



## THE WAR BABIES OF WORLAND: ORAL HISTORIES FROM THE CLASS OF 1960



### **CATHY SALZMAN**

Extended conversation after videotaping

Interviewers: Laine DeFreece & Cathy Healy  
Proofreader: Peggy Steele Porter

**August 1st, 2022**

*This transcript expands from the video due to additional conversations.*

I'm Laine DeFreece. This is August 1, 2022, at 10:30 am. I'm in Denver, Colorado. Cathy, where are you as you make this recording?

**Cathy Salzman Gotfredson:** I am at the present time in my home in Cedaredge, Colorado.

**Laine:** We thank you for adding to the oral history collection of the Worland Museum and Cultural Center, located in Worland, Wyoming. We'll begin by asking you for your full name, including a maiden name.

**Cathy:** My full name is Catherine Ebeth Gotfredson – Salzman is my maiden name. I go by Cathy.

### **SALZMANS AND LEHMANS MOVED TO WORLAND IN 1917**

**Laine:** If you weren't born in Worland, how old were you either when you started school there or when your family lived there?

## The War Babies of Worland: Oral Histories from the Class of 1960

**Cathy:** I was born in Worland in 1942, and my family left the Worland area for Ten Sleep in 1949.

**Laine:** What brought your family to Worland and then to Ten Sleep?

**Cathy:** My parents were immigrants from Russia, and their families brought them to the United States when they were young children. The Salzman family immigrated to Canada, then to Kansas, and on to Colorado. The Salzmanns came to Worland in 1917. Grandpa Joe Salzman was a construction worker at the Wyoming Sugar Factory. Grandpa Pete Lehman brought his family to Worland the same year and worked on the Wyoming Sugar Factory construction crew also. Both grandfathers then, along with their families, went to work in the beet fields. They were the stoop laborers. They planted sugar beet seeds, thinned, weeded, dug, topped, and loaded beets into wagons drawn by horses, all by hand. After a few years, both grandfathers purchased land and grew beets for Holly Sugar.

There are quite a number of White Russian families in the Worland area with a similar history. I had three cousins in the Class of 1960 from Worland High School – Vicki Kister, David Lehman, and Max Ogg.

My folks moved to Ten Sleep in 1949. My dad had farmed in Worland, north of town, and he bought a ranch in Ten Sleep. He tried to do both. He tried to do the farming and the ranching, and it didn't work, so my parents decided to move to Ten Sleep. My dad had always wanted to be a cowboy.

**Laine:** How old were you when you moved to Ten Sleep?

**Cathy:** I was seven.

**Laine:** You probably have more memories of Ten Sleep than you do of Worland.

**Cathy:** I definitely do.

## IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II

**Cathy:** But, I do have some memories, through my parents, about Worland, and one of them, if we could go to it, would be the World War II experience. Mother and Dad, during World War II, farmed with German war prisoners who were brought to Wyoming. They were housed in Worland near where the Holly Sugar factory is. These German war prisoners were farmed out to the farmers in the area.

## The War Babies of Worland: Oral Histories from the Class of 1960

Vicki Kister's dad was involved in that project, too, with that farming. [Vicki was a classmate of my husband, Ray's, in Worland's Class of 1960.]

What was very interesting to me is I had two toys that German war prisoners made for me. They made them out of scraps of wood and cereal boxes. I have a little desk that the drawers and the doors open, and I have a little chair that has a felt seat on it that was given to me – and I was an infant – but they gave it to Mother for me.

There was another thing that the German war prisoners did was, after they left the United States, a lot of them went back to England before they went back to Germany. I have quite a few letters that the German war prisoners wrote to Mother and Dad from England and Germany.

The reason for writing was to ask Mother and Dad to sponsor them to come to the United States. Mother and Dad never did agree to that, but in the process, I do have these letters. I think I would like to give them to the Washakie Museum.

An added note about the letters, some were in German and some were in English. In every letter that came, one of their last paragraphs was to thank my mother. The German war prisoners said: "Thank you, Mrs. Salzman, for the wonderful meals you gave us!" And that was neat.

**Laine:** Oh, Cathy, you know that wasn't widely discussed in Worland when we were growing up. So this is important information for people to understand.

**Cathy:** I think it is. The German war prisoners were good men. They were conscripted into the army like our own soldiers were. When they were in Worland, they'd be asked, "Why don't you try to escape?" And they said, "Where do we go? We don't speak English," and they didn't at the time, and "Where would we go? There are oceans. How do we get across the oceans?" They said, "You know we're here." They were treated okay in the US.

