

**Interview with**  
**VIVIAN NAOMI THOMPSON MEAKINS**

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**September 24, 1968**

**VOICES OF REMEMBRANCE FOUNDATION  
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VIVIAN NAOMI THOMPSON MEAKINS

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Vivian Naomi Thompson Meakins was interviewed by Fielding H. Harris on September 24, 1968 in Lincoln, Nebraska. She related her stories about her childhood, family life, and conversion to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

FH: This tape recording is being made in the home of Brother and Sister Meakins in Lincoln, Nebraska on September the 24th 1968 for Voices of Remembrance Foundation. Now, Sister Meakins, will you tell us your full name, please?

VM: Vivian Naomi Mea — Thompson.

FH: Vivian Naomi —

VM: Naomi Thompson.

FH: Now, how's this "Naomi" spelled? Let's be sure.

VM: N-A-O-M-I.

FH: Naomi, alright. And your birth date?

VM: January 17th, 1900.

FH: And the place of birth?

VM: [Inaudible] Lincoln, Nebraska.

FH: Alright. Now, what is your father's name?

VM: My father's name was Fred James Thompson.

FH: And your mother's maiden name?

VM: [It] was Maggie Rosalea Carsner.

FH: Kartchner. That's a familiar name to me, Kartchner.

VM: Oh, I never heard it before. Can't find any record of it or anything.

FH: We have some good friends by the name Kartchner out in Utah.

VM: C-A-R-S-N-E-R?

FH: No, it's Kartchner.

VM: Oh.

FH: So, that's a little different.

VM: Yeah.

FH: Alright, that's good we got that spelling straight, isn't it? Alright now then, Sister Meakins tell us some of your early childhood remembrances.

VM: Well, my mother was thrown from a buggy when she was carrying me and I wasn't premature, but I was a dry birth. And she said I was the ugliest baby she'd ever seen, I was wrinkled up like a little old woman.

FH: My goodness.

VM: Let's see, I had an older brother about five and he was named Theodore. I had three month old colic. One day my mother came in and found me [with] a pillow over my head because she'd told him not to let me cry.

FH: Mm-hmm [affirmative]. And he literally took it to mean to stop you from cryin'.

VM: He said he couldn't stop me from crying any other way.

FH: My goodness. That was a close call.

VM: My father was a baker by trade. So we traveled around quite a bit, one job to another. We moved to Sterling when I was about three or so —

FH: This was still in Nebraska?

VM: Yes.

FH: Still in Nebraska.

VM: And at that time we were Adventists, had been for about a year.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: And see, we went to church and they sang "The Half Has Never Yet Been Told" and I told 'em that [??] never yet been told.

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: While living in Sterling, we had a big flat stone for the front step of the little house, a big flat stone. Mother came home from the neighbor's, she found me cryin' on the front porch. She said that she found me layin' there. I was asleep when she got there; I'd been crying. She went in the house and found out the [???nay???] bird had all its tail feathers pulled out.

FH: Oh, my goodness.

VM: She told my brother, asked him where I was. She said that he didn't know where I was. So she said, "You better go find her. Maybe the gypsies picked her up." We had gypsies at that time goin' through the country. So he went around the house a'cryin'. He went around four, five, or six times, 'n never even saw me [laughter] layin' on the porch. And let's see —

FH: He thought the gypsies had gotten you.

VM: Yeah, that's what he was cryin' about.

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: When I was about four we went to Talmage, Otoe County, Nebraska. It was about fifty miles southeast of Lincoln. And we had a neighbor named Curtis [???Witter???] and Viola [???]. Them folks put up a tent out in the yard gettin' ready to go to camp meeting and my mother heard me say, "Girly, you mustn't do that." She heard somebody say that, 'n she went out to see what it was and I'd cut part of my arm here. These same girls used to call me "Girly" and she didn't like that, so she told 'em to call me "May." So after that, I went by the name of Vivian May Thompson till I went to College View. When I went to College View, I started to call myself Vivian instead of May.

FH: Now, College View is a part of Lincoln, isn't it?

VM: Yes.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: Before I was five, my folks had another baby. They named her Ruby Pearl. My aunt named her because she was a double jewel. She had all boys in her family. From Talmage, we moved to Brock, and that's Nebraska, too. My dad held down both jobs; one in Talmage and one in [Brock] Nebraska.

And let's see — I really — I was playin' like I was a boy out the front window and Dad come home and caught me. He didn't know what I was doin', but he promised to tell my mother. And my mother, she always give us a lickin'. I went in and laid down on the bed and I prayed that he wouldn't tell her and he never did, I guess, 'cause I never heard from her. [Laughter] I'll always believe in prayer.

FH: Your prayer was answered.

