

# *Interview of Lucille White*

August 29, 2005

Interviewer: Kathleen Evans Lott

with assistance from Karlyn Evans Fowler and Layne Whittaker

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**Kathleen:** My name is Kathleen Evans Lott. And this is my Mother Lucille Johnson Evans White, and today is August 29, 2005.

**Kathleen:** OK, Mother, would you tell him your name?

**Lucille:** Lucille Johnson Evans White.

**Kathleen:** And where were you born?

**Lucille:** I was born on June 18th, 1914.

**Kathleen:** Where?

**Lucille:** In Lehi.

**Kathleen:** What are your parents' names?

**Lucille:** My father was Charles Johnson and my Mother was Jennie Christine Peterson. I was the third daughter. There were four other daughters in my family.

**Kathleen:** And you were born in the Junction area of Lehi? What they called the Junction on Railroad Street?

**Lucille:** Yes, in the northwest part of Lehi. And they called it the Junction. There was a railroad station across the street from my home. And now it's called Railroad Street.

**Kathleen:** And what railroad was it?

**Lucille:** It was the Union Pacific.

**Kathleen:** And was there a water tower there?

**Lucille:** There was a water tower that the trains came and filled up their tanks with water for the steam engines.

**Kathleen:** And there was also a railroad station.

**Lucille:** And a railroad station across the street.

**Kathleen:** And mostly freight trains weren't they? Did they haul coal? Is that what they hauled? Do you remember?

**Lucille:** I don't know for sure what they hauled.

**Kathleen:** Was it a passenger train, though?

**Lucille:** Usually freight and coal and some passengers.

**Kathleen:** And you went to school at the Franklin School that was fairly close?

**Lucille:** Well, it was about one mile on State Street and about 5th West—a two-room schoolhouse. They had two classes in one room and two in the other. I went to the first and second grade in one room and then the third and fourth in the other.

**Kathleen:** And then in the fifth and sixth where did you go?

**Lucille:** I went about two miles. And I walked because they didn't have any bus.

**Kathleen:** And what did you have for lunch?

**Lucille:** Well, usually it was just a sandwich. And I got it at Dad's store. And we didn't have any refrigeration so we just had canned meat or cheese, maybe boiled eggs—not much.

**Kathleen:** Did you put it in a paper sack?

**Lucille:** We put it in a paper sack. We had paper sacks.

**Kathleen:** And your father ran a General Store?

**Lucille:** Yes, he ran a General Store. He sold groceries, shoes, fabrics and notions.

**Layne:** And where was the store?

**Kathleen:** It was right next door to where she was born. She was born on the south side of the store.

**Lucille:** Yes, we had a two-room house that was attached to the store. And then when I was six my father built a house north of the store and we moved into that and had lot's of room.

**Kathleen:** And the store was on Railroad Street across from the depot?

**Lucille:** Yes, the Depot.

**Kathleen:** 2005 North?

**Lucille:** 2005 Railroad.

**Kathleen:** And then at the end of sixth grade you got phlebitis in your leg. Tell us about that.

**Lucille:** I went downtown to school and I walked. And when I was in the sixth grade, I got a blood clot in my leg and I couldn't walk and I had to stay in bed for six weeks.

**Kathleen:** Tell about your school friends bringing you flowers.

**Lucille:** My school friends brought me flowers. It was then spring, and they had gathered wild-flowers and they walked out to the house about two miles, and came up and brought me flowers when I was in bed.

**Kathleen:** Tell what your mother thought.

**Lucille:** My Mother was very upset and she said it was like a funeral.

**Kathleen:** OK, then when you started seventh grade you moved to Pleasant Grove.

**Lucille:** We moved to Pleasant Grove when I started seventh grade.

**Kathleen:** Because your father had a store over there.

**Lucille:** He rented a building and we moved our store over there. And I worked in that store after school, that's what I did. I worked in the store. I was twelve years old.

**Kathleen:** Where did you live? Upstairs?

**Lucille:** We lived upstairs in an apartment above the store. There were two bedrooms and a living room and a kitchen.

**Kathleen:** And you lived there until you were sixteen or seventeen?

**Lucille:** I was sixteen or seventeen, yes.

**Kathleen:** You moved back to Lehi.

**Lucille:** I moved back to Lehi.

**Kathleen:** And your father ran the store again.

**Lucille:** I had another year of school to go to and I told my Mother I didn't want to go and she made me go anyway. And I graduated.

**Kathleen:** And you were glad you did?

**Lucille:** And I was glad.

**Kathleen:** But she didn't enjoy living in that part of Lehi. You didn't enjoy living up there.

**Lucille:** No, I liked Pleasant Grove because we were close to the school and everything that was going on. We lived on Main Street.