**Laine:** Did they live in a prison camp in Worland, or where were they–

**Cathy:** It wasn't a camp, Laine, it was more just housing that they had over there by the Holly Sugar factory. My dad said that the guards had guns, but he said they didn't have any shells in them. Because, again, the prisoners had no place to go – they were locked in where they were.

**Laine:** The people that worked on your family's farm – were they like day laborers?

**Cathy:** Yes, they were and they came from all different occupations. I will give you one that impressed me. There were several that Dad talked about, but one impressed me. This gentleman probably had what we now would call PTSD, like

## The War Babies of Worland: Oral Histories from the Class of 1960

our veterans. He was an art teacher by profession. When he worked in the beet fields, the blood would run down the handle of the hoe.

Dad said to the guards, "Don't bring that man out, he was never the kind of man who did work in the fields -- he can't do the work. Look at his hands, he's not capable of doing the work that farm labor needs." He never came back to the farm.

**Laine:** What did they do differently for him?

**Cathy:** I wouldn't know

**Laine:** That made a big impression on you, didn't it? It is what brought the war into your home, where you learned about what was going on.

**Cathy:** I was a little kid. I was an infant, but it was the folks talking about it and reminiscing about it. The fact that they did send a lot of those, well, not a lot, but some of the crews went to the White Russian farms because the White Russians spoke German. That was their language and also Mother and Dad spoke German.

**Laine:** That was a help for them, wasn't it?

**Cathy:** Yes.

**Laine:** Is there anything else you want to add? Something that we haven't talked about regarding those years?

### **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: FIRST WORLAND; THEN TEN SLEEP**

**Cathy:** I will just say that I started in the Worland grade school under Mrs. Hanner. [Her daughter, Lonnie Hanner, was in the Worland Class of 1960.] I really enjoyed Mrs. Hanner for as long as I was there. I thought she was a nice teacher, but again I was a brown noser. Even then. I wanted to please the teacher and when you please the teacher, they're always nice to you, and she was very nice.

**Laine:** Did you finish the first grade in Worland before you moved to Ten Sleep?

**Cathy:** No, I didn't finish first grade in Worland. We moved to Ten Sleep in February.

In elementary school at Ten Sleep, we had two classes per classroom, first and second, third and fourth, and fifth and sixth; Mrs. Mary Denny was my first and second-grade teacher. Again, she was a good teacher, and she handled all of us very well. I always found it interesting.

**Laine:** Ten Sleep was a very small community, and so the children must have been bused in from the ranches nearby.

**Cathy:** We had town kids also. My best friend, Sharon Bader, lived in town. But yes, a lot of us were bused into the school. You know all your classmates, you know them all the way from seniors through first grade. We were bused into the schools, and yes, they were very small.

**Laine:** Were you living on the farm outside of Ten Sleep at that time?

**Cathy:** We lived on a ranch outside of Ten Sleep, and we lived on a farm outside of Worland. To me, there is a big difference. In Worland, farmers raised row crops like sugar beets and beans that they sold for market. And on a ranch, you grew grain, some corn, and alfalfa hay to feed your livestock.

My dad had a small ranch, and he ran probably a maximum 200 head of cows. We did have a farm flock of sheep that some of the neighbors didn't even know about. Dad had them just for the extra spending money and to do some grazing around the creeks on grass that the cows wouldn't eat. He had some sheep there for that, but cattle were Mother and Dad's income.

## **YOUTH ACTIVITIES: HOW RANCH KIDS PARTICIPATED**

**Laine:** Being that you lived on the ranch, were you able to do anything in school during those years as far as school activities? Or was your life pretty much involved around ranch life and ranch chores?

**Cathy:** That's the nice thing about living in a small town like Ten Sleep. My best friend lived in town – Sharon's mother and father, Mayme and Tom Bader, always took me in. Somehow Mayne communicated with Mom – believe me, I was not turned loose! I don't know how they communicated because we didn't have a phone, but she would always take me in, even at the last minute, so that I could attend the activities at the school. In elementary school, I probably didn't do very much because we didn't have a lot of activities, but in high school, I participated in activities just the same as you kids over there in Worland.

## **ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, PART 2**

**Laine:** What are some of the memories that either amuse you or give you great joy to think about during those elementary years in the small school in Ten Sleep?