VM: That's the way I always felt, so I'll always believe in prayer.

FH: Okay.

VM: When I was seven years old we lived next to an old lady in a wheelchair and we had to go over and bring in her wood for her [inaudible]. I was comin' home from school one day and she called me in and told me to stay there awhile. I remember I told her that — I wondered if Mother was making me a birthday present because it was my birthday. She says, "Well, maybe she is, she didn't say." So when I got home, I had a baby sister. Her name was Tressie.

FH: Born on your birthday?

VM: I always wish I was a twin 'cause they'd wanna do the same thing I did and play the same games and wouldn't fight with me. So, I thought that'd be just fine, but it didn't work that way.

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: The summer of nineteen-seven, we moved into a large house, not really much to that. We had a lot of fun playin' dolls. This woman was a dressmaker and we had a lot of paper dolls cut out, so on and so forth, dress up.

FH: Like little girls do.

VM: Yes. Then my father went to Oklahoma, then. We went in a covered wagon. He went down on the train —

FH: From Lincoln to where in Oklahoma?

VM: To Custer City.

FH: Alright.

VM: It was about the middle of Oklahoma.

FH: How many days' trip was that about?

VM: We left here in November and we didn't get down there until almost Christmas.

FH: Hmm. That was a long hard trip then.

VM: Yep. We had a cover behind the wagon, had a lantern in there and we cut out paper dolls right there in the back end. We were comfortable.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: And nice and warm. And we took a hunting dog along with us and every night he'd go and get us some [???pigeons???] [laughter]. He'd bring 'em home to have along the road.

FH: Now, what happened to your schooling in all this time? Were you — When you were old enough to go to school?

VM: Yeah, I was seven then. I didn't go to school much before that. I just went to school when I was seven.

FH: Oh, okay.

VM: But we went to school.

FH: Where did you start the school at?

VM: I started at Brock.

FH: Okay.

VM: And I was just in the first grade when we went on down there. We went all the way down there and they had a lumber camp when they get down into Oklahoma and Lancaster, Kansas. Where they had lumber camps, sign up in a lumber camp. We thought it was [inaudible]. They called 'em lumber camps. Well, these lumber men pulled in there with their horses and eat and sleep, you know, go on the next mornin'. We got clear down and they told us we should'a made the Canadian river in the daytime because it was too dangerous at night. So when we got there and they said, "Well, now you'll have to hurry and get across and they'll be waitin' for you at the other side. So we made it across just in time; we had to use the lantern. There was a lantern [inaudible] to see the way of it. So we stopped and he told us to come on in and stay the night, otherwise we could'a headed all the way along the road there before we found one. We didn't think anything about it, we always camped out.

FH: That's a nice man.

VM: [Inaudible] get in there and [inaudible], and things like that, you know, no restrooms or anything like that, just a camping place.

FH: Wow.

VM: For a fee.

FH: It was kind of a waystation type of thing.

VM: Yeah. And then there was just a little trail about twenty, thirty miles, you know.

FH: That's interesting; I've never heard of them before.

VM: Well, that's just like these motels, nowadays, they have.

FH: Uh-huh [affirmative], sure.

VM: My mother used to sing us to sleep on the way. She sang "Whispering Hope" and my sister always cries to this day when she hears that [laughter], she was so homesick on the road.

FH: Alright. Now, how much older was your sister?

VM: My sister is five years younger than I am.

FH: Five years younger! Oh, geez!

VM: I was seven; she was about two, but she still cries, she remembers that.

FH: Well, that's good for rememberin' that that young.

VM: On the way down we had fires, except had one fire and it wasn't burnin' very good so my grandfather, he went with us for a [time], and he started another one. [He] got that worked out and the wind came along and took that over into the cornfield. [It] didn't do too much damage but we sure worked to keep it from us. It took us about three months to make the trip.

FH: Oh, goodness.

VM: There was a small candy shop that was in Talmage, a small candy shop about a couple blocks from where we lived. My brother used to go up and get sugar, just get a twenty-five cent package. A pound was about a quarter's worth.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: When he'd tell 'em to give him twenty cent's worth, they'd yell and they told him to spend it for candy! About that time I thought I was gonna be real smart, too, so I did it. I got partway home and I got these old-fashioned stand-up chocolates, you know.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: For a nickel, you used to get a great big sack of 'em. I tried to get 'em down before I got home that two blocks and I couldn't get 'em down so I hid them under the culvert. When I got home, I had candy all over my face, of course. Mother, she says, "Where'd you get

your candy?" I said, "I didn't have any candy!" [Chuckles] She gave me a lickin' for tellin' a lie!

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: I couldn't eat any more candy, yet, when I was goin' with my husband. I couldn't eat candy, chocolate candy, just didn't go down.

