



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



JOANNE CULBERTSON JEFFRES

Extended conversation after videotaping

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This transcript expands from the video due to additional conversations.

Joan Walseth Purcell: [Conducting the interview from her home in Philadelphia, PA.] I'm talking with **Joanne Culbertson Jeffres** on May 10, 2022, at about 5:10 pm.

First, let me thank you for adding to the oral history collection of the Worland Museum and Cultural Center, located in Worland, Wyoming. Was there another name that the people called you beside Joanne?

Joanne: Yes, my first name is actually Sally. I was named after my mother, whose name is actually Selma, but they called her Sally. I always went by Joanne or Joannie.

Joan: Where are you right now, when you're making this recording?

Joanne: Currently I'm living in Riverton, which is a little over 90 miles south of Worland. Prior to that we had lived on a farm outside of Pavilion [Wyoming -25 miles west of Riverton]. We farmed around 350 acres and milked 100 cows, while raising our three daughters [Lynette, Roberta and Carla]. Bob and I were married in 1968, so we have made it over 50 years now, and going for more.

We're blessed to have our eldest daughter, Lynette, living here in Riverton. She was named after her grandfather, William Linn Culbertson. She is an accountant and has a tax and accounting service, Berg & Jeffres Accounting. Our middle daughter, Roberta, is named after her dad, Bob [Robert]. She lives in Mitchell, Nebraska with her husband, Larry Feagler. Roberta works at Platte Valley National Bank in Scottsbluff. Our youngest daughter Carla, named after her paternal grandfather, Charles, is married to Grady Scheer, and they live in the country outside of Pittsburgh with their four young children, ages seven to fifteen.

CULBERTSONS MOVED TO WORLAND IN 1906

Joan: Were you born in Worland, or someplace else?

Joanne: I was born in Worland and lived here my entire life until I went to college. While in college, I came home to Worland during the summers to work. After college, and once I left to start teaching, I haven't been back except to visit.

My parents, Bill and Sally Culbertson, have lived in Worland since the 1930's. They lived in the same house, and the only thing we, my sister and I, ever changed was one time was switching bedrooms. [It was a small log home located at 909 Grace Avenue]. My mother couldn't stand it when my sister and I "picked" at each other, so they moved our bedroom upstairs. I have one older sister [Marilyn Culbertson Jack] and we were and still are very close. But you know how sisters are. So, our parents moved us from the main floor to the upstairs. They refinished the upstairs with a bedroom and bathroom, and that was our area. [We loved it!] My sister, Marilyn, is a registered nurse and is now retired. She and her two sons [Scott and Ron] have lived in Lander, Wyoming for many years.

FAMILY HISTORY IN WORLAND: GREAT AUNT HOMESTEADED

Joan: How did it happen that your family was in Worland?

Joanne: My family has a long history in Worland. At one point when Worland was developing, they started diverting water from the river to the farmland. They began building canals and opening more land to farming. There were a lot of homesteads being offered to the public. I don't know the exact reason — I wish I had written more of this down—but my dad's aunt, Mary Wood Culbertson and Helen Coburn, a life-long friend, were very adventuresome. They took a stagecoach from Carroll, Iowa and came out to Worland. The two young single women, in the early 1900's, became homesteaders. I believe the homesteads were given by "luck of the draw." Their homesteads were located thirteen miles north of Worland. They built a house which crossed the line of the two

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homesteads so they could live together [but still meet the improvement requirement.] The house was considered an improvement on both homesteads. I thought that was rather unique. Thirteen miles out from town was quite a distance in horse and buggy times. [Helen Coburn later married Ashby Howell.]

[The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed citizens or the head of a household that were at least 21 years of age to claim 160 acres of land as their own. They had to make improvements on the land within five years to receive the deed. Improvements required them to build a home on their land, live on their land and work the land as a farmer or livestock owner. After the five-year period the land became their deeded land. I believe there was a small fee that went along with the actual filing of the deed. This act encouraged people to move out to this part of the country.]

Aunt Mary was in Worland when it was located on the west side of the Big Horn river. When the railroad was coming to town, it was going to be placed on the east side of the river. During the winter, when the river was frozen, the entire town of Worland was moved across the frozen river to the East side of the river where it is today. [buildings were placed on skids and pulled by horses to their new location on the east side of the river where it is today]

Aunt Mary had an older brother, Roger who also came out to Worland. He left a very old family-owned bank in Iowa to move to Worland. Uncle Roger was part of developing the canal system in Worland. Aunt Mary taught school in Worland and also worked in the community as a secretary and bookkeeper. She also served as county treasurer for years, and I believe she had worked with Cathy Healy's [our classmate] grandfather, Alex Healy Sr. before she moved back to St. Louis, Missouri She moved back to St. Louis in the late forties, and she passed away in 1950. From what I remember, she died of pneumonia.

Joan: So, when did your father get to Worland?

Joanne: Well, my dad came from a military family. He was William Lynn Culbertson the Third. His grandfather, William Linn Culbertson the First, had been a commander in the Navy and a banker from Carol, Iowa. His father, William Lynn Culbertson the Second, also served as a commander in the navy. Both are buried in Annapolis.

But my dad, the son of a military man and a stepmother, had been shifted back and forth to his grandmother, Ruth Culbertson and [her daughter] my Great Aunt Mary. They basically raised him. So, when Aunt Mary was out in Worland, my dad would visit. [His younger school years were spent in military academies, Worland schools and later in life, attending Annapolis. He left Annapolis and joined the navy, serving in the Second Nicaraguan Campaign during active duty.] I believe my dad moved to Worland permanently in the thirties.

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[During the 2nd Nicaraguan Campaign in the late 1920's and early 1930's, the Navy sent their members to help protect the American citizens living in Nicaragua during civil unrest.]

Joan: What about your mother?

Joanne: My mother was a nurse, and she was raised in Madison, Wisconsin and Burlington, Iowa. Her parents were first-generation immigrants coming to the U.S. when they were 16 and 17. My grandfather [H.A. Brunsell] was from Sweden, and my grandmother [Sina Fosdell Brunsell] was from Norway. When they arrived in America, neither spoke fluent English, but they quickly learned the language. My grandfather was a woodworker and eventually ended up as an instructor at a junior college, and my grandmother worked as a housekeeper for other people, as well as a homemaker. My mother had three brothers. One of the boys was killed when he was very young, and the other two spent their adult lives serving their country. Uncle Harold, my mother's oldest brother, served in the army and later as Commander of the Iowa National Guard, as well as the postmaster in Burlington, Iowa. My Uncle Bob served in the navy. After he was injured, he continued to serve as a navy recruiter until he retired. Uncle Harold's sons were both "lifers" in the army.