**Cathy:** Probably my favorite memory was when I was in the fourth grade, and my teacher was Pearl Bader. I came in from recess one day, and Mrs. Bader said, "You need to go to the principal's office." As I said, I was a little goody-two-shoes, so to go to the principal's office was scary. I thought, "Oh, my God, what have I done?" But Mrs. Bader came in behind me. The principal was sitting in his office, and Mrs. Bader said. "Would you like to be promoted to the fifth grade?"

They talked to me, the two of them, as if I were a little adult and that my parents didn't have any inkling that this was going on. That was what was so neat about that experience. Of course, I figured out that Mother and Dad knew, and they had given their approval. So in the middle of the year, I was promoted from the fourth grade to the fifth grade. That's probably my fondest memory, and the fond memory of a teacher recognizing that a kid probably needed to be placed elsewhere.

Here's another way that being in a small community like Ten Sleep made a difference in our education – Ray was promoted from third grade to fourth grade – that's why he was in Worland's Class of 1960. [See Ray Gotfredson's transcript for more details.]

Ray was barely 17 when he graduated from high school. I don't think Worland jumped kids ahead in grades, and probably here's the reason: In Worland, he would have stayed in his regular class. But in Big Trails school where he went, there were only four students – two in the sixth grade, Dee Anna Tolman (another of your Worland classmates) in the fourth grade and Ray, in the third grade. That meant three all-day, all-subject lesson plans for the poor teacher. By moving Ray up to fourth grade, she only had to plan for two grades.

## **JUNIOR HIGH: 1954-1956**

**Laine:** [Laughs] Did you have middle school in Ten Sleep, or was it an extension of the elementary? How was that handled?

**Cathy:** We had junior high and it was an extension of the high school. The high school teachers taught us, so they taught all the way from 7 through 12th and we were in the same area of the building as the high school kids.

**Laine:** Was it located right in the little town of Ten Sleep?

**Cathy:** Yes, it was. We had extended buildings. Come to find out, one of our buildings was a Quonset hut that came from the Heart Mountain Japanese-American Internment Camp outside of Cody-Powell. It had been moved to Ten Sleep. I don't know when it was moved or who owned it, but for a couple of years, Ten Sleep needed the room just like they used modulars today.

They put us in that Quonset hut. We also went to the Masonic Lodge. All of these buildings were just across the street from the school – we had only that one building. I must have been in junior high when a new school was built, and that school stood until they started the new addition in Ten Sleep

## **YOUTH ACTIVITIES: PIANO, CHEERLEADING, TROMBONE, 4-H**

**Laine:** What were your experiences in high school as far as the academics, classes, and opportunities available to you for activities?

**Cathy:** We didn't have girls' sports. Probably I would have liked that had we had it. But not knowing what it was like, it didn't matter. We had cheerleading. We had our little pep club, and for me, I had my music.

I played piano for the high school choir and I played trombone in the band. Then I accompanied the little kids of Ten Sleep at their Christmas programs. I did that all my years of high school, and so I had normal activities for that era of our lives.

**Laine:** You must have had piano lessons.

**Cathy:** Yes, I had a lot of piano lessons and a lot of hopes from a couple of piano teachers which never materialized unfortunately for them – that I would become a pianist, that I would follow through with music. I love music, yes, but that wasn't it.

I had piano lessons during school, and I had piano lessons during the summer. And so yes, the piano took up time. It never was my favorite thing, but I did enjoy playing for the little kids. I played for several weddings. I played for my high school business teacher's wedding, which was an honor, a real honor, to play for hers. And there were other people I played for their weddings. I have a piano sitting in my house, but I never followed through. My intent when I retired was that I'd take up the piano again, don't ask me why, but I haven't done it. That's one of the things in life. [Laughs]

**Laine:** You did become an accomplished pianist.

**Cathy:** Not really, but the people asked me to play, and it was very nice.

**Laine:** What other activities were you involved with in your high school?

**Cathy:** Well, in high school – and it started in elementary – I had 4-H sewing and cooking. And then in high school, one of our neighbors, who was very involved with the wool industry, talked with Mother, and I participated in Make It Yourself with Wool. I expanded 4-H in high school, and I did a livestock project in lamb showmanship at the Washakie County Fair, I got to go to the State and, of course,

I didn't do well at State because I had never been properly instructed in showmanship and I didn't know what I was doing.