FH: It hurt you, did it?

VM: I can now, but I couldn't then.

FH: [Laughter.] Well now, tell us how much schooling you had.

VM: Well, I went to school in Brock, and I went to school in Custer City, and I went to school in Arapahoe [Nebraska]. We went down in Texas. While I was in Texas, we were there New Years' Day in 1911. It was a real nice, balmy day; we telled our mom to go bear-footed. Bein' from the north, Mother said, "No, no, no." We had a four room house with a chimney goin' up in the middle from all four rooms. We wasn't gonna stay. We decided we couldn't stay there. Nobody wanted hot bread down there, and there was no place for a bakery, so we decided to come back up north. So, we didn't unpack anything, only just what we had to have. Everything had to be crated those days, so we went on the train. We uncrated the cook stove 'n sewing machine, table; we'd sit on the crates. I think we was only down there a couple weeks. And it got colder that day and colder. We'd let the fire go down and move the stove into another room. We stayed in there a while and the wind changed, and we'd move the stove in another room. That night, we moved it in the last room, Mother sat up all night and read us stories. We kids was swaddled up with quilts around us, sittin' there while she read till the next mornin'. Next mornin' the sun was shone and it was nice again.

FH: Ah, okay.

VM: That's what I remember of Texas.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: About all I remember.

FH: It was kind of a disappointing adventure, then.

VM: Then from Texas we came back to Nebraska again. First we come back to Brock, then Talmage, 'n then College View. I went to school all those places.

FH: Well, this kind of broke up your education then.

VM: Yeah.

FH: Scattered it around a bit and made it hard.

VM: I was in the second grade in Oklahoma. I was there two years. I came up here and skipped the third grade and went right in the fourth grade.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: It was just a change of schools.

FH: Now, I see here that you had some accidents when you were small. You had a couple of times when you had broken bones or somethin'.

VM: That was years later.

FH: That was later, huh? Okay. Let's see now, you've already told us that you belonged to the Adventist church. How long were you a member of that church? Do you remember?

VM: Let's see, thirteen, fourteen years.

FH: Uh-huh. Okay.

VM: We come here to College View and they didn't have much activity. You know, they're so big out there, they didn't know whether you came or you didn't.

FH: I see. Okay.

VM: There was no backtracking to find out why you don't come or what the reason was you weren't there like there is in the Mormon church.

FH: So if you didn't go you just weren't missed too much.

VM: Yeah, that's right.

FH: Okay, uh-huh. Alright, now I think I'd suggest that you would tell us a little bit about your father. Can you do that?

VM: I don't know, my father was the second youngest. Well, there was one younger than him. He was from Indiana and he was older when he was married; he was about thirty when he got married. My mother was young; she was about sixteen. And they had six children, one died in infancy. He was a baker by trade, always was. He moved to Lincoln. When he moved to Lincoln, everything was machinery and he wasn't a machinist at all, so that was that. By that time he was getting pretty old anyway.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: So, he didn't do much after that. He broke his leg twice and finally passed on from the effects of it.

FH: Wow. About how old a man was he when — ?

VM: Sixty-five.

FH: Alright. Now tell me about your mother. What do you remember about her?

VM: My mother was born in [18]77, I believe, and she died when she was eighty-four. She had a very peaceable life, I guess you'd say. Raised all those children, but one. When my father died she lived in Missouri on a farm and then she finally came to live with her children. She lived with my sister —

FH: She lived alone quite a long time, then, didn't she?

VM: Yes she did. Well, she was married after that.

FH: Oh, I see.

VM: I don't know, she was always pretty lively 'n got around good. Took care of herself pretty good her whole life.

FH: She was like you, she was never sick, then?

VM: No, mm-mm [negative]. She was never in the hospital but once, and that was just overnight.

FH: Uh-huh.

VM: She died of cancer.

FH: Okay. Of course, she died of old age, really, now didn't she?

VM: Yeah.

FH: Had a full life. How many children were there in your father's family? Do you remember this or anything about that?

VM: Yes, four boys.

FH: Four boys in his family. Now how about your own family, your parents' family? How many — ?

VM: We had six; one of 'em passed away.

FH: I see. Can you tell me about them a little bit, where they are, or anything about them or what's happened to them through the years?

VM: Well, my older brother, he passed away in — [19]63, I believe. And my next sister is living. I was next to him and then my next sister is living. She is in Milwaukee [Wisconsin], farming. And my other sister's in Missouri, farmin'. And my brother's in town.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: That's it.

FH: Now, they're all getting along fine, then.

VM: Leonard's a paper-hanger. We're the two oldest ones in the family now.

FH: Do you associate with them once in a while?

VM: Oh yeah, yeah, all of 'em.