**Kathleen:** Didn't people kinda look down on people that lived in that part of town—in the Junction?

**Lucille:** Yes. They did. They didn't think we were very good people. But one day a group of us were out playing and the other group decided they's gonna knock us down and they did. And after it was over one of the boys, Dean Worlton, he was the President of the Class, he said he was sorry that had happened.

**Kathleen:** And when your granddaughter, Annette, moved up there in a nice subdivision do you remember what you said?

**Lucille:** No.

**Kathleen:** Oh, you said, "I don't know why anybody would want to live up in that part of town?"

**Lucille:** I thought we were at the end of the world when we lived there. It was two miles from town—seemed a long ways.

**Kathleen:** Well I said to her, "Are you going to tell 'em that you had to walk to school both ways, uphill both directions in the snow bare-footed?" She said, "No I didn't."

**Lucille:** But I did walk in the snow a lot.

**Kathleen:** Seemed like it.

**Layne:** Does she remember why that part of town was started? Why it was so different?

**Kathleen:** The Railroad.

**Lucille:** The Railroad.

**Kathleen:** It was the railroad that made the difference. But that's where your grandpa had a store and lived out back.

**Lucille:** My Grandfather started the store

**Kathleen:** Her Grandfather came to Lehi. In fact he walked across the plains. Her Grandfather, also, when he was about 7 years old.

**Layne:** And what was his name?

**Kathleen:** His name was Charles Johnson also.

**Layne:** Okay.

**Kathleen:** Charles Ferdinand Johnson. And he settled in that area of Lehi and also had a store. But the railroad was an important part of that part of town. The people would come and work for the railroad. He worked on the railroad, didn't he, and also your father worked on the railroad too, didn't he?

**Lucille:** Yes, and then he took care of the store.

**Kathleen:** There were a lot of good people up there. You don't know why people felt that way, because there were a lot of good people up there.

**Lucille:** There were a lot of nice people.

**Karlyn:** When the train stopped people would come to the store and buy things.

**Lucille:** We did real well running the store. We had quite a bit of money.

**Kathleen:** I thought she told me they brought white bread on the train but she doesn't remember that so I don't know if that's right or not.

**Lucille:** I don't either. I can remember a truck coming up and bringing bread to sell in the store, but I don't remember the train ever doing that.

**Kathleen:** But the people that worked on the train would come to the store and buy things.

**Lucille:** Yes.

**Kathleen:** And tell them that your Dad could get things, especially during World War II—couldn't he—for the store that most people couldn't get.

**Lucille:** He did. He would go to Salt Lake and we had things that other stores didn't have because there was, what did they call it?

**Kathleen:** Rations on food and gas, shoes, tires.

**Lucille:** Rationing during the war. But he could get some things not available at other stores and people would come up to his store and shop.

**Kathleen:** A lot of people really remember going to the store. A lot of people say, "Oh, I went to your grandpa's store or your dad's store."

**Lucille:** They did.

**Kathleen:** People came from all over town.

**Layne:** Please repeat what you said.

**Karlyn:** Every area in Lehi had it's own store. The Third Ward had one, the Fourth Ward did, the Second Ward had a little store by the park—by Wines Park. The First Ward had stores mostly downtown.

**Kathleen:** There was a store over by the Rodeo Grounds.

**Karlyn:** Over by the Rodeo Grounds, too.

**Kathleen:** What do you remember about the food that Grandpa sold in the store?

**Lucille:** Well, I can remember that there was no refrigeration and everything you had, had to be heated or bottled. We couldn't keep any fresh meat or anything like that. And I'd take a lunch to school. It was meat or cheese or boiled egg or something like that. Nothing was fresh. I remember one of my girlfriends had bologna and I wished I could have bologna.

**Kathleen:** I can remember the vinegar barrel. Do you remember that?

**Lucille:** Yes.

**Kathleen:** The great big barrel and then you would pump out, is that what you did? People would bring their own bottle.

**Lucille:** Yes. And we'd fill their jug from the barrel.

**Kathleen:** Another thing, you always had a lot of candy—she always had a sweet tooth—but Grandpa did too, right?

**Lucille:** Yes, they told me I could have anything I wanted and I ate a lot of candy. But I wouldn't eat my meal after that. I wouldn't be hungry. I ate a lot of candy.

**Kathleen:** Can you think of some family activities that you had?

**Lucille:** We used to sit on the porch at night and we'd play with balls and throw them over the house. We had a big front yard and between our house and the railroad track. We would play out there.

**Kathleen:** So what did you do with your parents? You went fishing a lot, didn't you?

**Lucille:** Yes we went fishing.

**Kathleen:** Was the store closed on Monday?

**Lucille:** It was closed on a Wednesday afternoon. Every week it was closed Wednesday afternoon and we'd take a trip either to Saratoga or to the canyon—we'd take a lunch.

