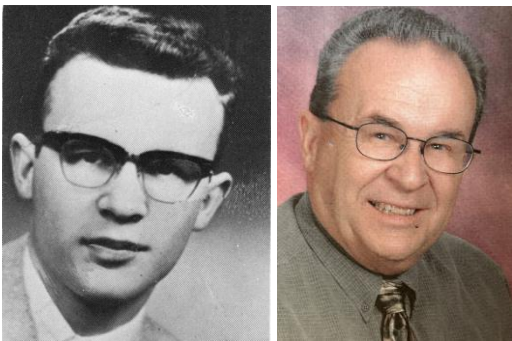




## THE WAR BABIES OF WORLAND: ORAL HISTORIES FROM THE CLASS OF 1960



### LOWELL KEITH PETERSON

Extended conversation after videotaping

Interviewers: Joanne Culberston Jeffres & Cathy Healy

Proofreader: Peggy Steele

**June 16th, 2022**

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

This is **Joanne Culbertson Jeffres**, on June 16, 2022, at approximately 1:15 p.m. Mountain time.

Lowell, thank you so much for agreeing to be recorded for the oral history collection of the Washakie Museum and Cultural Center in Worland, Wyoming. We have two goals in mind first that our class of 1960 tell us what life was like for kids and teenagers in Worland from about 1941 to 1960.

Our second goal is that we share how growing up in Worland impacted our adult lives.

Would you please tell us your full name?

**Lowell:** Lowell Keith Peterson.

**Joanne:** Was there any other name or nickname that you were known by during your time in Worland?

**Lowell:** A few people would call me Pete.

**Joanne:** Where are you now as you make this recording?

**Lowell:** At my home in Worland.

## **PETERSONS MOVED TO WORLAND IN 1954**

**Joanne:** If you weren't born in Worland, how old were you when your family arrived, and if so, did they ever leave?

**Lowell:** Actually, I was born in Bismarck, North Dakota. We moved to a little town called McClusky and then moved to Worland on June 3rd of 1954, when I was 12 years old.

**Joanne:** What brought your family to Worland, Lowell?

**Lowell:** My father worked for Mobil Oil Corporation, and he had an opportunity to move to Casper, Wyoming, Worland, Wyoming or Ferndale, Washington. My parents came out to Casper and Worland and liked Worland. And the rest is history.

**Joanne:** We're glad they liked Worland. Lowell, when your family came to Worland, did you live in the city limits, or were you outside the city limits?

**Lowell:** Well, my parents bought a new home at 813 South 11th. At the time, our home faced west, and across the street from our home, there was nothing but a field from there to Holly Sugar.

**Joanne:** Oh, my goodness! So, it was all just fields.

**Lowell:** All just fields at that time, yes.

**Joanne:** Now, as you close your eyes, what else do you remember about the sounds and the smells right there in your neighborhood, or in Worland itself and maybe the surrounding areas?

**Lowell:** Well, after a few years, houses got built across the street, believe it or not, I think from Charles Avenue to Washakie Avenue. On South Eleventh there were 76 kids below the age of 12.

**Joanne:** How fun!

**Lowell:** Those were the days where we had, at that time, Consumers Grocery Store, which became A and R Supermarket– this was before the Catholic church was built in the area. It was just a neighborhood with lots of kids.

**Joanne:** That sounds like it was a wonderful place to be.

**Lowell:** And I might mention, downtown Worland at that time had lots of stores – a lot of small stores. I think Vaughn Ragsdale and JC Penny and Gambles were the only chain-type stores that I can remember, and we only had two banks and the Kirby Theater, and Merz bakery. There were a lot of them there and it was fun to shop because you could - you can find lots of places to go in and out of. [I believe that during our school days, Worland had fourteen full-service gas stations.]

## **YOUTH ACTIVITIES: CHURCH, MADE EAGLE SCOUT**

**Joanne:** You said you moved here in June 1954, so you did not attend elementary school when you were here. What do you remember about those school years in junior high? Do you remember going to junior high here in Worland?

**Lowell:** Yes, of course, moving here in June when I did, there wasn't school. So, the only kids that I met were the ones that I met in church. I'm guessing, but I think David Scheurman was probably the first kid that I met, and then I got involved in Boy Scouts. I had started in North Dakota and got involved in Boy Scouts that summer, and in August of 1955, I made Eagle Scout, and I remember being awarded my scout badge by the then Governor of Wyoming, Milward Simpson. [The father of former Senator Alan Simpson.] Back in those days, that was a big deal, and it's something I'll never forget. Well, I had earned my badge earlier than that, but I wasn't old enough to get it. So, I had to wait until August when they had a Court of Honor, and I was awarded my Eagle Scout badge.