FH: Together? Your family's held still close, then?

VM: Yeah, mm-hmm.

FH: Which is good. Now, when you were growing up through the years you were moving around a lot. Do you remember any kind of activities that you did that were just fun? What did you do to just have plain fun? With all this moving around [crosstalk] you didn't have roots anywhere until you got up here to Lincoln.

VM: [Crosstalk] I don't know. We never had any special friends that I know of. I don't remember having much activity.

FH: Just too busy, maybe. Huh?

VM: I suppose.

FH: [Laughter.] Did you ever help with your father's work at all?

VM: No.

FH: Never did enter into that at all?

VM: No, he always worked with somebody else.

FH: Oh, I see. Okay. Now —

VM: He had so much wages and all the bread the family could eat, so we came home from school we always had hot bread and butter. We couldn't have jelly or anything like that, but we got all the hot bread and butter we wanted.

FH: Well, that's good.

VM: I put on some weight, to this day [laughter].

FH: [Laughter] Sure. Tell me about music in your life, have you enjoyed music? Do you like music?

VM: Yes, I enjoy music.

FH: What's been your association with music?

VM: Oh, I took music when I was a child. I don't remember too much about it.

FH: What kind of music did you take? What did you listen to?

VM: Oh, I never got into classical or anything like that. I just played church music.

FH: Was this on a piano?

VM: Yes.

FH: On the piano, alright. This means, then, that you enjoyed the music that your husband produced [crosstalk].

VM: Yes.

FH: Very good. Okay, now tell us about how you met your future husband and tell us what happened after that. What —

VM: Well, Mother was interested in havin' us take music lessons when we moved to College View. So, his mother came over and was goin' by and she stopped to talk to my mother. Mother asked her if she knew of a music teacher around there; she wanted us to take music lessons. This woman, his mother said, "Yes," her boy was takin' music lessons with a pretty good teacher. She says, "I'll bring him over on Sunday and let him play for ya." Well, she says, "There he goes now." He had a bike 'n he had knickerbocker pants, and he was pushin' a bicycle. I was kinda boy-crazy at that time, so I ran out the back door and looked up to him to see what he looked like. He was cute even though he was just a kid. So next Sunday, he came over and had on long pants, 'n he sat down and played for two hours without even lookin' at a music book or anything. And, "Huh, he ain't so bad after all."

FH: [Laughter] Changed your perspective, did it? [Laughter] Okay.

VM: Just, not very long we started goin' together.

FH: Just started it right off, then?

VM: That's right.

FH: How long did you go together before you were finally married?

VM: That was in 1914 and we went together and wasn't married until 1917.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: One was in the spring, and the other one in the fall.

FH: Oh, okay.

VM: I never went with anyone else, only that older fellow and I didn't go with him for that reason.

FH: Okay.

VM: He was just a neighbor or a friend, that's all. He wasn't a boyfriend; he was too old for that.

FH: But you had a date with him once, is that right?

VM: No, I didn't have a date with him. He just had a date with me 'n — [laughter].

FH: [Laughter] In other words, he was interested but you were not.

VM: Yes, that's it.

FH: Okay, fine. Well now, tell us where you were married and how this all took place.

VM: We were married in South Dakota.

FH: How come you went clear to South Dakota?

VM: Well, folks wouldn't let us get married here. My mother didn't like him so —

FH: Oh, yeah.

VM: We asked Mother about [inaudible] gettin' married, asked her about it, she says, "Well, tell him I said you wouldn't change." So that's what we did. When we couldn't get a license here, his mother went with us, and we went to South Dakota.

FH: Uh-huh, okay.

VM: And wed on the run.

UV: Grandma.

VM: We were goin' up there to work anyway.

[RECORDER TURNED OFF.]

FH: Alright, now let's see, you were married in South Dakota. Did you remain there or where did you go —

VM: Oh, we lived on a farm up there with his uncle. He had been up there all summer, so —

FH: This was in South Dakota? Alright.

VM: Then we stayed there till long late in the winter and then we came back to College View.

FH: Mm-hmm. Now, he was working on the farm then, while you were there. Then what did you do when you come back?

VM: Well, I didn't do much of anything for a while.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: He could get work. I don't know. The oldest girl was born then.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: I got work. [Crosstalk.]

FH: She was born in South Dakota?

VM: No. She was born after that.

FH: After that time.

VM: That's why we came back.

FH: Oh, okay, uh-huh.

VM: We were miles from a doctor and hospital.

FH: Oh, I see. That's a good thing, then. Okay. When you came back then, did your folks receive you well when you came back?

VM: Not till after the first baby was born.

FH: Oh, okay, uh-huh.

VM: [Inaudible.]