My mother went to nursing school at Northwestern University in Evanston, IL., just outside of Chicago. She and Katie [Wilder] decided they wanted to do something really interesting after graduation. At that time, commercial flying was just coming into vogue, and you had to be a registered nurse to be a stewardess. So, they decided that they would be one of the first ones, and Mother was among the first stewardesses they had on those planes. [She flew with United Airlines] Her area went from Chicago to California. They would land in Cheyenne, WY, occasionally. Some of the stories they've told about flying at that time were interesting – the stewardess had a small jump seat like a wooden box that she had to sit on when taking off or landing. [Their uniforms were basically a man's white shirt and tie along with a skirt and a hat. A cape was worn when outside the plane greeting flyers.]

While in college, mother had been on a swim team [and loved to swim]. Somehow, several years later, she ended up with a mastoid infection. She went back to Northwestern to have surgery. To make a long story short, after the second facial surgery, the doctors accidentally cut a muscle in her face which caused a facial paralysis similar to Bell's palsy. She was mortified [and knew that she could no longer serve as a stewardess with a facial disfigurement]. She left the airlines. Her friend, Katie had already come out to Wyoming, so my mother came out here to heal and sort-of hide from the world because she was embarrassed about her face being "crooked." I didn't ever notice it, because that's all I ever knew. That's how she came to Worland. When she arrived in Worland,

she went to work at the local hospital. She met my dad on a double date sometime in the mid- thirties and they were married in 1937.

CHILDHOOD: SIGHTS, SOUNDS, SMELLS

Joan: I believe you lived in town. Did you want to talk about where you lived?

Joanne: Yes, we lived in town. - Worland had just opened up some lots south of Main St. and my father purchased one at 909 Grace Ave. [At that time, it was the very south edge of town.] He was a beekeeper, an engineer by trade and education, but he was a beekeeper and also worked at Holly Sugar. He bought our lot and built a log building with the intention of buying the lot next door to build a house. The log building was going to be the honey shop; but, by the time he could afford the other lot, it was not available. He had no choice but to convert the building intended for the honey shop into a home and that's where we grew up. [That is why the house was located at the back of the lot instead of toward the middle of the lot like most homes]

We lived in the same home the whole time I lived in Worland, and if you see it - it's very close to the alley—it was wonderful. We thought it was wonderful because we had a great big, huge front yard to play in, and we had wonderful neighbors. My parents added a large addition to the house in the mid-sixties. Fortunately, the house is still there but it has been changed [in appearance] as has the neighborhood.

I was blessed to live three blocks from everywhere, and there were a few houses across the street from us. Alex Healy, Jr. and Lorraine were there [along with their three children: Sandy (Alex), Tim, and Diana. Other families included Hugh and Maxine Knoefel, and Chuck and Mrs. Gentry and their son, Tom. [Sonja Reed and her parents were on the corner. Sonja was about four to five years older than I was.]

Joan: Marian

Joanne: Yes, Marian Gentry, thank you, and Mr. and Mrs. Bob Gordon were right next to us, and Haines and Mrs. Hall, and then we had the Reeds, the Girards and the Chapmens — I mean, we were just blessed [with wonderful neighbors.] And then south of us there were very few houses. It was all hay fields. Before too long, people started coming in and building homes there. Some of the classmates' families, you know, started building homes out that way. [The Bowers and the Veiles moved to Obie Sue Ave., one block south of us.] We had Sander's Park nearby too. But, as I said, we were two or three blocks from every place in town. We never go to Worland without driving by to make sure everything's still okay. [Laughs] It's our home.

Joan: Now, I remember, there's a street named Culbertson. Was that for your family?

Joanne: Yes, that was both for [our uncle] Roger Culbertson, the one that helped with the canals and Aunt Mary. The ironic part is, we lived on Grace Avenue, which was named after Grace Robertson's family, and she lived on Culbertson Avenue, which was named after our family.

CHILDHOOD: SIGHTS, SOUNDS, SMELLS

Joan: What do you remember about the area around Worland? What did it look like?

Joanne: I never thought about Worland being a small town because as a small child, it was big to us. But, like I said, we were two blocks or a block- and-a-half from our house to the park and close to everything. I went to kindergarten in the basement of a house [Mrs. Cannon's home on Grace Ave. where she was the teacher] that was two blocks from us. The high school was two or three blocks, downtown was about three blocks. We could ride our bikes everywhere. Everybody was very, very friendly.

We were taught to treat people with respect, and we respected their property. If we were asked to do something, we did it. And I think one of the things I remember that you don't see today, is when somebody older than you came into a room you stood up, just out of courtesy. You always stood to recognize their presence and offered them your seat. I don't know if that came from the military influence in my family, or just because that's what most kids did. It is one thing I've noticed that doesn't happen anymore. Most of the close family friends were called by their first name. Anybody else you met, you always addressed as Mr. or Mrs. or Miss. You never just called them by their first name, unless you had their permission.

[One of the other things I remember about growing up in Worland is the wonderful smell of all the lilacs and Russian Olive trees in the spring. They were everywhere and smelled so good. We also had the horrible smell of the sulfur plant that would drift over the town when the winds shifted from the north. It was a rotten egg smell. Holly Sugar also created a stench over the town occasionally with their "lime pit" that was south of town. I do believe it still has an odor when it gets wet.]

Main Street: Clothing, Soda Fountains, Music, Dime stores

Joan: Do you remember what Main Street looked like?

Joanne: I can just almost visually go down this street and name the stores. Every store had big windows in front, decorated with clothing or things from the store. We had Broadbent and Healy — the music store. I loved that it came in — what maybe during our junior high time. [1954-55] We had two drug stores that had wonderful fountains—Graham’s and Reed’s had counters and booths to sit in. You could go in and have a soda or ice cream. They had the large apothecary jars at the back where the pharmacy was located.

Let's see — on one side [south side of the street] we had the hotel, the movie theater and then a barber shop where the men got their hair cut. There was a bakery [Merz Bakery]. There was a men’s store [Marvin’s Men’s Store formerly owned by Al Faye]. Molly’s Style Shop [Molly Eckhardt, owner] was a nice clothing store for ladies. [Hank’s Clothing Store was down the street. I remember they carried the Jantzen and Pendleton brands of clothing]. There were the banks too We had both the Farmers Bank and the Stockgrowers’ Bank on opposite corners.

On the northside of Main St, We had Kelly’s Shoe Store [next door to Graham’s Drug] Gosh! What else was down there? We just were blessed with nice department stores. You remember Sydney Coulsen, she was part of our class. Her dad and mom, Ray and Katherine, had the clothing store on the corner, called Ray’s Department Store. [Their son Wes was a little younger and their oldest daughter, Yvonne was married to another Worlandite, Rich McClean.] We had a Gambles Appliance Store [and Owen Everett had a Land and Title Office.] We had the — oh, one of the fun stores — Ben Franklin Ten Cent Store. For a nickel, dime or quarter, you had lots of options. We could go buy lots of stuff if we had a nickel.