**Joanne:** That's quite an accomplishment, Lowell.

## **AFTER-SCHOOL JOBS: BAG BOY AT GROCERY STORE**

**Joanne:** Did you fill your time after school with other things than scouting?

**Lowell:** Yes, I worked. Actually, there used to be a – I think it was a Tastee Freeze Ice Cream place by the bowling alley [on South 12th St.], and my older sister worked there. And if you remember John Stroud, our science teacher, well, I think he started it. My older sister worked there part-time, and there were a few times that she would get really busy, and I would go and help her. So that was probably my first job. I was only twelve years old.

I think I helped there during the next summer. Also, I worked for Consumers Supermarket, which became A. & R. Supermarket, which stood for Andy and Roman Perlinsky, and I worked there in high school until I got fired. [That was the only job I got fired from. What happened was Andy was checking out Lorraine

Healy [classmate Cathy's aunt] , and I was sacking her groceries. It was the afternoon of the 1959 State Football Championship in Douglas, and we were playing. A lot of people took the train down to Douglas for the game. She asked why I wasn't there. I said something like, "I had to work." When I went to work on Monday, I didn't have a job. I was unemployed for about 15 minutes. I went from there to JC Penney's, and Wally Heine hired me. [He was the manager.]

## **WORLAND HIGH SCHOOL: 1956-1960**

**Joanne:** What do you remember most about high school? Is there anything outstanding? Were you involved in the activities there?

**Lowell:** Let's see – I played in the band, bass clarinet. The band days were more fun in junior high. We had Basil Broadbent as our teacher, and we used to travel the state and march in parades, and the high school band wasn't quite as involved as the junior high band was. I don't think I was in the band during my junior and senior year. But there was a Key Club and Student Council. Because I worked, I wasn't involved in a whole heck of a lot of things. But I have a lot of good memories and a lot of good friends.

**Joanne:** And you still have a lot of good friends in our class of 1960 – we all owe thanks to you for all your work in organizing our reunions, you and other classmates in Worland—Dennis Bower, Carol Woodhams Day and Peggy Steele Porter. Because of the COVID pandemic, we've had to postpone our 60th reunion. Finally, we were able to get together in person. Were you ready for the reunion when it happened?

**Lowell:** Yes. And thanks to you, too, Joannie. I was at all of our reunions, and if you didn't have a good time at any of them, it was your own fault because we just had a special class.

**Joanne:** Oh, I agree wholeheartedly. Worland was one of the sixth largest cities in Wyoming when we grew up. Its population more than doubled because there was an oil boom. Do you remember all that growing up? I know you said the folks wanted to build a house. Where was the new home?

**Lowell:** Yes, in 1958, I don't know why, but my dad always wanted to live in the country, so during that year, I helped my dad build the log house on what is now Airport Road, and my middle daughter and her husband live there now. It was a lot of fun building a log house, and it's still standing.

## **RETURN TO WORLAND: BANKER WHO EXPERIENCED AN ARMED ROBBERY**

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

**Joanne:** Well, you've talked about your work experiences and what you have done growing up. What do you remember about your time when you were in banking, Lowell? How did you get in that?

**Lowell:** Well, actually, after we graduated, I didn't really know what I wanted to do, and I was contemplating going to Casper for college and didn't really know for sure what I would major in but was looking at that, and then the Vietnam war was going about that time, and so I looked at maybe going to the service. But I got a call one day from Joyce Taylor's mom, Daisy, wanting to know if I might be interested in going to work in the Stockgrowers State Bank. I visited with my parents about it, and I decided that if they offered me \$200 a month, I'd take it, so I went in and talked to Ray Faure at the bank, and they hired me.

Of course, the banking business can be kind of interesting, and really, it was for me. I went through a few hairy experiences. I was with the Stockgrowers Bank for 26 years, and during that time, I had a few interesting things happen. When I was a teller, I had another teller stealing out of my cash drawer and had some interviews with the FBI. I got through all that, and the person who did it finally confessed, and that's another story.

Then on November 1, 1976, we had an armed robber walk in at about 11 o'clock in the morning and started shooting things up, and we survived that! That's a day I'll never forget. Then several years later, I had a customer sue me for 10 million dollars. The court threw that out, but anyway, these were a few interesting experiences. Then after 26 years, my wife and I decided to start a hardware store, and we did that for 30 years.