FH: They had reservations a little bit then.

VM: Yeah.

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: Yeah, they did ever.

FH: Alright. Well, now tell us about your home life and things you did together. You've been a hard worker all your life.

VM: Right.

FH: You helped to bring in the bacon —

VM: Yep.

FH: — and keep things going.

VM: And help build a house.

FH: Alright. Tell about this; I want you to tell about it.

VM: Well —

FH: What was your first job when you came back?

VM: Oh, I don't know. It was probably four years before we started doin' anything by ourselves.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: We started buildin' and working. Little bit of everything, I guess, whatever come along.

FH: You actually went out and got a job, though?

VM: Yeah.

FH: What —

VM: Yeah, I worked right along, always —

FH: Uh-huh.

VM: — worked more or less.

FH: And you felt good about doing that, did you?

VM: Never bothered me; I knew I had to do it, and it's not easy to [live].

FH: Sure, uh-huh.

VM: I knew I'd have to do it, so when I got married, it didn't bother me any.

FH: These years now were they lean years in the country or were they good years — ?

VM: We had our drought and we had the war.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: In the First World War prices were high then, hard to make a go of it.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: In Oklahoma, when the boy was born, the only flour we could get down there was self-rising flour, it had the baking powder in it. Couldn't make homemade bread out of it; we made biscuits or cornbread —

FH: Oh.

VM: 'Cause sometimes you couldn't buy regular flour.

FH: That was during the war?

VM: During the First World War.

FH: Now, I didn't know this, I'm interested.

VM: [Inaudible] but you couldn't buy it down there then.

FH: Wow, uh-huh.

VM: That's the first time I ever heard of potato eyes. Potatoes were awful high, and you had to buy the whole potato always before. And then we bought the eyes at that time.

FH: Okay.

VM: [Inaudible] by the eyes.

FH: Alright.

VM: We moved to Milford [Nebraska] and had drought years out there, two of 'em anyway.

FH: You went into a —

VM: We were farmin' out there.

FH: — farm there. And this was along during the time when they had a terrible drought in this country isn't it?

VM: [19]34, '32?

FH: Uh-huh. And the dust storms. Were you actually in a dust storm area?

VM: Not in a dust storm. We lived in the dry part.

FH: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh.

VM: We didn't have any dust [inaudible].

FH: Okay. Now, your children came along and can you tell us their names in order of their birth and tell us about those—

VM: Vurla was born on sixth of August 1918, on the hottest day of the year, a hundred and four [degrees fahrenheit]. She was born at home. She was born the hottest day, and she was married the hottest day, and we're sure that she'll die the hottest day.

FH: [Laughter] Who did she marry, now?

VM: Earl Gewecke.

FH: Where did they go then — ?

VM: They live here in Lincoln.

FH: They live right here in Lincoln? Okay, alright. Do ya want to tell us something else about her and her family?

VM: She had five children.

FH: Uh-huh. And they raised all five?

VM: They've raised all five. The youngest one to date must be about twelve.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: Two of the oldest ones are married. [Coughing.]

[RECORDER TURNED OFF.]

VM: Then, Homer was born in Irondale, Missouri.

FH: Irondale.

VM: He was born the eighteenth of March 1920. Homer [inaudible] —

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: — a mile and a half from town, to the other town. And we left there. We only stayed there a couple of years. We came back to Nebraska, back to Lincoln.

FH: Kind of like home back —

VM: Yeah.

[Crosstalk.]

VM: — always come back, so I don't wanna move again.

FH: Uh-huh.

VM: So we come back here 'n live.

FH: It's a beautiful place.

VM: Then twenty-four years afterward, my [???Thelma???) was born.

FH: My, that's a long span of between, isn't it?

VM: She was our caboose.

FH: Uh-huh. Now, can you tell me a little bit about what happened to these last two in their lives?

VM: Homer, he married Violet Teller and they've got five boys. And they're all teenagers, three boys [inaudible]. And Verona, she is married and has been; she's got two children. She married Jerry Buskirk.

FH: How do you spell that last name?

VM: B-U-S-K-I-R-K

FH: [???Kurt???] Buskirk

[END OF RECORDING ONE.]

VM: They were married four years to the day when she got a divorce.

FH: Okay. It just didn't work out because of things he did, is that right?

VM: Well, just wasn't experienced enough.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: Not old enough.

FH: I see. Okay. Now, you have her two children with you, don't you?

VM: Yes.

FH: How long have they been with you?

VM: Five years.

FH: Five years. This is almost like having a second family for you, isn't it?

VM: They are.

FH: That's right, uh-huh.

VM: Or a third family; I had two of our own [laughter].

FH: That's right, you did. This is so true. Okay. Well, you're to be commended for taking the responsibility and helping out when there's need like this.