Going east on Main St., there is a little corner market that Mr. and Mrs. Earl McPike owned it. It was a log cabin, and I can remember if you were lucky, you would find a pop bottle someplace, and if you took it into the store, you could exchange it for a nickel and buy a popsicle. Then, you could share it with a friend because they could easily be broken in half. [Each popsicle or frozen treat was made with two sticks and very easy to snap in half. They melted rather rapidly so it was perfect to share with a friend! I do not recall any stores east of 15th street. Wilson’s Drive-In was one of the last businesses on the east end of Main Street Dr. Humphries’ Veterinary practice was out a little farther.]

[Changed interviewers]

WORLAND’S INDUSTRIES, SUGAR, SULFUR, OIL, CROPS, LIVESTOCK AND BEES

Cathy Healy: What about the area surrounding Worland?

Joanne: Oh, the area surrounding Worland was mainly fields. We had lots and lots of alfalfa fields. They raised sugar beets and beans, and malt barley. We had a lot of dirt roads. I shouldn't tell this, but as soon as we could see over the steering wheel when sitting on my father's lap, he let us steer the car, and as soon as our feet would reach the pedals for the clutch and brake, we could drive the car on the dirt roads. We started driving really, really young, but we always were out on the dirt roads, out in the middle of nowhere. I helped him drive out to Pennsylvania when I was 14.

Thinking of the industries we had at that time — we had the Holly Sugar Factory on the west side of town. We had the sulfur plant on the north side of town, about 12 miles out, I believe, just this side of the county line. We also had big sheep and cattle ranches in the area. A lot of the kids lived out on farms, or the ranches and we all spent a lot of time just being outside.

My dad was a beekeeper and I loved to help him. I would do my best and go out and help him feed the bees in the early spring, or go through the hives. In the summer, we would take the supers [beehive boxes] off and bring them to the very back room in our house. It served as our honey shop, where he would extract the honey from the comb. Prior to loading the hives onto the truck, he'd smoke the bees. The smoke would disorient the bees a little and drive them down into the lower frames. [A smoker is a metal can with a small opening and bellows that allowed you to put things like strips of burlap or any material that would smolder rather than flame up. You could squeeze the bellows and use the smoke to quiet down the bees. It did not harm them.]

We would then bring the [honey-filled] hives or supers into the house and extract the honey. The honey that we sold went to Superior Honey in Denver. We had a flatbed truck that went about 35 - 40 miles an hour as I remember. My dad would load the truck [with five-gallon cans of honey] and then we would travel to Denver. It seemed like it took us forever to get there, but we did get there.

The beeswax was also sold. He kept the fine, light-yellow beeswax and sold all the rest. The finest wax was saved until the price was high and that is what helped us go to college. I really enjoyed working with the bees until I got stung terribly, and then I was a lot more hesitant to go out. My father had also served as the state bee inspector for a year or two.

In order to remove the honey, the beekeeper had to use a heated knife to remove a small layer of wax called the cap or capping from both sides of the honeycomb. This wax was then melted down, separated from any honey left on them, and the wax was placed in five-gallon cans to cool and solidify. It was then removed from the can or mold and stacked until time to sell it. Beeswax had many purposes from candle wax and water proofing to rust prevention. The honeycombs were placed in a machine called an extractor. Centrifugal force spun the honey from

the combs, where it traveled down a tube into a large, steam-heated tank. It then was put into five-gallon cans for shipping.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: ROLLER SKATING, BIKING, JACKS, JUMP ROPE

Joanne: I just remember Worland being a big open space where we could ride our bikes anywhere we wanted to. We roller skated [with clamp-on, metal roller skates.] You were really lucky if you had roller skates that clamped onto your shoes which were called Saddle Oxfords. We could roller skate around and around our block — particularly between Ninth and Tenth on Grace and Culbertson Avenue. There was a section that we called the Cook's Corner, where Mr. and Mrs. Cook lived. As you rolled across that sidewalk, it was hollow sounding, and we loved that, so we would skate really fast around the corner and come back to where the sidewalk was hollow.

It seemed that all girls in town had jump ropes, or jacks, or roller skates or bikes. [I used a "sugarball" to play jacks! [It came from the sugar factory. These balls were used to help knock out any lumps in the white sugar as it was being dried. The balls were a hard rubber material and had a perfect bounce. They were placed on a vibrating screen with the sugar to bounce up and down, knocking out any clumps in the sugar. For some reason the balls were replaced on a regular basis. They were then set aside and given to the workers to take home to their kids. The sugarballs were cherished by anyone that was given one!]

You know, we just played and felt very safe going out. Worland was a safe community — and I never hesitated [to talk to someone.] If I needed help with something, you could always ask one of the neighbors. They were more than willing to help, but that worked both ways.

[Change of interviewer to Joyce Taylor Spence]

GROWING UP: PEOPLE WHO HAD THE MOST IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE

Joyce: Okay. well, Joannie, I'm curious — you have such a fabulous history in Worland and we could listen to you all day long. But do you have a person that is in your mind as you were growing up in Worland that had the most impact on your life? Someone who made the most significant difference in your life in one way or another. Is there a single person that you could think of?

Joanne: You just stumped me by "single." I have several people, but I remember in eighth grade at our eighth-grade graduation. They lined us up alphabetically, and when I was lined up, the person I had to walk down the aisle with probably came to my shoulder, if there. At that time, I was 5 '10." I'd gotten my height early

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and I was devastated because I felt that I looked like the jolly green giant. It was, also, the first time I'd ever had any high heels, which must have been half an inch tall. So now I was going to be even taller, and he was going to be shorter.

Miss Sadie Nederbet was a math teacher in junior high, and she was one of our class sponsors. I started to cry a little, and I said, "If I have to walk down the aisle with him, I'm not going to graduate." She looked at me and she said, "Well, what if we do this?" And she switched me [in line] with someone, and I don't remember who it was. She said, "When you get up there on the stage, very quietly switch back so you won't be out of order." She made it so simple, and I know he was relieved, too, because he was so much shorter. He didn't get his height until later. I just remember her compassion as a teacher because it could have been really traumatic if she had said, "Well, you're going to stay right there." But she made it so easy, and I think that's just one of the reasons I wanted to go into teaching, [to help students grow.] So many of our teachers made impressions.

Mrs. Chastain [our typing and shorthand teacher] allowed us, as second-year shorthand students, to go to a court trial that was being held in Worland due to a "change of venue situation." This was during our senior year, and we got to attend that trial until it ended. We took shorthand notes [during the trial and had to transcribe them later.] The "up and coming" prosecutor was from Lander – at that time he was county attorney – it was Gerry Spence, and I know most of you have heard of Gerry Spence. [He is a member of American Trial Lawyers Hall of Fame and started the Trial Lawyers College just outside of Dubois, WY. As a point of interest, he was your the former brother-in-law, Joyce.

Gerry Spence was young, handsome, and debonaire – he wore a three-piece suit, shiny shoes, and he made us feel like we were the most important people in that courtroom. He would stop and check with us to make sure we could get his words down correctly. It just made a real impression on me as a student, and I thought someday I hope to do that for students.