**Joanne:** I was going to ask you about when you transition from banking into your store. Tell us about your hardware store, Lowell.

**Lowell:** Well, I wasn't sure what we wanted to do after I left the bank. My parents lived in Arizona in the wintertime, so we thought we'd take a trip, and we went down there and spent a little time with them, still trying to figure out what I might want to do. Warren and Betty Robinson were very good friends of my parents, and they owned the Coast-to-Coast Store here at the time or prior to that, he suggested that he had a friend of a friend who knew a guy with a True Value Company, and so they had the guy call me. He lived in Joliet, Montana. He came down, and we visited, and we wondered where we were going to put this store and things like that. Well, it just so happened that Howard Culp was in the process of selling out his business and retiring, so his building would become empty. The building belonged to the Earl Bower Farms Company, and we found out that was going to be available. One thing led to another, and suddenly, we were in the hardware business.

**Joanne:** What year was that, Lowell?

**Lowell:** That was in 1987. It was kind of a rough year. We didn't get rich, but we sure did meet lots of neat people.

**Joanne:** I remember your store. You had a wonderful selection of everything.

**Lowell:** Well, it's a little different today than it was back in those days, but in a lot of ways, we miss it – we missed the people. And the rest is history.

**Joanne:** What other businesses do you remember that made an impression on you or the townspeople and or businessmen?

**Lowell:** Oh, there was a guy by the name of Stan Standard who owned the Ben Franklin store. That was a very popular store at the time. And, of course, who can forget Johnny Merz?

**Joanne:** Merz Bakery?

**Lowell:** Merz Bakery, yes. Wally Heine was in charge of JCPenney's and then there was Bill Hart, who had some kids a little bit younger. He had a Western store at the time. I think all the buildings on Main Street were full. I don't know if any of you guys remember the Slurp and Burp.

**Joanne:** Oh, yes, and Wilson's.

**Lowell:** Wilson's Drive-In, Mac's Drive-in.

**Joanne:** The A & W.

**Lowell:** The A & W. Do you remember Mac's Drive-in out north? A lot of people don't remember it, but anyway, they came and went.

## **LOWELL'S IMPACT: REPLACED FOUL RIVER WATER WITH ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPRING WATER**

**Lowell:** During all my banking days, and when I was at the store, [True Value Hardware, which Lowell and Punkie owned], I spent some time as a member of the City Council when Worland got its artesian water, and that's kind of a story of itself. But that was, I think, one of the better things that ever happened to Worland because we didn't have to depend on the river for our water.

The problem with water from the Big Horn River is when it rains up in the hills to the west of Worland, 15 Mile Creek gets muddy; it flows into the river near what was the intake to the water plant. It played havoc with the filters, and lots of

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chemicals had to be added. One time, Holly Sugar dumped warm water from processing beet pulp into the town's water pipes to keep them from freezing – it was 40° below zero (F) for days then. The Big Horn still gets so muddy when it rains in the hills that you can almost walk across it – it's muddy nearly to Manderson. And then, after a while, it is clear again. I don't see how fish live in it, but they do.

**Joanne:** Where is the artesian well located, Lowell?

**Lowell:** It's east of Manderson between Manderson and Hyattville. There was a Husky Oil company out of Cody that had permits for three wells in a location out there, and the first well they drilled became this artesian water. They didn't know what to do with that well, and I don't know exactly how it was, but they offered it to us [Worland]. But we had to put a valve on it, and the valve was \$9,000. I remember in the City Council, we were trying to figure out where we were going to get \$9,000 to put that on the well because I guess – I'm assuming – that if you shut down an artesian well, it may not regenerate again. So, we had to keep the well flowing.

Anyway, we spent the \$9,000 and put a valve on it.

I remember driving up there one day to where the well was. There was a garden hose coming out of it, draining into a stock tank that overflowed into a draw down to the Nowood River. It ran like that until we were able to take advantage of the well and put in a pipeline. Well, anyway, that was the most controversial thing that we had to do. We really wanted the water, but getting it 23 miles from the Worland to the well – it takes a lot of pipe to go 23 miles. We had to find a way to raise the money.

