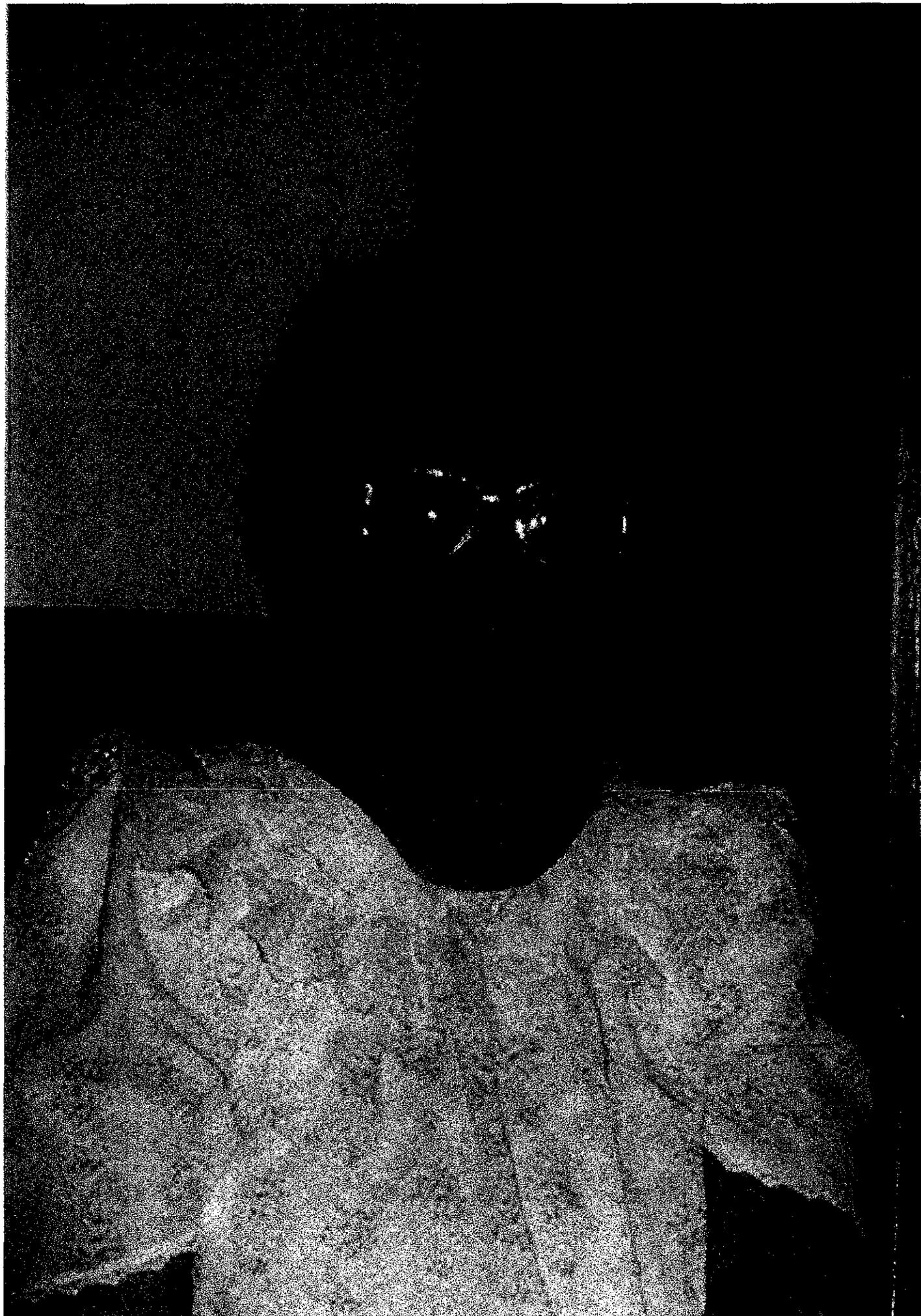


Ardi's Evans
Campbell / Johnson 1999
Cannonville

Southern Utah Oral History Project

The Southern Utah Oral History Project was started in July of 1998. It began with an interest in preserving the cultural history of small towns in southern Utah that border the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The project was managed by Kent Powell, from the Utah Division of State History, who oversaw the collection of oral histories conducted in Boulder, Escalante, Bryce Valley, Long Valley, Kanab, the Kaibab Paiute Reservation, and Big Water, by Jay Haymond and Suzi Montgomery. Also in cooperation with the state was the Bureau of Land Management and the people of Garfield and Kane counties, with support from the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. The goals of the project were first to interview long-time local residents and collect information about the people and the land during the first half of the twentieth century. In addition, the interviews were to be transcribed and copies of the transcripts were to be made available to the public at the Utah State Historical Society and at local repositories. Lastly, to build a relationship with state agencies and the local communities and provide a medium for the local communities to express their interest in preserving their own history and culture in the areas that are now included in the GSENM. Thank you to everyone who took the time to care and share their memories and stories.



INTERVIEW WITH: Ardis Johnson Evans
INTERVIEWER: Suzi Montgomery
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 20 September 1999
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: Garfield Memorial Hospital Extended Care Facility-
Panguitch, Utah
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: Her life growing up on the ranch in Hatch and her family
TRANSCRIBER: Pat Haymond
DATE: October 12, 1999

SM: This is an interview with Ardis Johnson Evans. The date is September 20, 1999. We are going to be talking with her about living in Cannonville, growing up in Cannonville. And we are at the Garfield Memorial Hospital. My name is Suzi Montgomery.

So, Ardis, could you start by stating your birthday.

AE: My birthday is March 4, 1929.

SM: I understand you were born in Cannonville.

AE: Yes.

SM: Can you tell me a little bit about the family you were born into?