I was fortunate as a teacher to be able to take the students to the courtroom several times, to visit the judges and the court reporters, and to go through the sheriff's office and the county jail.

Joyce: Okay, were there any others, other than teachers that are big in your memory?

Joanne: I think a lot of the Scout leaders that we were blessed to have. There was a little house called the "Edith Healy Little House," [donated by Cathy Healy's grandfather and named for her grandmother] and that was where we got to go to Girl Scouts. And my parents were both very active in scouting. My dad was leader of Troop 3, and my mother was a Girl Scout and Brownie leader. My parents and all of the other adults who were leaders were great. Everybody was

instrumental in teaching us life skills and you didn't realize that's what they were doing. We were learning different survival skills and how to get along with people and how to work with them. We emulated what our leaders modeled. [That had an impact on me.]

I think about my neighbors [they were also very important] — and I feel that we were really lucky to have a lot of older people who lived beside us. They were like surrogate grandparents because my grandparents lived in Iowa and Pennsylvania. [I now laugh!! I say old or older people, and I know that I am now older than any of them were at the time when I thought they were “old!”]

They [my grandparents, aunts and uncles] wrote letters every few weeks], and maybe once every two or three years, we would get to see them, but we did not know them that well, because we didn't have the ease of traveling. If we traveled back to Iowa, it was because somebody in the family died and we had to go to a funeral, or somebody was getting married. [We did get to go to Billings once a year to see Dr. Roy Morledge, my ophthalmologist. We also went to the mountains on weekends to fish and picnic. Those were considered our vacations.]

Those are the only reasons we traveled, and you either drove in a 1940's car or rode the train. Both seemed to take forever. But that was a fun thing, too. If you've never ridden on a train, please do before they're gone. They're fun to ride!

There were many people who were important to me. I think about Ray Coulson at the Ray's Department store. He and his wife, Katherine, took us [Sydney, his daughter, and me] to Denver on a buying trip for his clothing store. We got to watch them at the market where they purchased clothes for the following season. They took us down to the Denver Coliseum for a concert, and I will never forget that. The entertainer was Harry Belafonte, and I can still see him on the stage singing. That was the very first concert I'd ever been to. That was wonderful. I can still hear him singing, “Jambalaya and a crawfish pie and filé gumbo. 'Cause tonight I'm gonna see my ma cher amio.”

Remember the Community Concerts in Worland? Professional dancers and musicians would perform at the Junior High School Auditorium several times a year.

[Change of interviewer to Cathy Healy]

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: EARNED GIRL SCOUTS' CURVED BAR, BAND

Cathy: Were you involved in youth activities, both in school and outside of school? Did you participate in district and state gatherings and competitions? What do you remember about the activities and their importance in your life?

Joanne: Yes, I was always involved. I started out in Brownie Scouts, and then transitioned to Girl Scouts, where I did earn my Curved Bar. That was, at that time, the highest award that you could earn in Girl Scouts. I also belonged to Job's Daughters, and I remember all the things about going to the meetings [with all of the secret rituals and so forth.] One of the things I do remember when we were in school, we had a Job's Daughters drill team. That drill team was a marching team and we competed with other teams from around the state. I can remember being one of the taller girls, and I was always put on an outside corner. I had a horrible fear of missing one of the marching orders, like "to the rear harch," and I'd be going the wrong way. I used to have nightmares about it. [Laughs]

We learned to march shortly after we started playing a horn in fifth grade band. We continued playing and marching in the Junior High School Band. I participated in both the junior high and high school. Basil Broadbent was our first band instructor. I started playing the saxophone and my grandfather thought that was terrible, because saxophones to him meant a honky tonk. But he soon got over it. When I got into high school, Mr. Collier [our music teacher] asked me if I would play the oboe, so I played the oboe during my sophomore, junior and senior years in high school.

I was involved with Miss Stuka and Thespians, and that was always fun. I always loved to do the props, anything behind the scenes. She could not get me to be on the stage [as an actor], I just would not do that. She tried, and I said, "If I have to be on stage, I won't be a Thespian, so she said, "Okay, that didn't work."

AFTER-SCHOOL JOBS: VELTE'S PAINT, A&W COOK

I started working in the summer of 1956 [after our eighth-grade year]. I worked for Velte's Paint Store and sold paint, etc. I never did learn how to mix it; I just watched them do that. I stocked shelves and dusted and greeted customers, and then I had the opportunity to go to work at the A&W later that summer. The A&W was one of our happening drive-in's. Sam Gibson was the owner at the time. I absolutely loved it. I worked there all through high school during the summers. We usually started working just before school was out, or right after school was out, and we worked until about a week after school started.

After I graduated from high school, I came back two different summers and worked at the A&W. I have many wonderful memories from working inside. [I started washing root beer mugs, jerking root beer (pouring the drinks from the fountain) and I ended up being the cook. Claire Matheson was the head cook. She'd been there since it first opened and she was there for many, many years. [Claire's son, Danny, was in our class]. I did work with some wonderful people.

[Change of interviewer to Laine Bailey DeFreece]

Laine: Hot dogs and hamburgers –

Joanne: Yes, our menu was very simple. We had hot dogs, hamburgers, and twin burgers, and on Fridays, we had egg salad and tuna salad. [Catholics couldn't eat meat on Friday.] We served root beer and orange floats and ice cream cones and malts and shakes, banana splits, and French fries. And that was basically the whole menu. If you didn't want a hamburger or a hot dog, you didn't go to the A&W. The other drive-ins we had were Wilson's Drive-In, and do you remember Slurp 'n Burp?

Joan: Oh, yeah.

Joanne: And the Slurp 'n Burp was actually a cafe, as was Wilson's Drive-In, I believe. Those were the only drive-ins Worland had. The A&W Drive-in was new and unique. The root beer cost nickel, a dime, and a quarter. They had the baby size (free with order), small, the regular, and then the large mugs. Hamburgers started at twenty-five cents!]

Girls' Wages: 25 cents an hour, then 35 cents, finally up to \$1.25 after several summers

Laine: And how much were you paid per hour; do you remember?

Joanne: Well, at the A&W, I think I started at either 35 or 50 cents an hour, because it was above the babysitting wage. When I started working as a babysitter, we started out at about a quarter an hour, if that. Sometimes they just give you 50 cents for the entire night or a dollar, whatever they had. But you still had a little pocket change. [At the A & W] I finally got up to about a dollar and a quarter an hour [after several summers]

Laine: You were making money, big time–

Joanne: Which makes me think. The first year I taught school ,in 1964, I made \$3,200 the entire first year, and that was a real eye-opener. One of the things I realized is whenever you were living at home [growing up] and you opened a cupboard, you had soap, you had rags (we didn't have paper towels then). When I got my own house or my own apartment, my cupboards were bare. And it didn't take me long to realize you had to buy those things or talk your mom out of them. You know, I had two or three plates and a couple of glasses and some silverware. I did have a few pots and pans, etc. Eventually, you gather all the things you need. But even though I'd grown up cooking with my mom, I just never thought about having to start out on my own when there was nothing there. So those were some of my rude awakenings. [I know my parents gave me their "extras" in order to help get me started.]