**Layne:** Can you tell us about Saratoga?

**Lucille:** Oh, it was fun. We'd go swimming and take a picnic lunch to eat at the bowery and it's still there. There was tables—a place to eat that's covered. It was fun to go there.

**Kathleen:** One of the swimming pools was a covered swimming pool and had a big dance floor.

**Lucille:** Yes, we used to go to the dances out there.

**Kathleen:** All right, so how old were you when you were married?

**Lucille:** I was twenty when I was married.

**Kathleen:** And then she had five children.

**Lucille:** I had five children—four girls and one boy. And my husband was killed March 20, 1954. My youngest was only two and a half or so. Karlyn was married about three or four months before that, but I was left with four children to raise.

**Kathleen:** At this time we lived on 3rd North and 2nd West.

**Lucille:** Yes, we moved in 1944 and bought a house from my husband's uncle John Evans, which was about a block south on 2nd West in Lehi.

**Kathleen:** But you were lucky that when Dad was killed that your house was paid for. They'd paid cash for it. Tell about that. He worked at Geneva.

**Lucille:** He was an ironworker and he helped build Geneva Steel Plant and he had a little money saved up so we bought a house.

**Kathleen:** For three thousand dollars.

**Lucille:** Yes, we paid three thousand dollars.

**Layne:** How was he killed? Was it an accident?

**Lucille:** He was crossing the street and a car hit him. He was killed instantly.

**Layne:** Could I get you to introduce yourself quickly?

**Karlyn:** OK, I'm Karlyn Evans Fowler. I'm the oldest in the family. So after our dad was killed then you stayed home and took care of the kids until...

**Lucille:** When my youngest daughter was old enough to be in school I got a job at the Evans' Café and worked there for about a year and a half. And while I was working there, Mayor Westring would come in and he asked me one day if I'd like to work at the city offices. Someone was retiring so he said to put my application in, so I did and I got the job. And I went to work there. There was a lady that—she was the city Treasurer and she worked there for about a year and a half after I had come and she quit—so they put me in as Lehi's City Treasurer, and I was the Treasurer for about fourteen-and-a-half years. And I worked under four different Mayors. I liked Mayor Westring, he was a good man, and Morris Clark, he was very good. And then we had Calvin Swenson and then Evan College, and he was there when I retired.

**Karlyn:** Do you remember what you got paid, an hour?

**Lucille:** I don't remember that. But I remember—I remember it was more than the Café and I was glad to have a better job.

**Karlyn:** Well, it was hard work. But it wasn't a lot of money, was it?

**Lucille:** No.

**Karlyn:** And how many people were in the city when you started working?

**Lucille:** I think we used to send out about 500 bills every month.

**Kathleen:** And she did it all. She sent all the bills.

**Lucille:** We had a machine that would make up the bills and a sheet per family. And I would do the postage after they had paid and I would post the amount they had paid.

**Layne:** So what can you remember—the differences in Lehi while you worked there, from when you started to when you retired?

**Lucille:** Well, it didn't change a lot while I was there. But it has certainly changed now.

**Layne:** What were some of your fond memories working there?

**Lucille:** Oh, I liked working for the city. Ned Wilson, he was very good. And just before I retired, Ned quit and took another job and they put another person in his place that I didn't get along as well with.

**Kathleen:** Did you tell him that the money always balanced?

**Lucille:** Yes, I would take money to the bank every day that we would count and the register would tell us how much was taken and we'd have to balance the amount taken and I'd have to take it every day to the bank.

**Kathleen:** And then in fourteen-and-a-half years it always balanced, didn't it?

**Lucille:** It did.

**Kathleen:** Even today, she can balance her checkbook, and it's got to be to the penny. She had a lot of good skills. Her dad was like that, in the store. He could figure out faster than the cash register could or adding machine.

**Lucille:** He was very good with numbers.

**Kathleen:** And Mother is like that, too, aren't you—very good at numbers?

**Lucille:** Well, I used to be, but I'm not anymore.

**Karlyn:** It was one of your talents, wasn't it?

**Layne:** Can we ask about the Depression? I understand she had just been married about three or four years before the Depression started?

**Kathleen:** I think it started before she was married.

**Lucille:** Yes, there was a Depression on.

**Karlyn:** Her father was called on a mission during the Depression and her Mother and the girls were left to run the store in Pleasant Grove. They worried that they wouldn't get the store running good and they figured out why it wasn't. They thought it was their fault but it was really the Depression.

**Lucille:** When I was married we were poor. We raised a garden so we could eat, and we had a cow and that's what we did.

**Layne:** So you see young people today. Is there any difference between when you got married and today?

**Lucille:** Oh my goodness, I should say.

**Layne:** How about telling us some of the good parts and the bad parts where you see a difference?

**Lucille:** Well, I think the young people have so much more than we had. They want something as good as their parents had. We tried to get a long with what we could get.