AE: My mother was a Campbell and she came from a big family. My mother was sister to Nola Whitaker in...

SM: So your mother was a Campbell and your father?

AE: Johnson.

SM: Johnson. Oh, so you're part of the Johnson family.

AE: Yes, and my great great grandfather, Joe Hills Johnson wrote the song of “High on the Mountain Top, a Banner is Unfurled”.

SM: Do you know the song?

AE: Uh huh.

SM: Can you sing it?

AE: I can sing any song.

SM: So, sing that one that your grandfather wrote.

AE: *High on a mountain top, a banner is unfurled,
Ye nations now look up, it waves to all the world.
In Zions
Sweet peaceful land
On Zions mount behold it stand...*

SM: So your grandfather wrote that song. It sounds like you used to sing. You have a beautiful voice. Did you used to sing all the time when you were young?

AE: My mother taught me how to sing. She sang everything. And she taught me to sing. I can't quit singing. I love music.

SM: Is that what you did for a lot of the entertainment growing up as a young girl.

AE: I should say.

SM: That's what you did, isn't it? So tell me about Cannonville when you were young. What do you remember about Cannonville?

AE: I remember that my father and my mother met each other when they were in church one day. I think that was up to Fredonia. Anyway, he met my mother and they met in church one day and she said that when she looked up and saw him she fell in love with him right then and she laughed because he went like this (she smiles and averts her eyes)

SM: Was he nervous?

AE: No, he loved her on the spot.

SM: Really. They fell in love at first sight.

AE: Yeah.

SM: Oh, how beautiful. That was somewhere south. How did they end up getting to Cannonville?

AE: They came to Hatch. My grandfather had a business and then he had a big family, and my mother was one of them. When they got acquainted, they went to Salt Lake to the Temple and were married there. Then they came back home and they were there for as long as they could and that's where I was born.

SM: What did your father do to survive?

AE: He had a lumber mill.

SM: Oh, did he work at the lumber mill?

AE: Uh huh.

SM: Along with Roland Bee?

AE: No.

SM: Not the one in Escalante? Do you know where he worked?

AE: He had a ranch up there above Hatch and he had brothers and they worked together on the mill.

SM: That's interesting. So he was in the timber industry. And did that last a long time, all your life?