Then, getting the right type of pipe was a real job. We had a local realtor by the name of John Melia who took a real interest in it. He did a lot of research for the most economical pipe for us to use – it was asbestos concrete pipe. Now the word "asbestos" is a killer – well, asbestos is just a binder to hold the concrete together. I remember John had talked to a lot of labs around the country and got an analysis on the asbestos concrete type. Finally, we were able to convince the people in town that it was safe. I guess you know, for example, if a mouse drank 10 million gallons of water going through an asbestos pipe, they might find a trace of asbestos. I mean that it was that safe. So, anyway, we got the job done, and so now we have water. Actually, I think it provides most of the water for the Big Horn Basin.

**Joanne:** It is amazing that one well has run that long and is still providing water for that many people

**Lowell:** I can't remember, because I haven't been on the City Council for many years if the two other wells were ever drilled. Maybe they have been, I'm not

sure, but the first well provides water from Lucerne to Greybull, and that's a lot of water. Worland has two-million-gallon storage tanks – one out east of town and one out west of town. Even though it has a lot of minerals, it's good water. We don't have to depend on the sugar factory to give us warm, tasty water when we are freezing in the wintertime.

**Joanne:** In the past years, before the artesian well, it took so many chemicals to make the river water safe to drink. I think that many Worland health problems like cancer were created by that, unknowingly, over the years. It would be an interesting study to see if some of those health problems have subsided that were so common 20, 30, 40 years ago.

**Lowell:** It would be.

**Joanne:** Lowell, what you and the Council did is phenomenal.

**Lowell:** We do have a dependable supply of water, that's for sure. I was just looking. I was on the City Council from May of 1974 until January 1st of '81, and then yes, I was on the Airport Board for thirteen years. I, also spent 13 years on the Board of the Worland Fire Protection District, and a lot of those were fun.

### **Met Wife, Punkie, in an Alley**

**Joanne:** Thank you, Lowell, for being there and taking care of our town. It's because of those of you who stayed in Worland and kept Worland going that Worland is still on the map. Is there anything else that you would like to mention?

**Lowell:** Well, I married a girl from Gebo, Wyoming, and we met in the alley behind the bank.

**Joanne:** Oh, my goodness sakes! Had she just left the bank or was she just passing through?

**Lowell:** No, she worked in the business across the alley. She worked for Duke and Jeanie Dover's Worland Laundry and Dry Cleaners. That was about 60 years ago. [Punkie, Lowell's wife, said when we tell our girls the story that Mom and Dad met in an alley, they think it's pretty funny.]

**Joanne:** Are there any other memories of the kids you went to high school with that you'd like to share?

**DRAGGING MAIN: LED TO COMPASSIONATE POACHING. ONCE.**



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**Lowell:** Yes, there are a few. I don't remember what year it was. I think it might have been 1957. I don't know if you remember Benny Strauch. But anyway, he had gotten a new car. You know how we used to drag Main Street looking for something to do or some trouble to get into? Well, I remember one evening, and I think it was Dennis Bower and Bill Day and myself. We're riding around with Benny in his new car – and at the time, Benny lived on a farm, the Tiedown Ranch, southwest of Worland. When he came into town that night, he noticed he'd seen some deer in the hay field on the way in.

And anyway, we were dragging Main Street – and if any of you knew Benny, he was kind of a free spirit – and anyway, there was a family that Benny knew was having kind of a rough time, and he said, "I know so-and-so, and they could sure use some meat." He said, "I saw this deer coming in". He said, "Let's go deer hunting." Now, this is about 10 o'clock at night. So, we go out there, and oh, we got a 22 rifle, and I think Benny was the one to take the shot, I'm not sure, but anyway, he shot this deer, and then we couldn't find it. Well, after trespassing through the fields, we found him in the ditch, and it was deader than a doornail. He had hit it between the eyes.

**Joanne:** Oh, my!

**Lowell:** Well, anyway, we took the deer to these people. They lived out at Mc Nuttville, which is south of Worland on Hwy. 20, where several families lived, including the grandfather of two of our classmates, Bill and Walt Mc Nutt. We took the deer out there and strung it up, skinned it, and gutted it out about midnight for these people. I mean – here we were, as illegal as can be. You know. but if it felt so good to do that.

**Joanne:** Oh, yes, it would. It would feel good to help a family feed their children and take care of themselves.

**Lowell:** Yes. you know, if we'd have been caught, we'd have been in trouble. But it sure felt good.

**Joanne:** Well, I think that was the same mentality of a lot of the ranchers and farmers and the people up in the Nowood area out of Tensleep.. They fed those animals year-round with their hay fields, the salt blocks, and the water just because they were available, and if the meat was used for camp meat or family, it wasn't for want and waste. That's a marvelous story.

