

# *Interview of Vera Bullock*

September 19, 2005

Interviewer: Susan Whittaker

with assistance from Layne Whittaker and Neldon Bullock

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**Susan:** We are interviewing Vera Bullock. It is September 19, 2005. Vera would you first of all tell us your name and when you were born and where, and just a little bit about you?

**Vera:** Vera Brown Bullock.

**Susan:** When were you born?

**Vera:** 21st of November 1915.

**Susan:** Where were you born?

**Vera:** Lehi. In the house where Neldon lives now, but they tore down the old house.

**Susan:** What was that house like?

**Vera:** Yes, I was born at home—cold, it was cold they say.

**Susan:** What was the house like that you grew up in ?

**Vera:** My Dad built it and we lived up at the farther end of Lehi. We had to hook up a horse to come to Lehi then.

**Susan:** How many miles were you outside of Lehi?

**Vera:** About two miles.

**Susan:** What was the house made out of?

**Vera:** Wood on the outside and plaster. They used lathe.

**Susan:** How did you heat it?

**Vera:** With a cooking stove in the kitchen and a pot-bellied stove. It was a fancy pot-bellied stove in one room. The bedrooms were cold.

**Susan:** Why were they cold?

**Vera:** No stove in there. Later on we got little heaters in there. They were all wood stoves.

**Susan:** So if you were to think about some of your favorite memories or even the least favorite memories about growing up in that house what would you tell us?

**Vera:** We had to bathe in the bathtub.

**Susan:** Which was rare I think back then wasn't it?

**Vera:** Yes. But we kept clean. My Mother was very clean. She saw that we had a nice dress, one that was home made, but we thought it was nice. I was the youngest one in the family. The older ones had left when I was the baby.

**Susan:** How many brothers and sisters did you have?

**Vera:** Five brothers and three sisters. One died in 1919 during the epidemic in 1919.

**Susan:** What kind of epidemic?

**Vera:** I don't know. I know my husband's mother died in 1919. She had the twelfth child and it was very cold.

**Susan:** Several people commented of how cold it was in the winter. What are your memories of that?

**Vera:** I didn't notice the cold because we had to wear long johns and long stockings. I hated them to go to school anyway. But that the way we kept warm.

**Susan:** Did you wear those underneath the dress?

**Vera:** Yes. We didn't wear pants then, overalls or anything. They were all dresses, to go to school anyway.

**Susan:** What did your dad do for a living?

**Vera:** He was working at the sugar factory when I was born. My brother went after him down at the sugar factory and by the time he got home I was born. They got a midwife, what I know. Then right after that he got a job at Peoples Co-op. He held that job until I was married.

**Susan:** Now I didn't know that you were associated with that at all and you just made me the most excited person in the world. Tell me about the People's Co-op.

**Vera:** My Dad had to fire that for the show hall that was right—oh, quite a ways away—would you say it was 50 feet away. I would go and see him once in a while. My Mother would always go to the show because we could get in the show for free. We would drive a buggy, me and my Mother.

**Susan:** Was the show house part of the Co-op?

**Vera:** No, there was a barber shop in there and there was a drug store in there in between. We could buy an ice cream for at least fifteen cents and we always got that.

**Susan:** So what did you dad do at the People's Co-op?

**Vera:** Night watchman.

**Susan:** What did that entail?

**Vera:** He had a dog that he'd take to work with him. He would walk, especially in the winter time, he would walk to the store. He was a night watchman. Me and my Mother would walk down to the store. He'd always have to clean the store and fix the furnace. I would walk down to the furnace a lot of times. He would have to crawl in there to get the clinkers out of the stove.

**Susan:** How big was it?

**Vera:** A big furnace, it was coal or wood. I can remember the clinkers coming out those that he'd have to get out of the stove.

**Susan:** Was it down in the basement?

**Vera:** Yes. Every hour he would have to make a turn in through the store. Then he'd go check the show hall and the drug store. Even the drug store, I don't know how they heated it, but it was always warm. He'd go to work, I don't know

exactly, but he'd go in the night. Then he'd come home in the morning.

**Susan:** Then would he sleep throughout the day?

**Vera:** No, not very much, because I was outside with him practically all the time, doing the garden. I liked being outside. I was with him and with the garden and riding the horses.

**Susan:** Do you remember what they used to sell at the People's Co-op?

**Vera:** Everything. They used to cut their own cheese—they were in big blocks of cheese, round cheese. When you wanted the cheese they would just cut it off and it would form a V shape. That's how they cut their cheese.