Laine: But you survived with your cooking skills from home and the A&W.

Joanne: Yes, and every once in a while, I still do like a glass of root beer or a root beer float. [My mother was an excellent wild game cook! She had to be, because that's what we had to eat most of the time.]

[The interviewer changes to Cathy Healy.]

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: CHURCH

Cathy: Joannie, did you belong to a church youth group? Do you remember how Wednesday nights were spent in youth groups? Did this influence your friendships?

Joanne: I think it really did. I belonged to the Methodist Church and was baptized there. In high school, we had a wonderful choir. Our high school music teacher [June Collier] was also a choir director. We were blessed to have many kids from our class in the choir – and they harmonized beautifully. However, I have a two-note range and they're both off key and so one time, Mr. Collier told me, "It's alright if you mouth the words." Lol. If I had a strong alto beside me, I could follow it. We really had a lot of fun in the choir. I also belonged to the Methodist youth fellowship, the MYF, and we'd go to girls' church camp at the Circle J Campground. [Outside of Ten Sleep].

Hollywood stars visit Scout Camp

This also makes me think of one other interesting thing, which is when I was a Girl Scout, we'd go to the Buffalo Bill Camp out of Cody [toward Yellowstone National Park]. That was where the Girl Scouts went camping. One year while we were there, this gentleman and his daughter drove into the Girl Scout Camp and introduced himself to our leaders and offered to entertain us that evening. It was Edgar Bergen and his daughter Candace! He told us that Charlie McCarthy and Mortimer Snerd, his two puppets, had been very naughty, and they were at reform school. (They were just being refurbished)

[Edgar Bergen was an American actor, comedian, vaudevillian and radio performer, best known for his proficiency in ventriloquism and his characters. His daughter, Candace became an actress.]

Mr. Bergen took his hand, and like this, [showing a closed fist with the thumb on the outside making a mouth] drew eyes on it and placed a scarf over it and used that as his puppet. He entertained us all evening with that silly hand puppet, one on each hand, and just made up all kinds of stories. Candace was also a young girl [four or five years younger than we were], and if you know Candace Bergen now, you know she's not a young lady anymore. She's aged like the rest of us.

That is such a wonderful memory to have—to have him just stop in at the youth camp.

Laine: What a memory for Wyoming.

CARS!!!! THE EXPERIMENTAL '40s AND '50s

Joanne: Do any of you remember the old cars we drove? When we went to scout camp, we had an old Ford, then a Packard. Walrath's – they owned the beanery or the elevator by the railroad tracks – also had a Packard. Their Packard had a leveling mechanism on it, and when you put weight in the trunk, it would even out [or lift the rear of the car to compensate for the weight] – our car would just keep getting lower. I just thought that was fascinating because they would always load up a bunch of kids to go scout camp, and it didn't seem to matter how much weight you put in the back end of their car, it would level itself out. That's a neat feature of the old Packard's.

We also had an old work car, a 1948 Ford. That was a fun car just to drive it. It was a stick shift [three forward gears and one reverse gear on the steering column], so you had to know how to use the clutch in order to get through all the gears [without stalling the car]. We didn't have anything automatic at that time, so you learned to drive with a stick shift and clutch. We didn't have an automatic car when I was growing up. [Our family finally did get a Chrysler in 1956 that had a panel of push buttons used to change gears.]

IMPACT FROM GROWING UP IN A BOOM TOWN

Cathy: Worland was the sixth largest city in Wyoming when we grew up. Our population more than doubled because of the oil boom. We continually had new classmates from other places. New houses were being built, new businesses were opening, we had two flights a day to Denver. How did living with growth and more growth impact your adult outlook?

Joanne: That's a big question. I did not realize that we were in an oil boom growing up. Looking back, I can see that now. But people were just there, and we had friends whose fathers worked in the oil industry, and my father – he had always worked with his hands – so I just didn't think anything about it.

As far as new houses, the house I grew up in was an older house, and all the houses south of us were newer. Everybody had newer houses, and it was always fun to go there. We loved our little log house because it was the warmest house in the winter and the coolest in the summer because it was so well-chinked. We did have to oil the logs maybe once or twice, as I recall. The logs were not the

shiny ones like you see in many of today's mountain cabins, they were just old-fashioned logs that had some kind of preservative on them. [Chinking in a log building was made of any material people could find to put between the logs. It keeps the air from moving through the logs into the house. Things like a mixture of mud, cement, bark, strips of cloth were used]

I never thought about the impact of kids moving to Worland. I remember when Joyce [Taylor Spence] came in the 10th grade, she just assimilated. Joan [Walseth Purcell], when you came in the 2nd grade, I didn't know you hadn't been there forever, you know, you were just part of everybody. I was either blessed or cursed never having moved to a different town because I never knew a stranger. I didn't know how to meet strangers until I was out of college. Even in college, there were a couple dozen of us from Worland that went to the University of Wyoming, so, no matter where you went, you knew somebody. The freshmen girls all lived in one dorm at the University [Hoyt Hall]; but we from Worland all agreed to have different roommates, so it was easy to meet other people, and that's how we got to know everyone. [At that time, all of our dorm rooms had four girls to a room]

But as far as Worland, we had bikes – you could ride everywhere. We had airplanes coming in and out all the time. I never thought about it being unique or different, never having lived in other towns at that time. Looking back, I can see where Worland was unique. I remember the huge Christmas tree the city used to put up [at the end of Main Street] and the Friday after Thanksgiving they would have a downtown parade, and Santa came to town, usually on the firetruck, and the school bands marched and played Christmas music. Worland would turn all the Christmas lights on just prior to the parade. The stores would then stay open every evening until 9 p.m. on through Christmas. I believe that they were closed on Sundays. It was just something that I thought was absolutely wonderful, because people had time to go downtown and shop. You'd walk downtown – a lot of people didn't have cars. So, you just walked and enjoyed everybody. And that is a wonderful memory that we did have of Worland— all the celebrations and the Christmas festivities.

[Interviewer changes to Joyce Taylor Spence]

AFTER GRADUATION: TEACHING CAREER, AN EMBRACE OF TECHNOLOGY

Joan: Where did you teach?

Joanne: From 1964 to 1968 at Rock River High School, north of Laramie. I taught business subjects. When I first started, I taught shorthand, typing [using the old manual typewriters], accounting, business law – all business subjects. From Rock River, I moved to Green River, Lander and then to Riverton.]

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

In the early nineties, I could see the handwriting on the wall and knew that if I did not get further education and start teaching computers or learning about them, I wouldn't have a job. I started and completed a master's degree in computer education. [I was teaching at Riverton High School, Riverton, WY]. As they phased out the typewriters, I started teaching computer education. [To begin with, we used Apple computers and had to use discs for our programs and then save the work to a personal disc].