Yes, I was going to ask you, Lowell, when you were in business, do you remember the Christmas tree that we used to have on Main Street? Is that still up at that time every Christmas?

**Lowell:** That's where we used to go around the tree when you're dragging Main Street.

**Joanne:** Yes.

**Lowell:** No, it was, it was gone by that time.

**Joanne:** Oh, was it? Do you remember when it ended?

**Lowell:** Actually, when they built a new bridge across the river, and that's when they did away with the Christmas tree, and I'm not sure what year that was.

**Joanne:** It seems like one year, they had it there at Tenth and Main across from the courthouse, but most of the time it was clear up on the west end before they put the road in.

**Lowell:** Do you remember when they used to have the neon Christmas stars all over the street on Main Street?

**Joanne:** Yes.

**Lowell:** I remember growing up on South Eleventh. Our next-door neighbor was a man by the name of Walter Schulz, who worked for Wyoming Electric Sign Company, and he made all those stars. He was a neon tube bender and stuff. Anyway, Walt made all those stars when he was working for Wyoming Electric Sign Company. I remember he and his wife moved to Greybull and bought the Coast-to-Coast store in Greybull. He was a very, very talented guy.

The only thing bad about the neon stars, they screwed up with the signal from KOMA.

## **DRAGGING MAIN TO KOMA, OKLAHOMA CITY RADIO**

**Joanne:** Oh, and what was KOMA, Lowell?

**Lowell:** The radio station in Oklahoma City. Do you remember the station in Oklahoma City?

**Joanne:** Oh, how well I remember! Did you ever call in and request a song?

**Lowell:** We never did. We just listened to the station all the time. They always had good music, and then there was a station in Del Rio, Texas. I don't remember what that one was.

**Joanne:** I don't remember that one, but I remember KOMA. Yes, that was a good one to listen to.

**Lowell:** I would always drag Main and listen to KOMA, except you couldn't do it when the neon light stars for Christmas were above Main Street because that interfered with the signal.

## **YOUTH ACTIVITIES: JUNIOR HIGH OPERETTA**

**Lowell:** Oh, and evidently, not too many people remembered the “She's One of the Boys,” the operetta that we did in Junior High. I was just flabbergasted that Robbie Dee [Cline Humble] could remember those songs at our reunion last month.

**Joanne:** That was amazing. And she remembered every word.

**Lowell:** I was Briggs, the butler, the only time I ever sang a solo in my life.

**Joanne:** What did you sing?

**Lowell:** “I'm a butler name of Briggs. I've served in every strata” or something like that. That's about all I remember of it.

**Joanne:** I think all of us were blessed to have grown up in a small town with teachers that were vested not only in the schools but also in their community and the people in it. Wyoming still has many towns like that today, but there are fewer and fewer because of the growth and so many changes.

## **WORLAND HIGH SCHOOL: 1956-1960**

**Lowell:** You were mentioning some teachers. When I was a senior, I took two years of mechanical drawing. I was the only student. Joe Kienlen was my teacher, and I was his student. I love that man.

**Joanne:** Yes, he made an impact on many of us, and we were, I think, very fortunate to have the quality teachers that we did, and many, many of our teachers were also coaches, and many of those coaches did go on to the University [of Wyoming] to coach. It was a loss to Worland, but it was a boon to the University.

**Lowell:** Clarence Daniels went on to be an assistant football coach, I think at Navy?

**Joanne:** Yes, I believe so. And do you remember the professional ball teams that Worland used to have?

**Lowell:** Oh, yes, Billy Martin and Satchel Page, and Harlow Davis, who was from Ten Sleep, played on the Worland team. Jack Stine and Wally Sinner played for the Worland Indians. All of these things were before television. I mean, it's just, it's amazing, you know, like you and I were talking about the Coconuts Dancing Club the other day.