**Susan:** Where did they get their cheese?

**Vera:** I don't know. The peanut butter—they had the peanut butter put in a little paper dish. That is how we would buy our peanut butter, not in the glass bottles.

**Susan:** Do you remember how much it was?

**Vera:** No.

**Susan:** Did they sell clothes or shoes?

**Vera:** Yes, I like shoes. Every month my **Dad** would ask me what I wanted. I would say a pair of shoes. My brother even said he didn't know what I ever did with all my shoes. There was a D. I. back then.

**Susan:** Did you get a new pair every month?

**Vera:** Yes. They were only about fifty cents, but they were nice shoes. Fifty cents to a dollar—they were a lot cheaper. But I like shoes.

**Susan:** Do you still like shoes?

**Vera:** Yes, I like shoes.

**Susan:** What did little girls wear back then and what did little boys wear?

**Vera:** They went to school in their overalls. Girls never wore slacks, they wore dresses.

**Susan:** Was it a skirt and a blouse or was it a dress?

**Vera:** I don't think it was a blouse it was always a dress. My Mother always had little gingham dresses for us.

**Susan:** Did she make those?

**Vera:** Yes.

**Susan:** What did she sew them on?

**Vera:** A treadling machine.

**Susan:** Did most people have those?

**Vera:** Yes and I still have it.

**Susan:** Tell us how a treadling machine works.

**Vera:** You tread it about like you do now but you peddle it with your feet.

**Susan:** How long did it take to make a dress?

**Vera:** I don't think it took as long then as it does today.

**Susan:** Where would you get you material?

**Vera:** From the People's Co-op.

**Susan:** You brought up that you had a garden. Tell us what was in you garden?

**Vera:** Everything.

**Susan:** Why?

**Vera:** We believed in storing things. We believed in putting up fruit. We had potatoes. Of course we watered it by the garden. We lived up close to the Fox Ditch. We had turns—we took turns of watering.

**Susan:** What was the Fox Ditch?

**Vera:** That is where the people irrigated from up by our place.

**Susan:** Was it a big canal or a ditch?

**Vera:** It was an open ditch. They cemented it after but not then, it was an open ditch. Then we'd have to throw a tin in the ditch like a dam and turn the water down.

**Susan:** Did you have responsibilities in you garden?

**Vera:** I didn't have to do it. I wanted to do it.

**Susan:** Is that where you really had your staple or storage of food?

**Vera:** Yes.

**Susan:** Did you have any fruit that you raised?

**Vera:** We had lots of fruit in the orchard.

**Susan:** What would you do with your apples?

**Vera:** My Mother would make pies and I even learned how to make pies like she did. People liked my pies.

**Susan:** How did you make your pie crust?

**Vera:** By hand.

**Susan:** What would you put in it?

**Vera:** Shortening and flour.

**Susan:** Would you use lard?

**Vera:** I think so, of course we had a cow but my Mother didn't put butter in the pie. I think it was lard. We raised pigs for that. My Mother even made soap. I didn't like that soap. I've even made soap, but I don't like it. I would not make soap again.

**Susan:** How do you make soap? No one has told us how to make soap.

**Vera:** You take lye, I can't remember right now. There is lye in it and I think today if you were to make it they would put Borax in it. That makes it white. I remember my Mother, even when she was washing she would put lye in the water to wash the clothes.

**Neldon:** When your brothers would come back from playing with the Indians she would make them take their bath out side.

**Vera:** I think that my older brothers did that. That is all they had was home made soap. I don't remember using the home made soap because I didn't like it.

**Susan:** Neldon brought up something. Did you interact with the Indians that were around here?

**Vera:** My Dad did. I don't remember them too much. They lived just a little bit over there. They used to come down to our house quite a bit. One they called Febe, Febe Squaw. She used to come down and get hay. She would always say she needed hay and **my Dad** would always give her some hay. She would always put down a rope, in a string like manner. She would lay the hay in there and bring it up over her back and put a strap over her head. She would then pack it up to her house.

**Susan:** Where was her house?

**Vera:** I would say it wouldn't be a mile—from up to the corner would be about a good mile. She would pack it by herself. My Dad would always say that there was a ton in it. I don't think there was that much. She would lay the rope there on the ground and put the hay in it and then she'd put the rope up across her forehead.

**Susan:** What kind of a home did she live in?

**Vera:** I don't remember the home too much. I was in the home after they got it fixed up. There was an older couple that lived in after they fixed up the place. I used to like to go to her place. They moved in and they were good people. They used to come down to our place a lot—this older couple. They didn't know too many people. When we had a pig to do or chickens to do, they would come to our place to help. My Dad would always go up there and help them. We didn't have very far to go for entertainment. I would always get cleaned up and thought I was going somewhere, so I'd go up and see them.