**Kathleen:** You were never in debt.

**Lucille:** No, we never were in debt. My husband worked at the sugar factory for thirty-five cents an hour.

**Kathleen:** And he also worked on WPA projects, didn't he?

**Lucille:** That was before we were married.

**Kathleen:** Oh, he didn't after you were married?

**Lucille:** No. He worked there before.

**Karlyn:** And wasn't the dam up in American Fork Canyon, a WPA project?

**Kathleen:** He worked on dams in Garfield, didn't he? Grandpa?

**Lucille:** Yes.

**Kathleen:** He got work, anyway.

**Lucille:** We lived in Plymouth, Utah for awhile and we lived in Tremonton for awhile while he worked on the dams.

**Kathleen:** But she bottled everything we ate basically.

**Lucille:** I bottled a hundred bottles or quarts of peaches every year and had almost all kinds of fruit and tomatoes and that's what we'd eat in wintertime.

**Kathleen:** Tell about the clothes.

**Lucille:** Yes, I sewed.

**Kathleen:** With the treadle machine?

**Lucille:** Yes. It was.

**Kathleen:** She made both of our wedding dresses on her treadle machine, didn't you?

**Lucille:** Yes.

**Layne:** Now explain the treadle machine.

**Kathleen:** The treadle? Not any power—just your foot, is that what they're called? That's what we called it.

**Layne:** Yes, that's what they were called.

**Kathleen:** Not a power one. She churned butter a little bit when you had a cow, didn't you?

**Lucille:** Yes, I did.

**Kathleen:** And had chickens.

**Lucille:** I don't think we had any chickens.

**Kathleen:** Oh, we didn't have any chickens? We had a chicken coop.

**Lucille:** Grandpa had chickens but I don't think we had chickens. I can't remember.

**Layne:** So what's one of your fondest memories growing up?

**Lucille:** I can't remember. I'm too old for remembering all this.

**Layne:** Oh, you're doing great.

**Kathleen:** Her sisters were her greatest friends—doing things with her sisters. We always did ev-

erything with her sisters, you know, our cousins. We'd get together all the time. Don't you think that was your fondest memory?

**Lucille:** Yes.

**Kathleen:** And her parents were very good to her and her kids. They'd take us to the Lagoon and the canyon and to a lot of family reunions. Were they fun memories?

**Lucille:** Yes, they were. They were fun.

**Kathleen:** We went up American Fork Canyon, up to the top of the Loop? Do you remember that? Scared me to death, that narrow road?

**Lucille:** Yes, that was scary.

**Kathleen:** They took a lot of time for recreation and family time, Grandma and Grandpa Johnson did, didn't they? They worked hard all week but then they'd take the afternoon off.

**Layne:** What were you two's favorite stories growing up when you were young about your mom?

**Karlyn:** Well, she liked us to look nice. Our Dad went and got an old building, I think from Geneva, and brought it up to our house. We used that as a playhouse and we had fun. We were constantly dressing up and changing clothes. I think what we did was important to her and we just learned to enjoy clothes.

**Kathleen:** We're just seventeen months apart, and then our brother is six years younger than I am, so we were just kind of raised like twins. I wasn't taller than Karlyn but I was always heavier and we were pretty close to the same size so we really looked like twins and she always dressed us alike. And we never went out of the house when our hair wasn't curled and our shoes shined and in cute dresses. And we had white long stockings and white shoes and she always had us look really nice. She always spent a lot of time making our clothes and I think that was maybe your greatest pleasure in life, wasn't it?

**Lucille:** Yes, I think my children were.

**Kathleen:** Her children—spending time with them and having us look good and teaching us to work. Every Saturday we had to clean the house. We had work to do, which is good. We had things to do—we always did the dishes every

night. We always fought, but we did it. You don't remember us fighting?

**Lucille:** No.

**Karlyn:** I'm glad you don't.

**Kathleen:** Had to remind you about that. She doesn't remember so we don't have to. Is there anything else that you can think of?

**Layne:** How old were you two when your father passed away?

**Karlyn:** I was eighteen.

**Kathleen:** And I was seventeen.

**Layne:** What do you remember about the time right after?

**Karlyn:** I think we were too involved in our own lives. It was sad.

**Kathleen:** It was sad for the younger children too. But our father was an alcoholic and he wasn't home very much. So, in a way it wasn't, I mean he provided for us, but as far as being home, he wasn't there much.

**Karlyn:** He worked hard but he didn't go lots of places with us or anything.

**Kathleen:** Our Grandma and Grandpa were the ones that would take us places. I mean, he never went with us to Lagoon or the canyon or anything like that. He was either to work or with his friends. So it wasn't a big deal. And then her parents, you know, stepped in and took over the father figure role with the kids. And I was married a year later.

**Layne:** And you were already married.

**Kathleen:** She was already married. But we did help her a lot with the younger kids and took them places.