But the neat thing about State and that lamb was when I brought it home, I got to ride in Nick Geis's cattle truck, and that was a big deal for me. And now his youngest son, Lyle, is my brother-in-law. He's married to Ray's sister, Marge.

**Laine:** Going to the State Fair in Douglas always was a big highlight of the summer for 4-H kids.

**Cathy:** Yes, it was. but, as I say, even bigger, was riding home with Nick. That was a big deal.

### **4-H Camp: Dancing, Riding, Shooting**

**Laine:** Did you ever go to 4-H camp, the Varney camp up in the Big Horns?

**Cathy:** Yes, I did. I took part in that along with some of my friends from Ten Sleep.

**Laine:** We did square dancing, and they taught us how to rifle shoot. What are some of the things you remember about the camp?

**Cathy:** They had horses there one year and Faye Schrater – another ranch girl – and I decided we'd crawl on one of the horses without a bridle or a saddle which we did at home, and the little horse bucked us off. All we could do is laugh because we were stupid in doing it. But yes, we had crafts and the rifle shooting was probably a pretty big deal for all of us. So it was the usual camp activities, sing-alongs, and those activities which are typical for camps.

**Laine:** And the Varneys were such a big part of it, Dad Varney, with his long beard, and keeping those cabins so nice for us–

**Cathy:** Yes, it did take effort on somebody's part to put those camps on and to keep them organized. We were out there, a ways from town, and had there been accidents it might have been a problem. Thank God, I don't ever remember anything happening to any kids, so it was fine.

## **RADIO TO TELEVISION GENERATION**

**Laine:** During these years, did you have access to television?

**Cathy:** Well, incidentally, in the fall of my sixteenth year, my husband had invited me to Worland High's Fall Harvest Dance, and my folks got their first TV. There really wasn't much other than bug fights, all these spots on the screen and the program behind it, like floaters in your eyes, but hundreds of them.



My mother, of all people in the world, loved boxing and she made it a note to watch boxing on Friday nights on TV through all those bugs. We didn't watch a lot of TV because the TV reception wasn't that good. And so really TV was never part of my life until I was a young adult.

**Laine:** But you did have reception in Ten Sleep?

**Cathy:** Yes, we did. Roof and rabbit antennas – you've been all through that whole thing, but we did have some reception. There were channels from Casper and Billings.

## **AFTER-SCHOOL JOBS: HERDING CATTLE**

**Laine:** Did you have any jobs while you were in high school?

**Cathy:** My first job was an interesting one with our neighbors the Woosleys, Jim, his wife, Mary, and their son, Harold. The foreman of the Woosley ranch, Bob Schrater, the father of my friend, Faye, hired us to ride after stock. The Woosleys at that time ran a 1,000 head of yearlings. Faye and I have reminisced since then about how Woosleys and her dad trusted two young girls out there herding cattle. It was a responsibility, but it was something we both had done from the time we were much smaller. So it wasn't that we were novices on horses or whatever.

When I rode for my dad, it was harder work actually, because in the spring of the year, heel flies attack the heels of cattle and we'd have to stop working them until the next day. Let me explain, when gathering cattle in the badlands between Ten Sleep and Worland, it was a common practice for several neighboring ranches to drive all their cows and calves to a common area and hold them as a main herd. Then the cows and calves were "mothered up" and separated into smaller herds and held in these herds by ranch riders. When heel flies started biting the cows' heels, the cows would get really agitated, stick their tails in the air, and scatter, leaving the calves behind. Since there was no way to continue the "mothering" process, the only solution was to let the remaining main herd go and gather them again the next day. It was the pits!

Here's something strange. When talking with friends our age from other states, the only other state that we have found that had heel flies was an area in eastern Washington State near the Canadian Border. No one else had heard of heel flies. I've found that now they can do injections against heel flies.

Woosleys ran yearlings, and heel flies didn't bother them. I was paid \$5 a day, and I had to provide my own horse and saddle. I'd just ride over to their ranch from my own.

Harold Woosley was a pilot. One day, Faye and I had finished riding, and her dad said, "If you hurry over to the corrals, Harold will give you a ride home on the plane." We galloped over to the corrals right away, Bob took the horses, and we squeezed into the two-seater Cessna. Faye knew Harold was carrying extra weight by the sound of the motor.