As years went by, we left the "Apple world" and went to the PC's. I taught application programs using the Microsoft platform—Word, Excel, Data Base, PowerPoint. We had another teacher that taught programming- that was not my bailiwick. I still don't like to program—so I taught applications and absolutely loved it.

[As schools phased out the old manual typewriters, they began adding computers. The first classroom computers did not have any "memory," so everything had to be saved on an external device we called floppy discs, then hard discs. Eventually as the computers evolved, and our schools created a networked situation, it allowed the students to save to a networked system. Progress!! We also included thumb or jump drives for their personal use.]

Joan: Which was your favorite school? Riverton?

Joanne: My first job was probably one of my very most memorable. I started November 16, 1964. I had changed majors [area of study] a couple of times, so I had to do my nine-week student teaching in the fall [believe it or not, I was sent to Thermopolis (our rival school) for my student teaching]. Right after I finished it, I was offered a teaching position in a very small town about 40 miles northwest of Laramie on Highway 30 called Rock River. I was terrified because I had never been to any place that I didn't know two-thirds of the people or most of the people. [I had lived in Worland all my life and about a dozen members of our class went to the University of Wyoming for our freshman year, so it was easy to meet other people and make friends.] I knew nobody in Rock River, but I fell in love with that community, and I stayed there two years. I knew that if I didn't leave that year, I never would because that was such a wonderful community. Everybody opened their hearts, their homes and I just loved it, and the students were eager learners!

The schoolhouse [the high school and middle school were in the same building] was built around the gymnasium. Every classroom came directly off the gym. As you walked out the classroom door, you were in the gym on a raised boardwalk that went around the gym floor. [The raised boardwalk also served as the seating area for basketball games, etc.] A stage was located at the far end of the gym floor and the school also served as their community center.

Yes, it was a wonderful experience. [I taught all the business subjects, seventh and eighth grade math, spelling and even girls' physical education. I stayed for two years in the wonderful little town, and knew that if I didn't leave, I never would.] After I left Rock River, I was offered a teaching position in Green River, WY and I absolutely loved the school and the teachers and the students. But I found that town was not quite as accepting — because you were a teacher, many people thought you were on a different level [of education] from the rest of the community, and I had never experienced that before. It made me quite uneasy.

I was blessed to have an education [college degree] and many of them, as miners, didn't. When you were invited to their homes, they were warm and welcoming, but on the street, they seemed more reserved. They hesitated to speak because they were not sure you would acknowledge them. This was so different from my experience in Rock River [and Worland] that I only stayed there one year. I then went to Lander to teach at the junior high school. I taught there for two years before I met my husband. After we were married, we moved out to the dairy farm located south of Pavillion, WY. [I drove the 33 miles back and forth each way, every school day.] I continued to teach in Lander for another year.

When our first daughter was born, I “retired” for one year and then decided I wanted to go back to the classroom. I was hired to teach in Riverton. I just knew that I “could do it all—farm wife, mother, hired hand, teacher”—it was difficult! I then decided to become a “stay-at-home-mom” as well as serve in the capacity as “instant hired man”. I didn't teach for twelve years. When the time was right, I went back to Riverton and continued teaching for a total of thirty years.

WISDOM FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Joyce: Joannie, in closing, for the generations to come that might listen to your story, is there any wisdom that you want to pass on to them that you think you learned growing up in Worland?

Joanne: I think, in retrospect, growing up in Worland made me aware of the good in people, and so I would just say, as you're going through life, enjoy it day by day. And life is truly a journey, it's not a destination; so take each day and live it to the fullest and create new friendships. There's always somebody out there that needs a smile – It might be the only one they get – someone who needs a “hello.” And if you do your part, others will do theirs. I just think you need to put your face to the sun and keep looking forward.

Joyce: That's a wonderful thought and wonderful for all of us. Joannie, thank you so much. You are a treasure for us all, and I am so appreciative. So, thank you again.

Joanne: Well, thank you I feel that way about all of you, and we were blessed to have been in Worland.

Interview #2

This is Joan Walseth Purcell, talking with Joanne Culbertson Jeffres on May 18, 2022. We're going to add a little information to her interview because we thought of some things we'd like to hear from her., Joannie, you want to tell us a little bit more about your father.

IMPACT OF WORLD WAR II > BEESWAX ESSENTIAL FOR MILITARY FOR WATERPROOFING

Joanne: Yes, we had talked about wartime. As World War II began escalating, my father, Bill Culbertson, tried to re-enlist, but he was told that he was needed as a beekeeper because it was considered vital or essential to the war effort. Sugar was in very short supply. They couldn't buy it from other countries as they had been doing to supplement the sugar raised in the United States. Honey was needed to replace sugar as a sweetener and the bees wax was vital to the war effort.

There are so many facets with beeswax that were needed in the military. It was used to coat the airplane wings to make them fly faster, to coat shells, and drill bits, cables, pulleys, and anything like that. It was impervious to the heat or to the cold. This wax was also used as a waterproofer. They [military] covered all their tents with it and all their ropes. String was made stronger by running it through the beeswax, so that it would last longer in all their military equipment; and even though the premium wax or the fine yellow wax was used for many things, they found out that they could use the scrapings from the honeycombs, or the second and third-course wax. Beekeepers provided millions of pounds of beeswax to the military for those purposes. Even the canteens were coated as well as anything that needed to be waterproofed.

My dad did not go back to the military service. He maintained his career as a beekeeper and also worked at Holly Sugar during the campaigns. [Campaigns is the name given to the months needed to process the sugar beets into refined sugar after the beets were dug from the fields and taken into sugar factory for processing. Sugar beets are planted in spring and once mature, they are dug in the fall, usually in late September or October. Campaign ran for months — September to February or a little longer. The employees worked three rotating shifts: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.; 4 p.m. to 12 a.m.; and 12 a.m. to 8 a.m. The rotation was every two weeks.] Most of the time during my life, my dad was a year-round worker at Holly Sugar. He also had a business as a beekeeper. He had bee-yards all over the county and worked them on weekends and after his shift at Holly

Sugar. [The beehives were winterized or wrapped with tar paper during the winter month, so they did not require much attention]

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: SWIMMING AND SCOUTING

One of the other things my father was very, very passionate about was teaching young people life skills – skills they may not have learned on their own or from their own parents. He was adamant about working with Boy Scouts, teaching skills like fire by flint and steel, fire by friction, knot tying or rope skills and many other life skills. You name it, he taught kids how to camp, how to rough it. Since he had roughed it most of his life, he had a diverse, knowledgeable background to share.

Swimming pools were in only Thermopolis

Another of my father's main passions was swimming! He was a Red Cross Water Safety Instructor for Washakie County. And for many, many, many years, he (and several of the other scout leaders) took boy scouts to Thermopolis because Worland did not have a swimming pool and of course, a carload of girls, since he had two girls, to swim at the Star Plunge every Friday night. It didn't matter if the temperature was a 100 above or 40 below, we would pack up in that old '48 Ford we had, or the old Packard, whichever we had at the time and head to Thermopolis for swimming lessons. After the lessons, everyone had time to play or just time to do some free swimming. We all loved it!!!