AE: Almost as long as his life. I'll tell you something I'm not supposed to tell. (Laughter)

SM: I always like that stuff.

AE: They had five sons and six sisters and they all needed food, but you couldn't get food then. So my father poached it to feed his family. He killed deer. He had to.

SM: I've heard that before in interviews that they went up and just killed deer, poached them. I'm told it was to the point where they didn't have enough cattle meat to eat or they wanted to sell the cattle instead, so they poached venison. Did he do that a lot?

AE: No, only when they had to, when they had to bring food in for their families.

SM: Yeah, there's some priorities, isn't there. You've got to eat something.

AE: I had a lot of brothers and most of them went to the service in World War II. And this house, we called it the ranch, we had a lot of fun going up there and staying over night or a week or two or a month or so. In the summer we would stay about a month. And we just loved it up there. This one day, we had to go up hill to get there, quite a steep hill. My dad had some big cans of water that he put in there and he'd have to put them in the back of the pickup and then he'd have to haul us in the back of the truck with the water.

SM: Full cans of water?

AE: He'd bring cans full of water and then use them up there.

SM: There was no water up there?

AE: No I guess not. But they went out there one day and the water started coming down out of the pickup so everybody jumped in there and grabbed everything and they saved our lives.

SM: A small catastrophe! So you would go up to this place. Did your brother own this place?

AE: No, my dad owned it.

SM: So you would go there when, what time of year?

AE: Just about any time when we needed something to do. We would go up there and have picnics and stay over night and have a good time.

SM: Do you remember it as a fond experience?

AE: Uh huh.

SM: That's good. Was there a lot of snow up there in the wintertime?

AE: Yes.

SM: Was there? Tell me about your memory of the snow. Was it just freezing cold?

AE: Yeah, it was a little too cold for me.

SM: Yeah, for most people, I would imagine. You guys really braved it. What did you wear to keep warm?

AE: Some coat that somebody couldn't wear because it was too little for her. (she laughs)

SM: Some hand-me-downs. That's how it was, wasn't it? Whatever you could find, basically.

AE: Right.

SM: Do you know where you got your clothes? Did you have a lot of them made?

AE: My mother sewed. She made everything for us and for her too.

SM: Did your mother keep a garden?

AE: Oh, yes.

SM: Tell me about the garden. What do you remember about walking through that garden?

AE: I remember the potatoes, especially, because that's what kept you alive.

SM: Really. That was a staple?

AE: And tomatoes and other things. But you couldn't raise too much because it wasn't that warm for hot weather fruit.

SM: So did tomatoes have a struggle?

AE: No, they were okay.

SM: What stuff couldn't you grow? Do you remember?

AE: Well we couldn't grow hardly anything.

SM: Just the basics?

AE: Uh huh.

SM: So was part of your chores to help with the garden?

AE: Yes.

SM: You always had to hoe the garden and weed it.

AE: I was the oldest daughter. I had to work. And my mother had all those babies and I had to tend babies all my life. But I loved it.

SM: You did? You remember it as a happy time.

AE: Um hum. But I'll have to tell you a sad time. My oldest brother, his name was Dar, and when he was working for somebody, I think it's somebody in the government. I'm not too sure about it, but he was working and he had to go out one day and he went out there to start taming a horse, and that horse tromped him to death.

SM: Was it your family horse?

AE: Yes. They had to rush him down to St. George.

SM: That's how far you had to go to the hospital. You were in Cannonville?

AE: No, we were up at the ranch.

SM: So you had to rush him to the hospital, but there was no saving him.

AE: Huh uh. It was really hard to take. (Ardis gets teary remembering)

SM: Oh, I'll bet. That's really sad.

AE: I still have one, two, three more brothers that are still alive. And all the girls are alive.

SM: Really? Everybody's made it. How many kids are there all together?

AE: My grandmother, which was my father's mother, was one that delivers babies, and she delivered every one of us except two.

SM: That's amazing. She delivered her daughter's babies.