**Laine:** Have you continued riding horses into adult life, or is that something just in your past?

**Cathy:** That was something in my past, the reason being that horses are expensive to buy and to house, and Ray and I just didn't feel like they were in our budget, so we never did. It wasn't that we didn't enjoy that part of our lives, we did.

## **YOUTH ACTIVITIES: BARREL RACING**

Then with the horses, I did barrel racing at the Ten Sleep Rodeo, and I did barrel racing one time at the Meeteetse Rodeo.

**Laine:** I remember that on the Fourth of July, the Ten Sleep rodeo was a big event. Maybe you can share a little bit of information about barrel racing and some of the other events of a rodeo.

**Cathy:** Barrel racing is where you take your horse, and you do a cloverleaf around three barrels out in the rodeo arena. It's a timed event, and, of course, the horse that races across the finish line the fastest wins. The events that we had in Ten Sleep were saddle bronc and bareback [riding], and calf roping. We had wild cow milking, which was always probably the most fun event to watch when we were there.

As a kid growing up in Ten Sleep, the Fourth of July was a very big deal. My mother always worked a concession stand, and my dad was around the chutes someplace. But as a little kid, you could run free. Your parents had no idea where you were. They didn't know if you were under the grandstands, over in the middle of town, or down by the creek. They had no idea where you were, and it was fun.

The other thing[about the rodeo was when I was quite young, I gathered pop bottles. People would buy their pop and throw the empty bottles down under the grandstands. We collected them and took them back to these concession booths, and you got money for them. So you made money on the Fourth of July, too.

## The War Babies of Worland: Oral Histories from the Class of 1960

Another fun thing that both my husband and I remember was that you always got a new pair of Levi's and a new western shirt.

**Laine:** A pair of Levi's and a new western shirt?

**Cathy:** It was a tradition. Kids just got those things.

**Laine:** When you were doing the barrel racing and competing in the rodeos, were you using your own horse, or were you assigned a horse to use?

**Cathy:** You use your own horse for these. I used my dad's cattle horses. There came a time, about the second year, when I had used his best cattle horse. When we went home, he said, "You are never to run her through the barrels again. You're ruining her." That happens. If you ever watch rodeos on TV, these horses get really hyper, and they just want to run, and they're sometimes hard to handle. They get into this mood that that's what they want to do.

And when Dad would ride his horse up on the hill on the ranch where I would practice barrels, the horse would go nuts on him because she wanted to race. He just said, "You are never to ride her again for that purpose, and I didn't. I honored that because I was ruining her, and he needed her.

**Laine:** How did you participate in the Meeteetse rodeo? That's quite a distance from Ten Sleep.

**Cathy:** That was a little bit different. One of the neighbors north of Ten Sleep had asked Sharon Bader and me if we would work with a couple of his young horses. He wanted to get them shown in public and prove that if girls could ride them, then anybody could ride them. So he asked us if we would ride these horses in the barrel races over in Meeteetse that year so that he could get these two horses shown and sell them. That was the whole point of doing that. The neighbor eventually sold his horses.

**Laine:** You were not only an accomplished pianist, but a horsewoman, too.

**Cathy:** Not so great, but I enjoyed both.

**Laine:** Is there anything else you want to share about your high school years?

**Cathy:** I think, in my high school years, educationally, I got a good education. Probably I lacked knowledge in some subjects because when I got to the University of Wyoming, which is a small university, I found out pretty fast that there were some things I had absolutely no knowledge of. One time it happened in economics when we were asked to read the Wall Street Journal. A kid from Ten Sleep, Wyoming reading the Wall Street Journal?! I didn't even know how to open it up, much less read it.

## The War Babies of Worland: Oral Histories from the Class of 1960

So there were things like that. My dad put it in perspective about Ten Sleep schools. He had been on the School Board all the years I was in school, and he said about Ten Sleep High School at that time, "We get the new teachers who are eager to teach, and we get the older teachers who are ready to retire. So we don't have some, by-and-large, good veteran teachers that stay there to help the kids," and I think dad was right. It wasn't that they were bad teachers, not at all. But they were new and didn't know how to handle us, or they were old, and they were tired, and that happens.

But my education there was fine. I have no regrets about my education.

**Laine:** Most of us are from the Worland Class of '60, and you graduated in 1960 from Ten Sleep. You've come to our reunions because you and Ray are married, and maybe you want to explain how you and Ray met because that's so much part of your history that you're telling us today, and then we'll go on to the reunion.