Now then, let me see, about 1955 or six, along in there, you had something happen in your life with your husband that made some changes in your life. Would you like to talk about that now? Tell us about it.

VM: I was workin' on two jobs, working until four o'clock and then I came home and changed my clothes, started puttin' somethin' to eat on the table, and went on another job at five o'clock, and I got home about eight. Durin' that time, why — Before that time, Durl, he was workin' with a fellow, name of Wright. [He] come home and he started talkin' religion to me and it went in one ear and out the other ear usually.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: He told me that that fellow had a book he wanted me to read. Well, I didn't have time to read a book; he brought it out for me. He says, "That fellow wants you to read this book." So I took it and put it up on the shelf and said, "Alright." [I] put it up on the shelf; it stayed there. And finally he says, "That fellow wants you to look through that book and see if he's got a bookmark in there from his first wife." So I take it out, [???dishevel???] it up, shake it up, 'n tell him it isn't in there. [I] put it back on the shelf again... next thing I knew he says, "That fellow... said it was all about the American Indians, that book was. [He] said he wants you to read it." I said, "You tell that fellow I read all about the American Indians in school." So, I put it back on the shelf again. Finally, he says, "That fellow's comin' out to read that book to you." And I said, "Okay." So he come out he was readin' it to Durl and my mother. And they started out readin' about seven o'clock and he never went home until about eleven. So, I come home about nine o'clock; I couldn't get interested, 'n he'd already told part of it, you know. I couldn't get any sense out of what they were talkin' about.

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: I sit there, 'n about that time I broke my leg, so then I had to stay and take notice.

FH: Maybe the Lord had a hand in that.

VM: Could'a been.

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: So then after that, why, my mother and daughter joined; about a month after that then we joined.

FH: Mm-hmm. So when you read it then you really got interested [crosstalk].

VM: Yeah. Yeah, I found out about it then. And it wasn't anythin' to do with the American Indians.

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: [Inaudible] sense in them.

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: Didn't have any idea it was a religious book. If he had told me that I had forgotten it or it went in one ear and out the other. I don't know what [inaudible].

FH: [???Oh, I see.???

VM: I was workin'. I didn't have time to bother with no American Indians.

FH: This was Brother Wright that sent the book over, uh-huh. Now let's see, about how long was it then that you were exposed before you really took? Quite a while, wasn't it?

VM: No, it wasn't too long, 'course he kept right after me.

FH: I see.

VM: But it was two years before we were baptized after we —

FH: Yeah, mm-hmm.

VM: — got interested in it [inaudible] thing.

FH: Okay. Now let's see, who was the one that baptized you?

VM: Brother Newbell [???correct???

FH: You were baptized by Brother Newbell. Alright, now after you became a member of the Mormon Church, tell me a little bit about it. How did you feel about it? Did you enjoy going to meetings in the church?

VM: We enjoyed going to meetings before we ever came out and were baptized.

FH: I see.

VM: We went two years. Every meeting with the Relief Society. I was workin', couldn't go to that. I quit the one job and went to that then, and every meeting. We never missed a meeting. Finally, ... one of the bishops was branch president.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: He says, "We're gettin' tired of seeing you folks pass up the sacrament." He says, "Why don't ya be one of us?" So, one day [inaudible] everybody's gone to church, [we were] baptized.

FH: That is [???funny.???

VM: If he hadn't said that, we probably wouldn't've gone yet.

[Laughter.]

FH: Sometimes it takes somebody to just give that little push that you need.

VM: That's right, [???preferably???].

FH: Yep. Alright now, you had a wonderful experience since that. Your husband told about it, but I want you to tell it in your way. Tell me about this trip that you took out west. Tell us in one way the things you remember about it.

VM: This one thing that might be of interest in there to somebody that wasn't going to church, didn't know too much about it. I broke my leg and I went back to work before —

FH: Okay.

VM: — before I should, before I was released. My daughter went over and took the job when I couldn't do it. I told them I'd send her over so she went over to do the night work, and they — She had to go to hospital so I told — went over to work myself. [My] boss wanted to know why I was over there, and I said, "Well, it took the other girl at the hospital about fifteen minutes to go, so," I said, "I thought somebody'd already come." They wanted to know if the doctor'd released me yet and I told him no. And he says, "[He] just don't know you're here." And he says, "Tomorrow, you call him up and talk to him." So, the next day, why, I called up the insurance company, the doctor, told him [inaudible] I wasn't workin' harder [???on them???] than I was at home. I said, "I might still be over there helpin' 'em out to be here." He said, "Well, if you feel that way, it's alright with us." So, I went back to work then and he said — I'd been gettin' compensation, my wages just the same. So, then we were baptized in the meantime and as soon as we started paying tithes again, why, I got a check in the mail for 250 dollars that said that the insurance company sent it. We [inaudible] and talked to the boss 'n wanted to know if I'd settle for that. Boss said he thought I would, so they sent it through the mail to me. That was supposed to be the final settlement. We always thought that if we hadn't paid our tithes, why, we wouldn't have got it.