AE: Yeah. And then you every time she got a baby, we were so tickled, you know, and we'd run to go see it, and they wouldn't let us see it for a while.

SM: They sent you away while...

AE: Yes, and I hated that.

SM: I'll bet because you were older and you knew what was going on and wanted to be a part of it. Wow. What did your house look like? Not the ranch house but the one in Cannonville.

AE: Well the one we had in Cannonville was ...

SM: Was it big?

AE: Yeah, it had to be big for that many people and kids. I don't know exactly how big it was. Well, everybody had a room. Well, everybody didn't have a private room; there was usually three or four in the room.

SM: Did you ever have a private room?

AE: No, not then, not till I got older.

SM: So you probably shared a room with your sisters.

AE: Yeah.

SM: The boys in one room and the girls in another?

AE: Oh, yeah.

SM: And was there a big kitchen, a wood-fired stove?

AE: Yes. And we had a fireplace.

SM: Oh, how nice. Would that keep you warm in the wintertime?

AE: Umhum.

SM: Did you put your feet up on it and just get toasty warm?

AE: Yes. I loved that.

SM: Did you read a lot?

AE: Oh, that's what I wanted to tell you. Reading--a book was the most important thing and the most loveable thing. I liked books better than anything, and I do to this very day.

SM: Do you? It just completely gave you run-away pleasure, didn't it? Did you just sit and read?

AE: Yes, and my older sisters would get so mad at me. First, I better tell you about my eyes. I was born legally blind.

SM: No way.

AE: And I couldn't see even when I got older. One day we went on a field trip with the school and when we come back, I told mother, oh, that was so pretty. That was beautiful. And then she wondered why I didn't tell her more about it, and the reason was because I didn't see it.

SM: So that was the first time that she had really noticed?

AE: Well, she knew before that. She'd have known before that, but she couldn't do anything about it. But they did then. After that they got help to correct my eyes. They got me some glasses. When I went to school, now this was before I got the glasses. My family

was so poor they had to get them from the welfare. The only people that knew were very close because they knew how poor we were. So I got glasses, and the next time we went to a field trip, why I came running home and I said, "Mom, Mom, you should have saw it. Ooh, you should have saw it. It was beautiful." She said, "Well you've seen it before." And I said, "No, I haven't." (laughter)

SM: "This was the first time, Mom."

AE: That's when she got me glasses.

SM: Oh, that's so great. So your eyes sort of corrected themselves with the glasses so you could actually see?

AE: I could see with the glasses. Well when I went to school, I couldn't see to the blackboard, so I got my sister and best friend to go up and take the papers up and hold them on the board and write what I needed to write. Well, what happened was my mother kept telling me, "Now you get a front seat so you can see good." So I said, "I will, I will." But I hardly ever did it.

SM: Isn't that funny. Kids, huh?

AE: But when I looked at them, my sister and my friend would get up to the blackboard and write my things I had to do on it and I would write along with them so I would know.

SM: Oh, see, you were industrious, weren't you.

End of side one

Beginning side two

SM: We are talking about Ardis in school and getting your glasses. I just want to talk more about school. What kind of education did you get, until what grade?

AE: Oh, I went to the school all my first, second and third years. I went all the time and I graduated from high school. That's as far as I went. But I ended up being a teacher for children that needed special help, things like that.

SM: Oh, how wonderful. So you were a special education teacher.

AE: Uh huh. I loved that. I don't have it any more.

SM: Well you're retired now. It was a thing that happened and you put your time in when you did. Did you do that in Bryce Valley? Did you teach school there?

AE: Yeah.

SM: Wow, good for you. And what did your husband do?

AE: My husband was road foreman for Garfield County roads for thirty years and then one day we were sitting there looking at each other and he says, "I'm quitting." I said, "What?" He said, "I'm through with this job." I said, "You better not." I think we had a kid or two by then. We had a baby boy and, oh, we were so tickled, but I wanted a girl.

SM: Did you never have a girl?

AE: Yes.

SM: Oh, you did?