And there were many men involved. Ted Hanner, for one. His daughter Lonnie was in our class. Les Kimsey, (his son, Bruce, was in our class) Lou Tuttle, many of them were Boy Scout leaders, and would go to Thermopolis with a load of kids and we would have an hour to an hour-and-a-half swimming lessons and then they always allowed us to "play" for half an hour or so afterward. One of the fun things I remember is when it was 20 below outside, we could hardly wait to get out of the inside pool, slide over the ice, and get into the outside pool. It was so foggy and the area around the pool was covered with ice and snow. But it was fun to swim outside when it was that cold. Then the hard part was getting up and over the ice bank and back into the inside pool to warm up again!

My dad knew no strangers. After he had retired from scouting and teaching the boys to swim, my parents still went to Thermopolis most every week to swim. If he saw someone in the swimming pool who wasn't swimming, he would work his way over to them, strike up a conversation, and much to my mother's chagrin, he would begin teaching them how to swim or to get over the fear of deep water. And before long, he had them floating or swimming, or at least comfortable in the water. He just figured it [swimming] was such a necessary survival skill, that everybody should know how to do it. That's one of the things that we learned very young, and we just took for granted that everybody knew how to swim. Of course, that's not the case. Both my sister and I had earned our lifesaving badges,

and my sister had worked as a lifeguard at the Worland swimming pool. I never did work as a lifeguard, but I did have my Red Cross certification for many years.

PARENTS' LIFE IN WORLAND: BUILDING A SHOOTING RANGE

The things that my dad did in his life, other than work, like his scouting, were so very important to him. [He was awarded the Silver Beaver Award from the Boy Scout Council of America. This award is a distinguished service award from the Boy Scouts of America. Recipients of this award are registered Scouters who have made an impact on the lives of youth through service given to the council.]

Joan: That's a nice story.

Joanne: Thank you. He was a strong-willed man. Thinking back too, he and Len Jorgensen [and I'm sure others] developed the shooting range out of Worland. With my dad's military connections, he was able to get tank steel to use for the silhouettes or shooting targets. [Len was the welder and they worked together to cut the turkey and the deer and the wild boar — all of those things cut out of tank steel and made the targets for the shooting range which is located in the hills just west of the fairgrounds. The shooting tables were made from pipe, which I believe was donated by the local oil companies. Many hours of planning, cutting, painting and the implementation of the range were donated by these men.]

One of his other passions was that my sister and I learn to hunt and shoot guns very early so that we could protect ourselves, survive by hunting for food, or just for pleasure in shooting targets and skeet. He and I would shoot clay pigeons quite a bit.

Joan: I didn't know about that range. Did you, Cathy?

Cathy: I didn't.

Joan: Do you ever go shooting, Joannie? My dad used to take us out to one of the Mobile Oil dumps and they had cans and things there, so he set him up on something, and we would shoot those.

Joanne: I used to do a lot of target practice and we [my dad and I] shot a lot of skeet together. [Skeet shooting is where you are trying to hit a moving target in the air. We would throw clay pigeons or targets and try to shoot them with the shotgun. We also used to shoot at tin cans with a 22 rifle or pistol.]

Joan: I haven't gone shooting since my adult years. I've had no reason, or time to, but I still have the original 22 that my dad gave me and my brother.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES: “RUN!” FAILED AT REAL HUNTING

Cathy: Joannie, what about the time you went hunting with your dad, real hunting?

Joanne: That did not go well. I knew I was ready to go hunting and we were up with Bill Faure — who I always called Uncle Bill—on the top of the mountain in the upper Nowood and they saw a deer. As we got out of the truck and were preparing to bear down on him, I yelled. “Run!” Needless to say, that was the last time I was asked to go along! I just — there's no way I could kill anything. I love to shoot targets, but I just don't have the heart to kill anything that's living, other than maybe a spider. I can't even handle a mouse. So, I failed him, but he didn't fail me because I know I could have hit the deer, but there's no way I would have.

I think all of us were very blessed to have been raised in Worland. Did it have its problems? I'm sure it did, but as a child growing up there, I didn't see those problems. I was very sheltered, and yet we had the freedom to do most anything that we wanted to do.

With my parents, we were allowed to explore and do what we wanted, but they always set limits and consequences. So, if we chose to do something we shouldn't, we knew we would be responsible to pay the consequence, no matter what that was. Sometimes it wasn't worth having done whatever it was after you paid the consequence. But my folks allowed us to have sort of a free hand choosing what we did within reason. [Consequences included more chores at home, helping to do things we normally did not have to do. If you didn't get in by the curfew they set, they got us up very early in the morning and we worked hard all day long. I do not ever remember any physical or corporal punishment! Their disappointment in me was the biggest punishment!]

Joan: I think that was something more of the parents of our generation, wanting their kids to be responsible, or most of them did. I think we've seen a change, in that parents want their kids to be so happy all the time.

FAMILY HISTORY IN WORLAND: CULBERTSON AVENUE

Cathy: Joannie, I have a question: How many streets in Worland are named after people in your family?

Joanne: Just Culbertson [Avenue], and then Helen Coburn Howell [Coburn Avenue was named after her.] Helen was a very dear friend of my Aunt Mary [and always considered an aunt]. Aunt Helen and Aunt Mary were young ladies, very well-schooled young ladies, when they came out in the stagecoach from Iowa.

They were not related by blood, just by friendship. But she was always known as Aunt Helen just as Bill Faure was Uncle Bill.

Joan: What's your favorite story your father used to tell about your Aunt Mary Culbertson?

Joanne: I think, just — there is no one story. It's just how tall she was, how striking, how strong and ambitious! She had set her goals on coming out to the West to homestead, and to try to improve things. Other than that, I just don't have a story. I just remember she and Helen had been such close friends that when they homesteaded, they did build their house so that it went across the homestead line between the two properties, so they both could show an improvement on both of their homesteads within the homestead rule requirements. That way they would still be able to live together under one roof and help protect themselves from the wilds out there in the county. They had a lot of — I don't know — gumption.

Joan: What do you call it? The strength of character to go out and face the unknown?

Joanne: It's sort of like a small-town girl or little city girl going to the big city today. You have to have faith in people and if you listen to today's news, faith is sort of shattered when we listen to the radio or TV.

Joan: [Speaking of listening to the radio.] Do you remember “Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of man...”

Joanne: “The Shadow knows!” I remember listening to the radio with my grandparents [my mother's parents, H.A. and Sina Brunsell]. We also listened to music.