FH: Yeah.

VM: Anyway, we got it.

FH: This was a testimony to you then of your tithe paying.

VM: I think the Lord was pretty kind.

FH: The Lord has blessed you through these years, hasn't he?

VM: Yes, he has. In more ways than one, more than we deserved.

FH: Very good.

VM: After all, we're always guaranteed your promises [???will gain???] more.

FH: That's right.

VM: We got far more than that.

FH: Alright. Now, [inaudible], it looks like you've had many blessings.

What prompted this trip and tell me about how you planned and prepared for your trip?  
Unless there's something else you wanna talk about first.

VM: Well, I don't know. We got ready to go, and we get up and go, and that's it. We didn't do much plannin' on it. We had planned to get the — entrances into the temple —

FH: The temple recommend.

VM: — recommend.

FH: Uh-huh.

VM: We had to plan that much. My mother was with us then, so we had to make a few plans with her. She was able to take care of her stuff.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: [???Still couldn't go in and leave???] very well without somebody lookin' after her. And the schoolteacher came along with us.

FH: How did that happen? How did she happen to be there?

VM: Well, she was a teacher when this girl, she went all through grade school with her, a little country school around here.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: So, we got to be well-acquainted with her.

FH: What was her name?

VM: Kubeski. K-U-B-E-S-K-I.

FH: Okay.

VM: She was — I can't tell you what she was now. Anyway, well, she was a good company, good pal. [We] got along just fine.

FH: Mm-hmm. What did she think about your church interest?

VM: Well, she was one that agreed with you on everythin', although she never came up. She went to church with us a lot but she never committed herself one way or the other.

FH: Oh, okay.

VM: She always believed everything; she thought that was right. I don't know if that was on account of her folks or what.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: She went to church with us pretty regular.

FH: What were your impressions of the west? How did you like your trip out there?

VM: Oh, it was nice. We enjoyed it. Glad to get back, but it was fun.

FH: Your husband tells me that you drove down the middle of Los Angeles [California], right?

VM: Yep; went on the biggest day of the year but the quietest [laughter].

FH: Was it the Fourth of July?

VM: Mm-hmm.

FH: Fourth of July.

VM: We wanted to be home by the Fourth; we didn't want to travel on the road the Fourth on account of accidents.

FH: Mm-hmm. You didn't have any accidents or any problems on your trip, huh?

VM: We had a one problem. We went out to get somethin' to eat one night. We were at a motel that had different colored lights in front of it, and the schoolteacher, she says, "Let's go down there and get somethin' to eat, somethin' for dinner tomorrow." So we went down and saw a grocery store open before we got there we, 'course, took the time to get the car unloaded and get — paid and things like that. So, she says, "[???A store now???", let's go down." So, I, her, and the girl, we started down there. We got down and that store was closed, so we went a little farther and that store was closed, and we kept goin'. Finally, when we started back, we didn't know where we was. She was a pretty heavy set woman; she says, "Well, it can't be too far away." She says, "I'm not goin'

another step. I'm gonna sit right down here on the curb." I said, "Alright, come on, we'll go a little farther." And we went by and we saw a family sittin' on the porch pretty close to the sidewalk. And I says, "We're three little girls who have lost our way." I said, "We don't know the way home." [I] told 'em we stopped in a motel but we didn't remember the name of the hotel. I says, "All I know is the several colored lights." And he says, "Well, it's right here behind you." [Laughter.] We knew we was close, but we didn't have any idea which way to go anyway [laughter].

FH: Now, what town this was in?

VM: That was in Denver.

FH: Ah yes, uh-huh.

VM: We were almost home.

FH: Okay.

VM: But, that's the only trouble, I guess, we had.

FH: I think that's pretty remarkable to drive all that distance.

VM: We did have an experience, too, when we was goin' out. We were on just a one-way road, we were on, they were asphaltin' on the other side, so it had just a one-way road. Well, it was early in the morning, and they let us go through on that one side they'd worked all night on. And they were workin' on the other side. It was quite early in the morning, probably nine, ten o'clock. Everybody was beginnin' to think how hot it was gettin'. We were on the road to South Dakota, clear up the northern part, not eastern, the western part of it. We come up to this big mountain, that was really a mountain, first one we'd come to, really, that really was a mountain, and then we started down and, I said, "Durl, we haven't got a sign of a [break / brake]." And he says, "Well, I throw it in second." So, we threw it in second and went down as best we could, 'n got goin' pretty fast 'fore we got to the bottom. There was no one on the road, so I felt pretty safe. And we finally come to a kinda leveled off place, we got it stopped. And there was some stores down there, they had a store or two, just a little place, probably a post office. We stopped there and we went over to a garage, talked to 'em over there. We drove in there. Come to find out it was runnin' on that hot pavement; it had taken the oil or somethin' out of the brake fluid —

FH: Oh, yeah.

