She took a high fever and we had no doctors [and only] had the midwives there. Many times they came to help. It just had to be, I guess. She wasn't supposed to live.

The next one was Juanita [Leone (Leavitt) Pulsipher] Brooks. She was the second child. She was a smart little scamp! [Laughter] How do you say it? She was just as smart as you get them. She was a tiny girl. My husband went on a mission when I had four little girls. While he was gone, I put a lot of time in teaching them this and that, [like] the *Ten Commandments* and the *Lord's Prayer*. I put her on a stool in the chapel and she [recited] the *Lord's Prayer* when she was only about five years old. She played for Primary when she was eight years old, not regularly, but off and on. The high school came to Bunkerville in 1911 and from then on all our children had a high school education. When [she] graduated from high school, Juanita went to [Brigham Young University] Provo [Utah County, Utah] to college and [received] her degree there. Before [that], she married and her husband [Ernest Pulsipher] died. They had only been married a year when he died [and] then she went to Provo to school. I think we had two years of normal school in Bunkerville. They called it normal. [A graduate] could teach a few years with a normal education. I think she taught a year or two before she went to Provo. As the next ones came along, they went to Provo and she would have them come and stay with her.

FH: Would you tell about them in succession?

ML: Charity [Leavitt] was the second girl. Just Charity alone. She married Vernon Rowley [and] they live in Las Vegas [Nevada]. She [received] her degree at BYU too. Like Juanita, she helped with the next one. The next one was Aura [Leavitt], A-U-R-A, "Ola" was her [nickname]. She followed suit and went to the 'Y' for four years.

FH: Your family was getting a good education.

ML: My husband said. "I am not going to have our children as ignorant as we are. We are going to see that they get an education." They all did [and] that is one thing I am so proud and thankful [for]. They all helped each other as they came along, one helped the other and then the other one helped the [next] one. They never asked a penny back. Everything was free. They just helped each other. It was really an accomplishment. Six of them [received] their degrees at the 'Y' all in succession.

Melvin [Leavitt] was the first boy. I must tell about him. He was born while my husband was on a mission. I had the four little girls and when he came along [it] was just wonderful to have a little boy. I couldn't believe we had a little boy. Juanita came to bed one day and said, "Mother, isn't he sweet? Let's have another one before dad gets back and surprise him." [Laughter] Innocent little pixen [pixie]! He was our first boy [and was] kind of pampered. The girls made so much of him. I suppose he was spoiled, but I guess not too bad.

FH: Did he go to school at the 'Y'?

ML: Yes, [and received] his degree there.

FH: What did he study?

ML: Agriculture was his line. Grant Cavanaugh taught school there for two or three years. He taught agriculture [classes] and he was put in as bishop while he was there. He lived there about ten years, I believe. He retired and is in Nampa, Idaho now.

The next boy was Laurel [Evan Leavitt]. He was born after dad came home, of course. He had his high school education in Bunkerville [and] had good teachers. That is one thing, we did have good teachers in Bunkerville. Nevada paid better salaries than Utah. We [had] the best. Have you ever heard of A. L. Kelley and E. S. Romney? They were some of our first teachers. My brother, "Roy", was principal there for several years after he [received] his degree. We did have good teachers.

FH: Did [Laurel] go on to college?

ML: “Roy”? Oh, yes, he went to college on his own almost. He went down in the valley and worked in the summer picking cantaloupes and doing whatever is done on a farm. He would save his money and go to school in the winter.

FH: Did he go to the ‘Y’?

ML: Yes, he went to the ‘Y’. Later, he was the state historian in Colorado for twenty years. He retired and came to live in Provo and they hired him again. He is still teaching. I guess he is in his seventies, I am sure, or more.

FH: Is he still teaching there?

ML: Yes, he is still teaching.

FH: What about the next one?

ML: Of course, he was my brother. These others are my children. The next child was Daisy [Leavitt]. She also graduated from Bunkerville High School and went to Provo to school. [She lived] two years in St. George. While Juanita was a widow, she taught in St. George awhile. She had some of the children come and live with her and took care of them while they went to [Dixie] College here. [Daisy] and Eva [Leavitt] both [went] two years here. Laurel was here a year or two with her. Juanita was a second mother to the family. I can’t praise her enough for all she did for them. She is a widow ten or twelve years and taught and helped our family along. She has been a wonderful girl.