**Cathy:** Ray and I rode the same school bus to Worland in elementary school. I moved to Ten Sleep in my first grade; he moved to Big Trails, above Ten Sleep in the second grade. Consequently, we have known each other forever. In a small community, even though you don't see kids, you know about kids. When we were in the eighth grade, we graduated from Ten Sleep together because the Big Trails kids came down for a ceremony in Ten Sleep. Ray says he sat by me, I don't know. I don't remember him, but he thinks so.

Then in high school, when we were juniors, we got together and started dating, and the rest is history.

He went into the Navy after high school, and I went on and got my college education, and then when he came out in the spring of 1964, we were married. What happened was that we were going to be married after my sophomore year of college, but Ray was sent back overseas for two years. His orders read that he would be gone for only two years. He had already spent a year out of the States. So, during the total of his four years, he was out of the States for three, so we decided to wait to get married.

I went to school year-round and got my degree early. I graduated early, and I was teaching by the time he got out of the military. I was just barely 21, and he was a few months younger than I am. He was still 20 when he was released from the Navy. He got out right before the Vietnam War, but he spent his time out of the country in the Far East, where they were being trained in case the United States went to war in Vietnam.

**Laine:** Cathy, where were you teaching, and what was your major at the University of Wyoming?

**Cathy:** Again, I would put my education against anybody's education for what I did. My major was business, my minor was physical education. I started teaching in Thermopolis, and I taught in the junior high. I wasn't teaching in any of my subject matter there at all – business and P.E. – because I taught reading and English. When Ray went to college, we moved to Casper, I taught physical education full-time and loved it. Well, one of my principals picked up on my schedule and decided I needed to teach one more class, so I was back to teaching business as well as physical education, which was fine.

After Ray graduated from Colorado State in industrial arts, we went to Farmington, New Mexico, where I taught high school physical education full-time and loved it.

It was a good year. It was probably my best teaching year. It was a larger high school with 1,600 kids, grades 10 through 12. The diversity there was amazing. I learned so much about the Navajo culture, Mexican kids, Black kids, and White kids – four different cultures. What was so interesting – and that was 50 years ago – was that these kids intermingled. It was amazing. It really was fun to watch.

It was just a good, amazing year. And then we came back to Colorado, and I started teaching business and a little bit of physical education and ended my career teaching English.

**Laine:** Was that all in Cedaredge?

**Cathy:** No, I taught in Basalt and Carbondale, Colorado – they were the same district – and Carbondale is where I spent 18 years teaching at the Roaring Fork High School. Cedaredge is about 90 miles to the east, closer to Grand Junction.

**Laine:** We enjoyed talking with you and Ray at our reunion this past May, a reunion that had been postponed for several years. But we had been in contact by email, zoom, and telephone, and we did a lot of looking back at our years during these four days of the reunion. We talked about some of our memories, and you obviously have thought about your memories.

What about the experience of growing up in the Worland area, and especially Ten Sleep, created the most impact on your life?

**Cathy:** Probably the biggest impact on my life wasn't any one incident, but I would have to say my parents. They were very strong disciplinarians. I did not get to do a lot of things that kids did in high school. But, on the other hand, I had a lot of freedom right there in my immediate community. Mother was a perfectionist, so everything had to be correct for her.

My dad didn't talk to us very much, but when he talked to me, he talked about things that were really relevant for a teenager, and he made me understand something from a different viewpoint. So probably my parents had the most influence on me, and I'm appreciative of what they did.

**Laine:** Is there anything that we haven't covered that you would like to share?

## **IMPACT OF GROWING UP IN TEN SLEEP**

**Cathy:** I would like to talk about a couple of things in the town of Ten Sleep itself. When we were there for Ray's 62nd class reunion a few months ago, and we were talking about memories, we all shared that we tended to grow up happy. We were happy, and I would say if kids weren't happy at that time, they were crazy because things were easy. We had responsibilities, but they weren't overwhelming, and we didn't have some of the problems that kids have to face today that, thank God, we didn't have to face. If kids didn't grow up happy, it was their problem.

The other thing is, we had townspeople that were really good for our community. Leo Rhodes ran a hardware, clothing, and general store. Florence Shriver was kind of a grumpy lady, but she had the soda fountain and the post office at the back of her store. She had a knick-knack store. George McFarlane gave a sense of community because he kept a grocery store open for years so that people could go to get their groceries, Spec Larose had a little hamburger joint on a side street, and we kids would go there at lunch. It was only half a block from the school, and we'd buy a candy bar. He never disciplined kids or told them to get out of his store. He just let us wander around. So the townspeople in Ten Sleep were very kind to us.