**Susan:** What did you do for entertainment when you were growing up?

**Vera:** I don't know. We would play. They finally got a street light up by our place and not very many cars so we kids would play underneath the street lights when it would get dark. We didn't have to watch for cars so we could play in the road.

**Susan:** Were the roads paved?

**Vera:** No. I don't think the roads were paved for quite a few years with blacktop.

**Susan:** Can you remember your first car that you got?

**Vera:** Yes, very well.

**Susan:** Describe that to us.

**Vera:** It was a Model T Ford. Before that we had a buggy. I drove the buggy sometimes. We would harness the horse. We'd go to town and we would have a surrey. It had two rows of seats in it—one in the front and one in the back with fringe on top. That is the way we went to town. Then we had a cart. I didn't like the cart too much because it was just one seat and if you weren't hooked up with the shafts, on each side

of the horse, it would come back, so I didn't ride in that very much. If we went to town we were always taught to dress nice. Just like we were going somewhere or church.

**Susan:** How often did you come to town?

**Vera:** My Dad used to take me to school every morning. We lived just across the road from the city, in the county. The county line ran just in the middle of the road. Because we didn't live in the city we couldn't ride the school bus. So my **Dad** always got home in time to take me to school, but I didn't come to Lehi to go to school to start with.

**Susan:** Where did you go?

**Vera:** On State Street there was a house, someone lives in the house now.

**Neldon:** It was still Lehi. It was up by the old 3rd ward church, just west of there.

**Susan:** Is that where the house was?

**Vera:** There were only two rooms. There were two grades in that school.

**Susan:** Do you remember the name of it at all?

**Vera:** Yes, Franklin School. There were two teachers, Mrs. Gilchrist and Mrs. Thurman. By that time they were kind of older than me. We didn't have any running water. The outhouses were back of the school, one for the boys and one for the girls.

**Susan:** Tell us about the outhouses?

**Vera:** Well, a two holer, I guess.

**Susan:** Is that what they had?

**Vera:** Yeah.

**Susan:** How was it built?

**Vera:** Built of wood. To guard the door it was built out a little bit to cover the door up if it was left open. It had a front on it that was built out a little bit. The boys' was a little bit further away.

**Susan:** So did you get to go to the outhouse in the middle of the school or did you have to wait for recess?

**Vera:** We had to wait until recess and we would all run.

**Susan:** What do you remember about learning in school?

**Vera:** The same thing. Reading, I guess, and writing.

**Susan:** What kind of books did you learn to read with?

**Vera:** I can hardly remember them. They were about what we have today. They were good books.

**Susan:** Penmanship?

**Vera:** Yes, we had penmanship. I got to where I was really good at cursive. Even today I have a lot of cursive in my writing.

**Susan:** What did you do at recess?

**Vera:** You didn't have much time, maybe fifteen minutes. We just played outside for a while and they would ring the bell and we would go back in.

**Susan:** Did you have a big school bell?

**Vera:** No, we had a hand bell.

**Susan:** What did you do for school lunch?

**Vera:** We took our own lunch.

**Susan:** Which consisted of ..?

**Vera:** Sandwich. Peanut butter and jelly I guess—whatever we had.

**Susan:** How many grades did you go through?

**Vera:** Not very long up at that school, maybe three years. Then we moved downtown here. Our first school was just where the senior citizen building is. That building was torn down—all this was torn down.

**Susan:** Did you go through the eighth grade or further than that?

**Vera:** Do you mean through school? We changed schools, the other school was torn down and we moved over there across the street where the fire station is. That was torn down. Everything was torn down.

**Susan:** Tell me what you did when you started to date? What activities were fun to do?

**Vera:** That's going a little bit too far. I had a lot of boyfriends.

**Susan:** I don't need to know all the things that you did. Did you go to dances? Did you go to the drug store?

**Vera:** Yes, every time we went to the show, my Mother would buy the ice cream sodas. I really liked them. They weren't very expensive. We even saw Buster Brown. Buster Brown came to the Royal Theater. It was called the Royal Theater up here. Buster Brown and his dog—I should know it but I can't remember it. They started selling his shoes at the people's Coop when he came down.

**Susan:** What kind of shows do you remember seeing at the theaters?

**Vera:** They started out with just a piano. It was on the screen and some lady always played the organ down below the stage.

**Susan:** Do you remember some movies more than others?

**Vera:** I liked the show of B.B. Daniels. She was a movie star. We had an outside toilet too and I used to put show pictures in it. That was my job, every wash day. That's why the lye was in the water, I was cleaning it up. I put pictures of movie stars in the outhouse. I had to clean the walls with lye soap.