FH: Does she have a lot of what it takes?

ML: Oh, she is a wonderful girl. She has done lots of things that nobody knows about.

FH: I am beginning to see that [in] the little bit I have seen of her.

ML: Yes. If you read some of her writings you will know she is [very] accomplished in her line. Francis [Leavitt] is [the] next [child]. He is living in Sacramento [California] now [and] also graduated [from] the ‘Y’. He [received] his master’s degree in Reno [Nevada]. He went to Reno and spent two years. He and Dudley both went to Reno [for] a couple of years. He [began] to teach. Dudley didn’t get his degree [because] he wanted to go on a [LDS] mission instead.

FH: Where did he go?

ML: He went to England and Ireland. I remember the deal was made before he left. Francis said, “I will keep him the first year, dad. You don’t need to worry. I will keep him the first year.” So every month the money went to him. He was teaching at the time. As I [have] said, they helped each other along.

FH: My, your family was [very] cooperative!

ML: Yes, they really did help each other. Our second daughter, Charity, went on a [LDS] mission. She lives in Las Vegas now.

FH: Where did she go on her mission?

ML: She went around Arkansas, the Central States Mission, [and] Independence, Missouri.

FH: That was my mission.

ML: That is where the headquarters were in Independence.

FH: Do you remember what year she went?

ML: I know she went before she was married, but I don't remember. I have it down in my book. I could find it in a minute.

FH: What about the next child now?

ML: Mary [Leavitt] was the last one. She is the baby. She hardly finished high school when she married. She found a [fellow who] really wanted to marry her and she couldn't say no. They have a wonderful family. She is the top one of all of them.

FH: Where is she living now?

ML: She [lives] in Mesquite. She married Fenton Frehner. She has eleven children. She was my eleventh child and she has eleven [children].

FH: You have a marvelous posterity by now.

ML: Yes, I really do. I have fifty-one living grandchildren. I have not the exact count, but I know there is 125, the last count, of great-grandchildren. I have two great-great-[grandchildren]. Juanita's first husband died and it was ten years before she married again. Her son is a grandfather now.

FH: How long [ago] did your husband [die]?

ML: He died forty years ago [December 2, 1944] when he was seventy-five. It seems like a long while.

FH: How have you been able to get along since then?

ML: I have always had plenty. We sold the place down there and located here.

FH: Have your children helped?

ML: Yes, they have helped me a lot.

FH: After coming to St. George, what has filled your life?

ML: The main thing is the temple work. I lost my husband and I was alone. My mother was alive when her husband died so she came to live with me [for] two or three years. That is why she wanted to come to St. George — to go to the temple.

FH: [Did she live with you] in this home?

ML: No. We lived down in Rosina Blake's home. Did you know Rosina Blake? She died a couple of months ago. We lived there for two or three years. When she died, I moved up here. Juanita had this home here. In the meantime, she had married and had another home.

FH: Do you know how much temple work you have done?

ML: I try to keep track of it. I write a name down every day in a book.

FH: Can you give an estimate of how many [names] you have done?

ML: I have about 4,300 [names in my book].

FH: You are going to have a lot of friends when you get over there.

ML: I hope [so]. I feel like that is my main job now. I don't have anything tying [me down], but I can do that and still keep up my house.

FH: It is marvelous that you feel well and can do this.

ML: I am very well. I have a good constitution, but my knees are bad. I can't walk very well, but otherwise I am perfect. I eat and sleep like a baby, no pain or aches anywhere. I have never been to the doctor for anything; only a check over to see if anything was wrong. He could find nothing wrong, only the knees. He said I have arthritis in my knees. That kind of hinders me a little. But, otherwise, I have perfect health.

FH: Is there anything we have missed that you would like to tell about?

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

ML: All through the years I have kept a diary. I have all the names of all the teachers [who] ever taught in Bunkerville from 1911 to 1944 when I moved to St. George,

all the grades that our children were in, all the names of the bishops and the relief society presidency.