**Laine:** Thank you for sharing that. Before we close, I'm going to ask Cathy Healy, who's been doing the recording, if she has any questions or clarification she'd like us to do.

## **FAMILY HISTORY > VOLGA GERMANS TO WASHAKIE COUNTY**

**Cathy Healy:** Cathy, thank you. I'm wondering about your term "White Russians" because I always heard "Volga Germans." Are those the same groups, or are they different?

**Cathy:** That's the same group. They all came over from the same area. Catherine the Great, when she went into Russia, took part of her German citizens with her. They were peasants in the Volga River area, but they became Russian citizens. If you read some books, they're called White Russians. One of my cousins, in

particular, never said “White Russians.” She always said the “Volga peasants,” but they were Russian citizens through their migration from Germany. My grandfather and grandmother and my parents were Russian citizens. Mother and Dad came over as small children, and they had to be naturalized in the United States.

By the way, Mother was named Catherine, I think after Catherine the Great, and I was named after Mother.

I don't know why my mother's side of the family left Russia. My dad's side of the family left Russia because my great-grandfather told my granddad that a revolution was coming and to take his family and move to the US. One of my grandfather's brothers came with the family and returned to Russia, and they never made contact with that side of the family again. Communication would have been difficult to impossible. They would have gone through World War I, the Bolshevik (Communist). Revolution, Stalin's purges during the '20s and 30s, World War II, and the Cold War.

### **German Prisoners of War in Worland**

**Cathy Healy:** Do you have any idea how many German POWs were around Worland? Did your parents ever say it was a 100 or 200, or 50, or any sense of how many there were?

**Cathy:** No, they never did say, and I didn't know and, again, because, see, I was a baby, and all of this came by hearsay through my folks. I don't know how many of them there were, but many of the well-known farmers in that area used their labor.

Vicki Kister said—we were talking about it at the reunion—“Oh, Dad talked about that, too,” for the Kister farms, and I'm just making assumptions, but the Webers probably did, and the Scheuermans probably did, but I really don't know. [David Scheuermann was in the Worland Class of '60.]

**Cathy Healy:** How far out of Worland was your farm?

### **First a Farm Near Worland, then a Ranch Near Ten Sleep**

**Cathy:** Our farm was about 10 miles north of Worland, not very far from the Big Horn County Line. It was just off Highway 20, on the right side of the road, and was irrigated by the Upper Hanover Canal. It wasn't a big farm. It was owned by George Muirhead, Sr. – he was the president and majority owner of the Stockgrowers State Bank. My dad rented the farm from him. Mr. Muirhead and my dad then went into a partnership with a cattle company which they named the Hardly Able Cattle Company. [Laughs] My dad had a very good relationship with the Muirheads.

Dad and Mother never had money, but they paid their bills. I think my dad paid his loans at the end of the year. It wasn't a big farm. He expanded it a little bit, and Mr. Muirhead built a house out there on the farm while I was little. Years later, my brother, Joe [Salzman,] was able to buy that farm, and he farmed that until his death. Then it was sold a couple of years later.

I'm trying to think of some of the farms around there. I don't know if you knew where George Ogg lived. He was the father of classmate Max Ogg and was married to one of my dad's sisters. We were about a mile-and-a-half from Uncle George.

**Cathy Healy:** Whereabouts was your ranch by Ten Sleep? How far out, and in which direction?

**Cathy:** We were approximately 12 miles south of Ten Sleep on the Nowood. The Nowood River ran through our property. The badlands were on one side. Half a mile from the house, you were out in the BLM [Federal Bureau of Land Management]. And on the other side was the county road that ran up to Big Trails and beyond. Two ranches above us would have been considered Big Trails, that's how close we were.

## **YOUTH ACTIVITIES: GIRLS' COMPETITIONS - MAKE-IT-YOURSELF WITH WOOL, RODEO, 4-H**

**Cathy Healy:** I have a question about Make It Yourself with Wool. That's how you and I met each other, the only two Cathys who were in the county Make It Yourself with the Wool contest. For people who don't know anything about it, why did you do that kind of competition? I didn't realize it until my little sister, Debbie Healy Hammons, said to me once, "We had no idea you were so competitive." Actually, it wasn't "competitive," it was perfectionism. It seems like for you, it was 4-H and Make It Yourself with Wool, and barrel racing. Those were ways that girls could compete because we couldn't play sports – back then, track for girls didn't exist.