**Neldon:** The garage was full of old movie posters too.

**Susan:** So do you still have those old movie posters?

**Vera:** No, but I wish I did.

**Susan:** What was a family activity that you did together?

**Vera:** We went to church a lot. We went to Church and Sunday school was in the mornings. Then we would go home and have our dinner and come back to Sacrament Meeting there in the afternoon. So that was an all-day deal on Sundays. When they dedicated the old church up here, have you ever seen the old ward house, the 3rd Ward? I'm still in the 3rd Ward. As many times as they have changed wards I'm still in the 3rd Ward. They had a dedication for that old church. There was a bunch of us kids,

there weren't too many kids at that time—practically all of them are dead. Heber J. Grant came down to dedicate it. I was on the front row, the stage was up and the piano was down—us kids sat on long benches in the front. We thought it was great to have the President of the Church to come down to Lehi. We thought that was great, to have one come from Salt Lake to Lehi to see the people. I remember Heber J. Grant, and he played the piano. He couldn't play but he used his finger. I remember the song that he sang, it wasn't a church song.

**Susan:** Do you remember what it was it?

**Vera:** Yes, part of it. "Down in the diving bell at the bottom of the sea. Pretty little mermaids all concerting me." I can't remember any more.

**Susan:** And he sang that right in the meeting?

**Vera:** Yes. At that time there wasn't very many people—ninety years ago. I'm ninety years old. Not quite, in November I'll be ninety years old. I can remember him coming down, and he sat down with the people on the lower floor. Of course, we had a pot-bellied stove in that church. Classrooms were pulled with curtains. We didn't have any classrooms. They were big red velvet curtains that they pulled in on the wires. We thought it was great to have Heber J. Grant, but I can remember him.

**Susan:** What else do you remember? Anything?

**Vera:** I don't think he changed much. He looked old to me in a way that I don't think he got old. At the time I thought he was kind of old—I must have been. I was baptized so I was over eight years old. I probably got papers where it has the year he come down. The date would be on the chapel.

**Susan:** What other family activities did you do on the holidays?

**Vera:** My Dad didn't have many days off. We got a Model T Ford and we would go to Cedar Fort to see my Grandmother. I remember my Grandmother. She died the year after we got married. If you don't mind I'd like to tell you about that. We would go over to see her. She didn't have water in the house. My Dad took some pipe and there was a little spring that was right by her house. He put this pipe in the ditch and ran it into her house. She thought that was the great-

est thing she ever had. She could turn that little spout and get water in the house there in the dish or the pan. We would sit there sometimes and a little water snake would go up the screen door. She was never scared. A lot of times we would go over there and she would be pushing a rattle snake out the door. She lived in Cedar Fort and it was quite a nice little town. Indians were there. Indians lived there. My Mother played with the Indians a lot. My Mother was born in Cedar Fort.

**Neldon:** That's where Febe Squaw originated from.

**Vera:** My Grandmother, when she came over here to Utah as pioneers, they were coming through and there was a kind of sickness going on then. They thought my Grandmother had died. The captain that they were coming through with them, said we can't wait. We will have to bury her and have to go. They even buried my Grandmother under some leaves and trees. During the night, her mother said, "I can't believe my baby is dead." Her husband said we have to go on as the captain says. During the night her mother walked back to where they had buried her. She was still alive. She packed her back as a baby. During the night they got up and couldn't find her mother and they looked up the road and here she comes down this dusty road packing the baby. They all said, "Well, she is alive!" and my Grandmother lived in Cedar Fort. She became a midwife for over a hundred or so babies here in Lehi. The day that we had to leave my Mother said, "My Grandmother is pretty sick. I think you had better go see her." We were on our way to California, me and my husband. My Mother wrote and said that my Grandmother had passed away. That was in 1934. She had lived all that time. It was done for a purpose because we wouldn't be here today if it hadn't been for her.

**Susan:** Wow, that is an interesting story. When she lived out in Cedar Fort, that really was quite out a long way out.

**Vera:** Johnston's Army came through at that time. She did the washing for Johnston's Army. She made the butter for Johnston's army. They never bothered her. She has an old copper tub, she would heat the water outside and wash their clothes.