FH: You have a kept a history of that place.

ML: Someone could write a little history on it if you go through everything. But I didn't write enough of [events] that happened during the years. We had bad luck in Bunkerville several times. We had two school buildings burn down. We had to go to people's homes to have a room to teach. I entertained one class all one winter at my home. I only had two rooms. I moved into the one while my husband was on a mission. They had school in the other room. A few times they had people give rooms until they [had] a high school built. Even the church burned down. I can't imagine why we had so many fires. There was somebody doing it purposely. We never could find out.

FH: Did you ever have any floods down that way?

ML: Oh, floods! We had floods and floods and floods!

FH: That Virgin River —

ML: — was treacherous. We just had brush and rock dams. They would haul brush and pile the rocks. Days and days the whole town was up there day after day to make a dam. In a week or so there would be another flood and take it out again.

FH: Was it a constant job?

ML: It was terrible at times. Drought in the summer and the crops would dry up.

FH: Have they overcome that now?

ML: Yes. They [have] a permanent dam now. The [United States] Government came in and helped build a permanent dam and we haven't had any more trouble.

FH: Bunkerville has been, in spite of their problems with floods, quite a prosperous place.

ML: They have had some of the finest young people come out of that little valley that you ever saw — a lot of leaders, business men, church men [and] church leaders.

FH: The good people of the earth.

ML: Yes, they are. [The town] turned out a nice crop of young folks.

FH: Would you give a little counsel and advice to those who come after you? Maybe bear your testimony?

ML: I try to do that maybe too much. When I write letters to the [children] I always give a little advice — do this and do that and don't neglect this nor that. I know that if they do this, they will be prospered. If they pay their tithing they will be prospered more than if they didn't pay it. Sometimes we think that we can't afford to pay it. I think most of mine pay their tithing. I hope they do and I believe they do. But if they want any blessings from the Lord, they must keep His commandments. That is the only way I see. I am just so proud when I can pay a good tithing. The more I pay, the better I like it.

[END OF RECORDING TWO.]

FH: Do you have a testimony?

ML: You couldn't take it from me. I am so sure that the gospel is true and that the Lord hears and answers our prayers. We have had it so many times. In the time of sickness, maybe not too serious, but still sick enough that you pray in earnest and you get relief before you are hardly through with the prayer. You know that somebody was there to hear. Oh, yes, I am a strong believer in prayer.

FH: Is this your way of life?

ML: It is my way of life. I don't know what doctors are. I never have had a doctor in confinement. Those good midwives, they [would] come day after day for ten days, wash [the] baby, comb my hair, clean me up and even straighten up the house if it needed to be. We always had our babies in our own homes. They would come there and take care of us for ten days. The first few [midwives] wanted \$3.00. [That] was all we had to pay, the regular price [of] \$3.00. Later, [it was] \$5.00. The last two [babies it] was \$15.00. Imagine what they [charge] now. [They were] faithful women to come and take care of us like they did. I [can] never get over praising them.

FH: Is there anything else you would like to add?

ML: I hope and pray that they will all prove faithful so we can all meet in the eternities to come. That is my hope and my desire. It wouldn't be heaven if we couldn't have them all there. I would always be longing for the one that wasn't there. I hope and pray they will be there with our loved ones. We won't have to be ashamed of our earth life.

[TAPE RECORDER TURNED OFF]

FH: How many descendants do you have? Can you tell a little bit about them?

ML: I have ten living children and fifty-one living grandchildren and 125 that I know of, great-grandchildren. I may have more. I haven't counted lately. [I have] two great-great-grandchildren. Of all of these, I can proudly say that none use tobacco

and none use liquor of any kind. They are all clean in that respect. I am positive of that — unless there are one or two of the later in-laws. I shouldn't have said that.

FH: You have a lovely posterity of fine children.

ML: They are really, I believe, all trying to do their part in the church. [They are] all active. Three of my sons have been bishops, four of my daughters have been relief society presidents and two have been stake relief society presidents. They are all on the upward climb. There are none going downhill that I know of.

FH: Are you proud of all of them?

ML: I am very proud of my nice family.

[END OF RECORDING THREE. END OF INTERVIEW.]