PARENTS' LIFE IN WORLAND: THE COCONUTS DANCING CLUB

Joanne: I was interviewing Lowell Peterson and I asked him if he knew anything about the Coconuts and he said “Yes”. He and Punky had been in Coconuts. I said, “You are the only person I know that knows what a Coconut is in Worland.” It was a dance group. My parents belonged to the Coconuts, and several times a year, they had dances in the old Community Hall, where they would have a live band or orchestra, and they would dance. A couple of times a year they had a formal dance, a dinner and a dance, and that was something that they loved to do— even though my dad was big and awkward, he used to love to go out dancing. Mom probably more than Dad. I don't know if Worland has the Coconuts anymore. It was a group of people that just enjoyed an evening of music and dancing. Those are some of the little quirks that many people don't

know about my father, who seemed to be very gruff on the outside, but he was a Teddy bear inside.

FAMILY HISTORY IN WORLAND: GREAT AUNT MARY'S HOMESTEAD

Joan: I'm curious about what happened to the homestead.

Joanne: My father and mother had it for years, and then Marilyn and I had it for many years after they passed. Since we live in Fremont County, [about 90 miles south of Worland] we were unable to take care of it, so we sold it. We had leased it out for several years, but it was very hard to find someone who really wanted to farm it as a profitable business along with their own land. It was in the family for three generations.

I don't know if I have anything else to add. I just appreciate the opportunity to let people know that we were blessed to have a wonderful community and wonderful parents, and they [the entire family] did leave their footprint in Worland, and for years to come it will still be there as Culbertson Avenue. There are so many, many people in Worland that have a link to history. Mine just happens to go back to the early 1900s.

PARENTS' LIFE IN WORLAND: EVERYONE KNEW SALLY CULBERTSON, RN

Cathy: Joannie, you talked about your mother and her career as the school nurse. Can you tell us a little more about what that involved?

Joanne: I'd be happy to. My mother, Sally Culbertson, was the school nurse in Worland, from about 1947 or '48 — I'm not sure when she was hired — until 1972. During her time, she covered all the schools. Eventually, there were seven schools that she covered.

She could see a rise in strep throat. Strep throat can be easily detected by a throat swab. And if strep throat is untreated, it eventually will go into scarlet fever and then rheumatic fever. So, Mother worked closely with the doctors in town and a lab technician named Louise Hampton, mother of one of our classmates, Jackie Hampton Harrod. Every few weeks or once a month, everybody in school was tested for strep throat, or on a need-be basis if they came in with a sore throat. Louise would read any growth on the plate or culture. If it turned out to be strep, they were able to have the parents get the medication to the children on a very quick turn-around in order to prevent the strep throat from advancing into

rheumatic fever. Rheumatic fever can damage the heart and cause lifetime issues.

[Note: See Peggy Steele Porter's interview – she had to spend a year flat on her back to heal from rheumatic fever.]

I just wanted to mention that not only did they do this in Worland, but Mom was very involved with the State Nursing Association, and they got these throat swabs and the strep throat program going throughout the state of Wyoming and many schools adopted the same program. Most of today's school systems no longer do the strep throat analysis like they used to. They now have more rapid testing methods, but if a child does come with a sore throat, they're requiring the parents to go to the doctor to get a strep test.

I just thought it was a wonderful thing that she had done through the school systems.

One of the other people in town that needs to be recognized is Zelda Black. Zelda was the Washakie County nurse and she helped whenever they needed an immunization program throughout the school. She was always willing to help and available to Mom, as was Louise Hampton.

Terrifying Polio Which Crippled or Killed You

Cathy: We all were scared to death of polio. We knew kids who died. There were kids from three families across the alley from me who were crippled for life when they caught polio.] I remember one time when we were maybe in the 5th or 6th grade — 1954 – one of Judy Van Buskirk's classmates got polio. They were a grade behind us. This was before we had polio vaccines [the Salk vaccine didn't become available until 1955]. The next best hope, and it wasn't considered very good, were gamma globulin shots. All the kids in Judy's class got the shot in their rumps. They were so painful that Judy couldn't go down to her basement bedroom because it was too painful to walk down the steps. Your mother must have been involved in that. Do you remember?

Joanne: I remember the polio outbreaks and I remember several of our friends had polio. They finally had drops of a medication that were put on the sugar cubes and we had to take them to help prevent polio. [The Sabin vaccine on sugar cubes became available in the early 1960s] I don't know who or why some of the kids received the gamma globulin shots. But yes, Mom was involved in trying to prevent a lot of these [childhood diseases] through the schools.

Tick Shots - Little Needles, Big Pain

Tick shots were another thing. We had a big outbreak of tick fever in Washakie County, and so the public health nurse, Zelda Black, would come up [to the

school] and help mother give shots to teachers and students. And, I remember, everybody getting tick shots. They required a series of three for your first year, and then the next year, two shots, and after that, a yearly booster. And they would do those through the school to make it available to all kids. Those are some of the things that are no longer done through the school system. They're done privately, through your own physician. But at that time, it was such a boon to everyone to have this available.

At that time, the school nurse not only took care of the kids if they had a medical problem or fell and needed medical attention, but they also helped with many of the immunizations, so they were very busy. And as Worland grew, and added more schools, Mom had to figure out how to cover every school. She had her main office in the old junior high – and each day she would make a point of checking in there and then spending hours at the different schools – part of a day each week at the different schools, so she traveled all the time. When they needed her, if a child had fallen or was sick, she'd hurry up and go over there. [For several years, Mom also taught a nursing class at the high school.] Most schools, today, have their own school nurse, or a nurse may have to cover two schools.

Mom had worked at the hospital for years and years and when the opportunity came to be a school nurse, she thought it would be wonderful. Having two children in school, it made life much easier to have her weekends off and her summers free. She did have to go back to college every few summers to get more education in order to renew her certifications. – like the teachers did. [Smile]

Scarlet Fever = Lifelong Heart Damage

Cathy: You said your older sister had scarlet fever – was this before or after the strep swabbing program?

Joanne: [I believe her scarlet fever was prior to the strep program] I wish I'd thought about the year. At that time, they quarantined everyone in the family. My mom couldn't go to work. We had to stay home. My dad could go to work, but no place else.

That is the same year that Worland had the ice jam. I remember that because the ice was up on that old bridge – I don't know if you remember that – in the springtime when the ice in the river began breaking up and started coming down the river in huge pieces. It actually came up on the old bridge on Culbertson Avenue and damaged the bridge a little bit. I was very upset with my sister because we were quarantined, and I felt it was her fault that I couldn't go see the ice jam. [Laughs]

I should know what year that is, but Marilyn was young –sixth or seventh grade. [I think it was 1948 or '49. Yes, she had scarlet fever, which can go into rheumatic fever if it isn't treated. At that time, we were all quarantined in the house. Very

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seldom do they quarantine people anymore – except they did ask people to quarantine for COVID – but you don't hear about quarantining with scarlet fever. Fortunately, she had no permanent damage, thank goodness.

WASHAKIE MUSEUM: THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORAL HISTORY

Cathy: Joannie, thank you so much for participating in a public recording for the Washakie Museum. We really appreciate your stories and we (our Oral History team) appreciate you being our guinea pig so we could learn how to record our classmates on zoom for this collection.

Joanne: Thank you.