AE: Yes, finally. But I'll tell you what. I cheated.

SM: How did you do that?

AE: My sister told me she knew some people so that I could put my name in so I could get a baby.

SM: You adopted?

AE: Yes, we went to Salt Lake City at the Primary Children's Hospital and we brought home a little baby girl.

SM: I was adopted too.

AE: Were you really?

SM: Yes, at six weeks old. My mom, she had three boys and she decided she wanted a little girl and so she went and got me and a year later she got my sister. We're both adopted, so I understand how that works.

AE: It's fun. It works good.

SM: It's easy too. It didn't hurt as much.

AE: We adopted Kimberly. She is the one we went up to Salt Lake and brought back with us. Is it okay if I tell you funny things that happened.

SM: Oh, yes. That's what I'd like.

AE: We got Kimberly. Me and my sisters, we got her and then we went to my sister's house to do some shopping, and when we got through, all at once my sister says... Oh, I forgot to tell you, we'd get our sisters to tend the babies, and this was a brand new baby, you know. I kept holding her all the time and pretty soon we was shopping and checking out things we wanted, and all at once my sister said, "Aren't you worried about your baby?" And I said, "What baby?" I'd forgotten. Oh, they looked at me.

SM: Where was the baby?

AE: The baby was home with my sister. You know they'd offered to do that so we could go shopping.

SM: Yeah. You were so excited and enthralled with what you were doing.

AE: Life is funny.

SM: It is, it's really funny. So you had two kids all together?

AE: No, we adopted more. Most of them are our grand children, you know. Now the first one, our son was Michael. He had to go to the Army too. He got married and he married a girl that wasn't suitable for him because she didn't want the kids. She wouldn't take

good care of them. So we have another one now and this little boy is Dustin. He is so cute and we love him to pieces. But his mother still treated him mean.

SM: So did you adopt him as your own, kind of?

AE: We had him most of the time. We have Amy, Amy Michelle. She's really our granddaughter. I've got some pictures.

SM: I'll look at them afterwards.

AE: It's got some pictures of Amy. You can remember better than I can.

SM: So let's go back to your childhood in Cannonville, back, way back there. You went to school and everything and you did your chores. What did you do once you were married? What was your role as a woman in the community?

AE: When I was married?

SM: Yeah.

AE: I run away and got married.

SM: Where did you run away? Did you elope?

AE: Yeah.

SM: You did? Where did you elope?

AE: Well we went down by St. George.

SM: Like Vegas or something? You didn't have a formal wedding; you just ran off and got married?

AE: We finally had a wedding, and all those kids. We got a whole bunch of kids and we love every one of them.

SM: It sounds like you've had a pretty happy life. And you just basically taught school, and your husband--what's your husband's full name?

AE: Bob Evans. The girls over here call him Big Bob. That was because he does have a big stomach on him, but he doesn't now because he's been dieting and he's lost quite a bit of weight, in less than a year.

SM: Good for him.

AE: Yeah.

SM: Is he your age?

AE: He's just a little bit older than me.

SM: You're seventy, right?

AE: Uh huh. On his next birthday he'll be eighty, I think. He had his birthday in January.

SM: What do you remember doing for entertainment other than singing?

AE: Oh, sewing. I love to sew. I wish I could show you a few things. My mother, her mother taught her how to quilt, so my mother taught me how to quilt - she taught all of her boys and girls how to quilt. Even the brothers quilted. Some of them would bellyache about it.

SM: Did you love it?

AE: I loved it and I still do. I love to quilt. I wish I had some to show you. I have some in Bob's house. His house is down there.

SM: I'm sure they're beautiful. So you did a lot of quilting, you did some reading and some singing. Now I understand Cannonville is a very isolated area. There weren't a whole lot of people around back then. Did you feel isolated at all?

AE: Yeah.

SM: You did? Did you feel lonely?

AE: Well the only reason I felt lonely was because there was nobody to play with. When we'd go to the ranch, there wasn't anybody there to play with.

SM: It would be just your family, right?