Did you find that you were more competitive than people might have thought because you participated in those competitions?

And please tell us a little more about what Make It Yourself with Wool was – it was pretty important for high school girls in Worland because we had a lot of 4-H sewers. Jacque Hampton, a classmate, must have gone to Nationals a couple of times. I think she won the contest once.



## The War Babies of Worland: Oral Histories from the Class of 1960

**Cathy:** Well, Make It Yourself with Wool was put on by the Woolgrowers Association, the ladies of the Woolgrowers. They were the ones who set this up and everything. It was a well-known sewing competition in our area. It was a sophisticated competition. For me, probably because of our neighbor lady, Mary Woolsey, and my mother, I competed.

Was I ever really excited about it? No, I was more excited about being around people. I've always enjoyed being around people and I enjoy meeting different people — like yourself. It didn't make me competitive, I don't think. My competitiveness, of what little I've had, was more on the academic level, and again, my class in Ten Sleep was so different from your class of brilliant kids.

What it turns out I was best at is that I can communicate and make people feel included.

**Cathy Healy:** Did you ever wear the clothes you made in those from Make It Yourself with Wool? I didn't. I ended up hating every dress that I made. [Laughs] I suffered too much, making them to never want even to touch them again.

**Cathy:** I did, Cathy. I didn't have a lot of clothes, but the clothes I had were very good. I don't know if you remember H-Bar-C wool pants. They were lined wool pants, and they were very expensive. I had a couple of pairs of those. I had a couple of nice wool skirts and either sweaters or blouses. I did not have a lot of clothes, so I did wear mine.

Did I necessarily like them? No, but I did wear them because my mother and dad weren't into clothes, they just weren't our bag. It wasn't until I married my husband that he finally said, "Would you start wearing clothes that fit you rather than two sizes too big? [Laughs] And he was emphatic. So you know, he kind of changed my perspective of my body.

But anyway, I did wear my Wool and 4-H clothes because that's what I had, and they were fine. I know on one of the questionnaires, the oral history team asked, "When we left town, did we feel like our clothes were really different?"

I guess maybe I didn't go far enough that it made any difference. I went to Girls State in Laramie, and that's where I met a lot of kids from around our state, and I didn't feel any different there.

**Cathy Healy:** I went to Girls' State. I felt fine about my clothes. I really liked meeting girls from all over the state, but I felt too intimidated to campaign for office like we had to do. I didn't have so many clothes either. I had to share a small closet with my little sister. We shared a bedroom.

I have a question. Were you allowed to wear pants to school?

## The War Babies of Worland: Oral Histories from the Class of 1960

**Cathy:** We were allowed in Ten Sleep, but my mother never liked it, and as a little kid, I abhorred that I had to wear a skirt with a pair of pants under it to walk to the school bus. You had to wear those god-awful leggings that were a vanilla, yuk color– you had to wear them to keep yourself warm. I understood why, but I hated them. The other thing is my mother made me wrap up in a wool scarf, and I still hate wool scarfs. I just hated them.

**Cathy Healy:** Speaking of “just hating,” – I love your story about the sewing machine your mother gave you for a wedding present.

**Cathy:** Okay, that story. I'll repeat it so you have it. My mother and dad, for our wedding gift, gave us a sewing machine. I hauled that sewing machine around for I don't know how many years while Ray was in school. We hauled it around until. Finally, I had a friend who said, “You hate it, get rid of it!”

And it was gone, I think, the next day. I hated to do it because Mother and Dad had given it to me with the best of intentions, to hem up a pair of pants here, or ripped seam, or whatever. And Ray and I didn't have money just to throw around. But I hated the sewing machine, and it was gone.

## WASHAKIE MUSEUM THANKS YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

**Cathy Healy:** I don't have any more questions, except it's such fun listening to these stories. Thank you, Cathy, and it's Laine's turn now.

**Cathy:** I bet you two have learned a lot about your classmates, and that's wonderful. Thank you, gals, for taking the time to do this project.

**Laine:** Thank you, Cathay. Your sharing was so rich, and the wisdom that you passed on and your enthusiasm – we just appreciate so much your taking the time to do this for the Washakie Museum's oral history collection.