VM: — someway, just like a car.

FH: Had a broken line on your brake fluid.

VM: I don't know what it was, but anyway, they said it was — well, they took it, they had to bleed it. It didn't take very long, probably cost us a dollar, dollar and a half.

FH: [Laughter.]

VM: Here, it was worse than that.

FH: [Laughing] Well, I guess.

VM: But, that was all. We got down there safe and sound without any trouble. That's the only trouble we had along the road, but not anything —

FH: Let's see now, you went to South Dakota, and to Wyoming, and to Idaho, and to Utah.

VM: We were going to see into Montana, but we didn't get to Montana.

FH: Montana. You went through Nevada, you went through California, you went beyond California over to Catalina [Island], then clear back through Utah again. I guess you cut through Arizona a little bit too, didn't you? You went down to Grand Canyon.

VM: Yes, mm-hmm. Corner of that.

FH: Mm-hmm. And all the way back to Lincoln, and all that without any problems. I think that was a beautiful trip! Man, wow!

VM: When we got back, I was only home, probably, a couple days and I took my mother down to Missouri to see a girl down there.

FH: Your sister?

VM: Mm-hmm.

FH: Uh-huh. How long were you down there? Just a short trip?

VM: Probably ten days, didn't have any trouble.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: Got on the interstate, there was a paid road down there.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: Cost me thirty cents to get off of it [laughter].

FH: Oh yeah. Now, you [???encountered???] a toll that you had [crosstalk].

VM: Oh, yeah.

FH: This was something we don't have out in the west; we're not used to it.

VM: I wasn't used to it either. Somethin' new, we don't have it here, either.

FH: Alright. Let's see now, you've made another trip back to Utah, haven't you, since then?

VM: Yes.

FH: When was that?

VM: We went back there a year ago.

FH: Oh, yeah.

VM: For our anniversary.

FH: What anniversary was that, now?

VM: Fiftieth.

FH: Golden wedding anniversary.

VM: The girl figured it out with the church and had a big deal down at the church. Had a honeymoon tree —

FH: Yeah.

VM: — and we had enough money on that to travel out to Utah.

FH: Wonderful. That's the way you pay for it.

VM: Then his sister, who was here from California, so we went on home, went to California with her and then we came back on the bus.

FH: Wow. That sounds like a nice trip.

VM: Had a nice trip that time. [The] boy was in school, so we left him there and took the little girl with us, and laughed at it, 'cause we had a little girl on our honeymoon.

FH: [Laughter.] Fiftieth wedding anniversary, I think that is real fine. And you had quite a celebration over at the church, now did you?

VM: Yes; it was a big one. We didn't know anything about it; a surprise to us, it doesn't [inaudible].

FH: [Laughter] I think that made it all the nicer, didn't it?

VM: I called him a 'dirty Mormon.' He could never leave [???there???] quiet.

FH: [Laughter] Alright. Now, let me see ... Is there anything else you can recall in the story of your life that you'd like to tell us at this time, things that we might have passed up or missed here or somewhere?

VM: No, [garbled] [I can't think of anything]. [Coughs.]

FH: Okay, now then let's see, I think this would be a fine time for you to give some counsel or advice to your descendants.

VM: [Coughing.]

[RECORDER TURNED OFF.]

FH: After this lifetime with wonderful experiences that you had, you should be able to counsel them and tell them things that they should try to do in life.

[RECORDER TURNED OFF.]

VM: Well, I'll bear testimony to it, that I know that it's true. I have believed it ever since we — 'fore we come into the church.

FH: Mm-hmm.

VM: Always have believed that Christ was [risen] always believed in paying our tithes, never used rough language, never drank, never smoked, never used coffee, tea. The only thing we had to learn was readin' the *Book of Mormon*, Joseph Smith.

FH: The Mormon prophet.

VM: As soon as we learned that, why, we were satisfied. And testimony of that, 'n that's about all.

FH: Do you think that it's worthwhile, then, for those that may hear your testimony to investigate this? Is this what you feel?

VM: Sure. It's been a good life for us. I believe it'd be for anybody [???do it,???] to investigate it, try to live by it.

[END OF RECORDING TWO. END OF INTERVIEW.]