**Joanne:** Yes, my parents were involved.

## **RADIO TO TELEVISION GENERATION**

**Lowell:** And then television came along, and, of course, you know, we didn't have any TV in North Dakota. So, the first time I ever saw TV was, well, actually, the very first time I ever saw TV was in the old Emerson Hotel in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

When I was ten years old, I sold the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* Sunday paper, and I won a free trip to the Minnesota State Fair. I'm ten years old, so I go to Bismarck by myself. My folks drop me off at the train, and I go to Minneapolis to the Fair. Well, here's all these ten- and twelve-year-old kids in this hotel, and TV was just coming out. The hotel had dedicated one room on each floor with a TV in it. So, you could go there to watch the test pattern. You know. That was in about 1952. Well, then, when we moved here in 1954. I remember getting our first black-and-white TV, and we'd watch "Our Miss Brooks" and the test pattern that would go off at 10 o'clock every night. And then – remember, KWRB TV in Thermopolis.

**Joanne:** And, yes, Mildred Ernst was the owner.

**Lowell:** Yes, Mildred and –

**Joanne:** Joe.

**Lowell:** Joe Ernst. And they had a guy by the name of Hannibal Hannah, who lived up on Boysen Peak and kept their antenna going. Now you can't even get good TV.

## **PARENTS' COCONUTS DANCING CLUB CONTINUED**

**Joanne:** You mention the Coconuts. Would you tell us what the Coconuts were?

**Lowell:** I don't even know how we got invited, but it was kind of an invitation-only group of individuals that would get together, I'm going to say twice a year, and we danced. We always went to the old Community Hall, and we'd have a band. Back in those days, Carol Wayland was used all the time – he was from

Burlington or Cowley and had a great band. Polly and Her Posse played, and Sal and the Sons of Sound. Once a year, we'd have a dinner dance. I don't know how many – maybe there were 30 couples or something like that, I guess. It was before television and was good fun and entertainment.

**Joanne:** And most of the Coconuts, as I recall, was ballroom dancing, right?

**Lowell:** Yes, and they had a formal dance. They wore formal dress and attire along with the orchestra, and it was really something to watch. I mean, it wasn't really expensive, and it was a good time, and it wasn't just young couples. There were a lot of older couples there, too. It was a real mixture of the population

## HIGH SCHOOL AND JUNIOR HIGH TEACHERS

Let's see, you said something about teachers—I think back to some of the interesting things with teachers, and I like I told Mary Elise [White] Sande, “You know, I'll never forget Irene White”. [Mary Elise's mother] You know she had me write a term paper, and I asked, “How long does it need to be?” And her favorite expression was “Just like a lady's skirt— long enough to cover the subject and short enough to keep it interesting.”

**Joanne:** Yes, what a lady.

**Lowell:** Can't you just see Mrs. White saying that.

**Joanne:** Yes.

**Lowell:** I remember Velma Pickard hitting Dean Frederick over the head one time with a ruler. She wanted to hit him hard, but she was so fragile she didn't even mess up his hair. Do you remember her?

**Joanne:** Yes. She had multiple sclerosis, I think. She taught 7th-grade English. Her room was on the second floor in the junior high. She would walk sideways down the stairs to the first floor, holding her hands flat against the wall to steady herself. She became the school librarian. The library was on the first floor.

**Lowell:** In fact, talking about her, they are having a – I think, on the 23rd of July –a memorial service for her niece Ardis. You know she died last year, last July, and they're having a memorial service here. Misner was her last name. She was Ardis Pickard Misner.

**Joanne:** Yes, Ardis – she was also called Bunny. She was Esther's daughter, and Velma Picard was her aunt, I believe.

**Lowell:** Right, right.

**Joanne:** Esther and Velma were married to brothers. Esther also taught 7th grade on the second floor of the junior high. She taught geography. We learned the geography of Latin America. I remember making salt maps a card table cloth and napkins with a South American theme. As I recall, they had a cactus and a burro I painted in each corner and fringed all the edges. I proudly gave them to my mother to use while hosting her "card club".

You've covered many, many wonderful topics, Lowell, and given us a good insight as to your years in Worland. Have you thought of anything else that you would like to mention?

## **LOWELL'S IMPACT ON WORLAND**

**Lowell:** Worland's been good to us, you know. I really did enjoy my years of public service because it was always appreciated. And it was the years on the City Council that were probably the most trying. Actually, I don't know – we were growing during those years.

**Joanne:** Anytime you are a public servant, you are at the will of the people, it would be very trying because you can't please everybody, and you do the very best you can with the knowledge you have.

**Lowell:** Yes. It was like six-and-a-half or seven years on the City Council. My tenure on the City Council was from May 1974 to December 1980, and in 1978 we built the new Fire Hall. And then, when I didn't run, Dennis Bower [our classmate] took my place on the City Council for the next term. Then, a couple of years after that, Sonny Shear, another classmate, was our mayor.