AE: Yeah. But we had to play with each other or else with the new baby that was there.

SM: When you played with your brothers and sisters, what did you play, do you remember?

AE: Marbles.

SM: Oh, you played marbles?

AE: Yes, everybody had to have their own taw.

SM: It was called a taw?

AE: Yeah.

SM: So there was some sort of feeling of isolation there, though, that you were quite alone in this big area. Was it hard or do you remember it as happy?

AE: I told you about my brother being killed. I resented that, but I knew it wasn't anybody's fault. It was sad, though. He was just a special man. He got married. He was married before he got killed.

SM: Really. So he widowed somebody. Did you spend a lot of time on horses?

AE: I wanted to, but we didn't have that many horses? Well, I don't remember having hardly any. Yeah, we had a few big ones that we could ride.

SM: And that was about it? I see. So do you think the community's changed a whole lot since you lived there?

AE: Yeah, I think so.

SM: Is it still a close-knit community?

AE: Well, I don't think there's enough people there now. Would this include Cannonville?

SM: Umhum.

AE: Well, yeah, there's more. Cannonville has grown.

SM: So were you talking about Hatch most of the time? Was that where the ranch was, in Hatch?

AE: No, the ranch was up higher in the hills there.

SM: I see, up from Cannonville?

AE: Uh huh.

SM: Okay, I see. So during the summer time you would go there probably for the higher elevation. Do you know anything about the Paria River? Did you spend any time there?

AE: Pahree? Yeah.

SM: Do you know Ruby Moore, Iris Bushnell?

AE: Who are they?

SM: I think they all grew up in Paria and they lived in Henrieville during the school year. They are all indigenous to the area. They are all Smith girls. Do you remember those girls? Ruby and Iris and Doris? They talk a lot about living in the town of Pahree and playing on the Pahree River when they were young. I'm just wondering if you ever went down there by the river.

AE: Well, we lived in there (Cannonville, on the Paria River) when we were little kids. We had kids to play with us. I'll tell you what we used to do. You know the river just goes along and when you go to look at it, there's little rocks in the sides. We used to pick them out and let them get dry and then we'd just get the ones that looked like a horse or an animal and then we would have us a little...

SM: A little barn or a little farm.

AE: Yeah.

SM: That's a good game. I'm almost out of tape. Do you have anything else you want to mention?

AE: We were talking about the Paria River.

SM: You spent some time as a little girl on there. Do you remember the floods?

AE: Uh huh. Yes.

SM: Those crazy floods. I've heard a little bit about that, how you could smell the sage before it would come thundering and rolling down and people would have to flee.

AE: I was trying to think if I have anything to tell you.

SM: Was it a good life?

AE: Yeah. Like I told you, my sisters helped me along with school things because I couldn't see them. Then when I got my glasses, the welfare had to pay for them. That's the truth. But they were the most wonderful thing I ever had. Oh, I could see. I could see.

SM: It was a blessing, wasn't it?

AE: Yes.

SM: So you grew up fairly poor? Your family was fairly poor.

AE: Yes, they definitely were.

SM: Everybody kind of was, but you didn't really know it because you didn't need money as much.

AE: That's true. We had each other.

SM: So it was still a happy life. Well, I'm going to shut this down for now. Thank you very much for being a part of this project. I appreciate it.

AE: You're welcome.

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Interview Agreement and Deed of Gift

In view of the historical value of this oral history interview and my interest in Utah history,

I, Andrs Johnson. Evans
please print or type your name

knowingly and voluntarily donate to the Utah Division of State History the audio tapes, any transcription, as well as any and all copyrights and other rights, title and interest that might exist. I also permit the Utah Division of State History full use of this document for whatever purposes they may have.

Interview Description

Date of Interview Sept 20/99

Primary Subject Growing up in Cannonville & the ranch in Hatch

Other Topics school & teaching.

Number of Tapes 1

Signature Andrs Evans

Date Sept. 20/99.

Address Charfield Memorial Hospital - Extended Care Facility

Phone _____