**Susan:** What other things are in the family stories about Johnston's army?

**Vera:** I don't remember much, only what you read.

**Susan:** How many children then did she have?

**Vera:** Eight. My Mother was the oldest of the children.

**Susan:** What else did you do for holidays?

**Vera:** It was good to have my **Dad** home once in a while. I was with my **Dad** quite a bit because I was the only one home at that time. I was never made to go outside, but I liked to go outside to work, more than I did in the house. I did even the hay. I put up the hay. During the thrasher time they would have, they would cut the grain and put it in stacks. The thrashers would come around and thrash the wheat for different neighbors. The wives would cook dinners for the thrashers. That was what I like to see. I used to gather a little bit of the wheat when it came out of the thrasher. You would separate the wheat from the chaff. I have never done it all my life, but I liked it. I cooked the wheat. I'd wash it and cook it on the back of the stove all day long and it would swell the wheat and make it. If we had that kind of wheat now I wouldn't mind trying it. I haven't tried it since then. We would put cream and sugar on it. It was really good.

**Susan:** What do you remember eating that you liked?

**Vera:** We had a lot of potatoes which they don't eat much today. We ate well. We grew our own meat. We would always have a pig around November. That was the shortening for pies. I don't remember too much beef or anything like that, we'd eat. We would always have chickens. I remember one rooster when I was little—a big red rooster. It didn't chase anybody but me. Every time I would come out that rooster chased me. My Dad saw it and he threw a shovel at it. That night he killed it and we had chicken soup.

**Susan:** Neldon tells me that you have a lot of talents.

**Vera:** I don't know about that. I have made a lot of quilts.

**Susan:** Could you tell us some of your hobbies and things that you have developed over the years?

**Vera:** I like to paint.

**Susan:** Where did you learn how to paint?

**Vera:** I just started to paint on canvas. I liked mountains and trees. I didn't keep it up. After I got raising my family I spent a lot of time with my family. I think we had more time then than we have today to do things. We accomplished more.

**Neldon:** Do you want to tell us about the lamb that used to pull you in the wagon?

**Vera:** Yes, I had a lamb that would pull me around in a little wagon. My Dad and Uncle was watching me one day and my Uncle said, "You ought to cut that lamb's tail off." I asked, "What for?" He said, "So it would grow." I started to cry. They did and I fainted.

**Susan:** Memorable events—when you think back about growing up in Lehi are there things that stand out?

**Vera:** I liked to dance. There was a friend that I used to dance with. We didn't date but oh did we like to dance. Let's see, it was where the skating rink was over here by the school and they danced a lot. We used to dance a lot in that skating rink.

**Susan:** What kind of music played?

**Vera:** It was old music and somebody would play it.

**Susan:** Orchestra?

**Vera:** I think there was only a piano. Sometimes Carter's Orchestra would play. There were about three of them but there was always a piano.

**Susan:** Were those well attended?

**Vera:** Yes, with school kids. We had to keep a stove in there to keep us warm in there too. We had to dance to keep warm.

**Susan:** Neldon what else can she tell us?

**Neldon:** Tell about the bullet hole where Grandfather shot the rat down at the Co-op.

**Vera:** I don't remember that. I wasn't with my **Dad** then. There was a rat that was there and

he shot the rat in the Co-op. In those days they had to wear a gun. My Dad had a gun. He wore a gun but he never left it lying around like they do today. He always had a dog, it was a good dog. I had a dog named Gofe and Sharp. We had a black-and-white dog, a collie. That was my dog, and he got old and he was laying out in the street, that was when the cars would come down the street and we were afraid that the dog would get killed out on the road. My Dad said, "I think we had better get rid of that dog." I heard them talking about it but I wasn't sure. They sent my sister and I down by the road I heard a shot. I said, "There goes my dog" so I ran back.

**Susan:** Was it your dog?

**Vera:** Yes, it was my dog.

**Vera:** I just wrote down a few things so we could talk about it. I have told it anyway what I've got. The only other thing about the sugar factory here. After they got through the grade we would take the sacks down to the Sugar Factory. You got too much on there now.

**Susan:** We have other people lots longer than you. We are just warming up.

**Layne:** Neldon, would you introduce yourself.

**Neldon:** I'm Neldon Bullock. I am the youngest one of the family. What else do you want to talk about?

**Vera:** I believe that about all I want to talk about.

**Neldon:** Do you want to talk about raising raspberries?

**Vera:** No, we had a lot of stuff like that.

**Neldon:** How about the drunk magpie?

**Vera:** I don't think we should bring up that story. It used to talk. That magpie would come down and used to talk. We had a lot of fruit that would fall on the ground and he would come down and sometimes he would get kinda "happy".

**Vera:** On the sugar factory, the beets would go up to the sugar factory and I would always ride down with my Dad, where the Albertsons is now. They used to have a flowing well there and I liked to drink the cold water. That was all in water then, I guess that's about it.