## **Story Behind Worland's Wall of Honor**

**Joanne:** The Class of '60 has been well represented within the city. Lowell, tell us a little bit about the Wall of Honor that you've been involved with at the high school. We've had two of our members inducted.

**Lowell:** Six or seven years ago, several of us were trying to figure out – you know, all the schools in Worland are like East Side, West Side, etc. They don't have fancy names or anything.

We got this beautiful new middle school or junior high, and there were several of us thinking– "Why couldn't we name that building Roger Youtz Middle School?" John Davis, Jim Gilman, Dave Bostrum, and me – and there were about six or eight of us. We had many, many meetings and talked about how to promote it. We got to the point where we were going to present it to the School Board about changing the name of the Worland Middle School.

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Anyway, we got shot out of the water. The principal at the middle school didn't know who Roger Youtz was, so it didn't mean anything to him. He went to bat against this. Maybe I shouldn't say, but anyway, he wasn't in favor of it. I think that kind of convinced the school board to leave it as Worland Middle School. Well, I think to appease us, they came up with this Wall of Honor. I don't know if that's true or not, but that's what happened, and it's a good thing. It really is a good thing, and I think our classmate, Grant Ujifusa, was in the first class [to be honored].

**Joanne:** What is the Wall of Honor, Lowell?

**Lowell:** It's for anybody that's made a name for themselves or brought Worland into the spotlight – I think it kind of started for athletics if you graduated from Worland or went to Worland. It's just like the one the University of Wyoming has, and Ray Sanchez is on the University of Wyoming's Wall of Honor. I don't know if they can get him here or not. I don't know if Ray went to school here. But he sure did a lot in fact, they're having a special here – the Old Worland Monarchs are going to have a deal at the museum.

Ray Sanchez was a local postman for years and years. He also was the coach for the women's softball team, the Worland Monarchs. During his tenure as coach, the team won several championships.

Anyway, this last year, getting Rick Hake involved in this was kind of difficult because it was hard to know what Rick really did because so much of his missile defense systems for Lockheed Martin are classified information. But Grant is convinced that Rick Hake was the smartest person who ever graduated from Worland High School, and I have to agree with him. Grant and I sponsored Rick last year, and he was inducted last year. They had six people last year and there's only four this year, and I just got a call yesterday. Grant and I had sponsored John Davis, and he was selected – John called me yesterday to let me know he was selected. [John Davis, Class of 1961, is a Worland lawyer whose histories of Wyoming are published by the University of Oklahoma Press, which is the most important Western publisher.]

**Joanne:** Well, here again, Lowell, even though you're not on City Council or a banker anymore, or business owner, you're still involved with keeping Worland on the map and keeping it alive and as on behalf of the class, we just appreciate that so much, because without you, we'd have nothing to come back to.

One last item. Is there anything else that you've thought of that you'd like to say before we close?

## **LOOKING BACK: RIFLES IN THE HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT**

**Lowell:** Well, yes, this popped in my mind. I can remember the parking lot at the high school. There wasn't a pickup in the parking lot that didn't have a gun rack with a gun. Try that today.

**Joanne:** That's true, and we were very safe, even with all our guns.

**Lowell:** Yeah!

**Lowell:** There are some things that I better not say, you know. Not that there's anything wrong with them other than the fact there were things that I didn't understand as a kid that I do today, I'll put it that way.

**Joanne:** And I think that's true with all of us.

## **LOOKING BACK: WHY POWELL, NOT WORLAND, GOT THE COLLEGE**

**Lowell:** You know I should mention my mother. She worked for Earl Bower [Earl owned Bower Farms] when she was alive. And you know, Earl was trying to get Worland a junior college back in, I think it was in like 1948. I don't know if it's true or not, but I am of the understanding that he would have donated the land where Bloedorn Lumber currently is, out east of town, for a junior college. The town would not go for it for two or three reasons. I think they would have had to form a district which would have meant a mill levy to get it started and keep it going. And yes, ruffraff, they didn't want the ruffraff of those college kids tearing up our town. You know, when you look back, that's around the time Powell got Northwest [Community. College] from what I understand; but you know, I can't imagine kids in 1948 being wild, they weren't even as wild as we were.

[Earl Bower was a farmer and investor in Worland. He moved to Worland in 1912 from Missouri, and his twin brother, Ray, Sr. joined him a few years later. Earl was drawn by the new land being opened for cultivation by the Hanover Canal companies. He was Washakie County's state senator from 1937 to 1962. He, Ray, Dr. Grey, and Bill Pulliam founded the Farmer's State Bank, now Pinnacle Bank. Two of our classmates are related to Earl Bower, Gretchen Bower Knapp was his granddaughter, and Dennis Bower was his nephew.]

**Joanne:** No, I'll bet kids in 1948 were wild in their own way, but it wasn't public knowledge without all the social media and Facebook.

**Lowell:** But you know, it really would have been nice to have a college here.



### **Lowell on the Pilot's Wall of Honor at the Airport**

**Lowell:** One thing I didn't mention, but several years ago I got my pilot's license. I had an airplane and did a little flying around the valley here, and that's one thing that I do miss, but I'm sure I couldn't pass the physical anymore. But that was one of the things that I had an opportunity to do, and in fact, I don't remember when I was on the Airport Board, and I talked to the gal that's manager out there. I guess the guy whose place she took had destroyed all the old records of the Airport Board because they don't have an Airport Board anymore. It's all run by the City Council, but she didn't have any records of when I was on the Airport board. As near as I can tell, I'm not just sure when it was, but the other day, I went out there, and there's a plaque on the Terminal Building. You know, we have a really nice terminal building sitting empty out there. The Terminal Building has my name on it.

**Joanne:** Kudos!

**Lowell:** So, if my name doesn't show up anywhere in town, and you're looking for me, I'm at the airport.

**Joanne:** We'll know where to find you Lowell.

### **KEEPING IN TOUCH: LOWELL IS THE HEARTBEAT OF '60**

**Joanne:** We appreciate everything that you and your wife Punkie have added to the well-being and welfare of Worland, and you've kept our class going. We truly appreciate that. You've given us the opportunity to keep in touch with everybody.

**Lowell:** Oh, and you know if you have one question about keeping in touch with friends from those days. you know. Punkie and I haven't done much traveling the last 30 years, but when we did do quite a bit of traveling, we always planned it to where we'd stop in and see somebody that we hadn't from our high school days, you know. Maybe have lunch with them or something. It's nice to have friends.

Well, you know, look at how the town seems to be growing towards Ten Sleep. I think of the businesses that have gone up out there. I think of what's happened with Pepsi in Worland. You know it's just grown, and grown, and grown, and thank goodness we have them.

I'll tell you what, you cannot believe what I did. I took my wife to the new library yesterday, and Cathy [Healy], you should see Kay Wray paintings. She has really decorated that library up and it is beautiful. And, in fact, Punkie was visiting with Kaye this afternoon, she has a lot more paintings. She could put more up. She is

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quite an artist and a real asset to the community. I'll tell you it's just really something to be super proud of, that's for sure.

**Joanne:** You were talking about growing out east of Worland toward The Day's Motel.

**Lowell:** I was just thinking of Day's Court. And then there was a Pawnee Motel out there. There was a Log Cabin one across from the Baptist church. It was the Log Cabin Court or something like that, I can't remember this exactly, but we had several little Ma and Pa motels, you know, the way the town was growing or not growing, I can tell you the day that Worland stopped growing was the day the Hotel Washakie closed. [Ranchito restaurant was built on the site after the hotel was torn down.] It's just too bad somebody didn't have a whole pile of something to keep that [building]. I mean. Here we have the old Kirby Theatre still standing there, but we don't have the Hotel Washakie. No, it's really kind of a shame.

But you know, I think Worland is progressing again, and I think we're going to see some things happening as we get more and more manufacturing of small things. When freight companies like FedEx and UPS can't land in other places, they land here. You can always land in Worland. But you can't always land in Cody. Believe me, I've done it.

**Joanne:** It sounds like Worland would be a good place for a hub.

**Lowell:** Yes, it is, and it seems like we're progressing a little bit. I think Worland has a good chance at pretty good growth.

**Joanne:** I hope things will turn around again.

## THANK YOU ON BEHALF OF THE WASHAKIE MUSEUM

**Joanne:** Lowell, thank you so very much from all of us for sharing your experiences for the public while you're growing up in Worland. It's truly appreciated. We thank you.

**Lowell:** Well, thanks Joanne. If there's anything more I can do, just holler at me. I'll probably think of something else.

**Joanne:** I do believe that the class of 1960 from Worland High School was very special, and we are very lucky to have 82 classmates of 135 still on this earth. We hope that everybody has another good year. Stay safe and keep your face to the sun.