INTERVIEW WITH: Corris Swapp Morgan
INTERVIEWER: Suzi Montgomery
INTERVIEW NUMBER: One of One
DATE OF INTERVIEW: April 8, 1999
PLACE OF INTERVIEW: New Kanab Library
SUBJECT OF INTERVIEW: Life Experiences in Kanab/Johnson Canyon and her experiences as a working woman.
TRANSCRIBER: Vectra Solutions/JN
DATE: November 8, 1999

SM: Okay, Corris, I understand you grew up in Kanab, all your life, if you could just tell me when you were born and tell me a little bit about what they told you about your birth and the family into which you were born.

CM: I was born October 12, 1918, delivered at home by the midwife who is my aunt, Aunt Laura. She delivered all the babies at that time. We had a family of ten children, six boys and four girls.

SM: Where do you fall in that line?

CM: I'm right in the middle.

SM: What do you remember most about your family as a young girl?

CM: Well, we all got along well. The first I remember was when I was little we homesteaded up at Thompson and we'd spend our summers up there and then come down here in the winter to go to school.

SM: I see. Now where's Thompson? I'm not familiar with that.

CM: That's up Johnson Canyon, you go up beyond Johnson Canyon toward Alton - it's up in there.
SM: So, describe your house in the summer up at Thompson at Johnson Canyon.

CM: I can't remember it. I just remember it was a big long one.

SM: Do you remember if you slept with your sisters in the same bed?

CM: Oh, I always slept with my sister; I had a sister just younger than I, two-and-a-half years younger. Yeah, we all had to double up in beds.

SM: So was it two to a room?

CM: Oh, at times we'd just, I think we'd practically be in the same room. Two or three rooms - boys in one and the girls in one and mother and dad in another.

SM: Really, so I imagine there was some kind of eating room.

CM: Yeah, we had the kitchen and the living room.

SM: And what do you remember as a child? A day up in the summer up at that house? What would a day be like?

CM: Well, we used to climb the hills a lot but my older sisters and brothers were always out with the sheep and the cows and the horses. My oldest sister broke all of Dad's horses for him. And I remember there'd be floods and they'd go up to get the sheep and they'd have to stay overnight on the other side of the wash 'cause the flood would keep them out.

SM: So that was the Kanab Creek up there?

CM: Well, no, it was just a wash up there. Johnson Wash.
SM: Oh, the Johnson Wash would flood. Did you ever get stuck on the other side?

CM: I don't think so. I don't think I ever went out when it was stormy.

SM: So, I guess the girls and the boys were involved with sheep and cows. What was the main subsistence of your family, was it sheep herding or...?

CM: (Yes).

SM: Was it always both, cattle and sheep?

CM: (Yes)

SM: What was your role in the family as far as herding was concerned?

CM: Well, I didn't do much... I was nine when my dad died so we didn't ever go up there after that.

SM: I see. You stayed down in the Kanab.

CM: (Yes)

SM: So that ranch was when you were really young.

CM: (Yes)

SM: Okay, I'm going to try to see if I can get some memories of that ranch. Do you remember having a garden up there?
CM: No.

SM: You can't remember doing any gardening or... how about chickens or anything like that.

CM: Oh, we had chickens always.

SM: Did you have to go clean that coop or something?

CM: No.

SM: You didn't have to do that either? (Laughs)

CM: I didn't have to do anything. (Laughs)

SM: Where would you get your water? Did you have running water?

CM: No, I think we took it in in barrels from probably here or up to Sink Valley up by Alton. I think's where we got our water. Oh, we did have a pump out there so we must have had a well.

SM: You can remember a pump and pumping. Did you have electricity?

CM: No.

SM: So, how did you light your house, what do you remember about that?

CM: Kerosene lights. In fact, I remember when we got our electricity down here. We were
Corris Swapp Morgan
Page #5

one of the first ones in town to have it. Before that we had gas light, in the evening they
have to go up in the stairs and pump this gas down into the lights and light them all.

SM: So, they weren't just portable lights?

CM: (No.)

SM: They actually were...

CM: No, they were in the ceiling – ceiling lights.

SM: You'd pump and the gas would be let out from the ceiling through a pipe or something?

CM: (Yes), and down in and it had a mantle on it, they'd light it with a torch.

SM: Oh I have never heard about that. So, you didn't get electricity ever up there.

CM: No, no.

SM: I see. And that was probably right before the Depression that you left out of the canyon.
Do you remember Johnson town at all?

CM: (Yes)

SM: Could you tell me what you remember about Johnson town?

CM: Well, there really wasn't a town. I think my sister went to school maybe at the school out there for some time. But my grandpa, well, that's Joel Hill, he was the first one to go out
Corris Swapp Morgan  
Page #6

there and settle the place. And that's the one, the ranch where Sylvan is now.

SM: Where Sylvan is now?

CM: (Yes), Sylvan and his wife live out there now.

SM: I see. And so did he build the schoolhouse, do you know?

CM: No, no, I don't know who built the schoolhouse, I don't remember that.

SM: So, as a little girl did you ever go down and go through town for any reason, get mail or anything?

CM: No, no, there was no mail out there. Course the highway, that was the only highway through here, too, it went by Alton and down this way. Up here on the sand they didn't think they could build a road through the sand 'cause it moves all the time- the sand dunes. And I remember when they decided- they tried these tar roads and they always thought that the sand would just cover them up but it was quite different because sand blew right on across it always and it always lifted there. So that was when they built the highway up through there.

SM: Oh, so that was a discovery then. So when you were young there must have been a lot more traffic going through there then.

CM: Well, not much. (Laughing) I don't think... When I was young I think I remember the first car my dad had, a Model T, and I remember when we went out to the Grand Canyon we had to turn around and back up the hill. I was just told the other day why they had to do that.
SM: Why?

CM: Because there wasn't a pump on the gas and the gas would all go... When they'd start up the hill the gas would go back and the motor would quit so they had to back up so the gas would go down to the motor.

SM: Oh, that's funny. So they'd always back up all the hills, you remember doing that.

CM: (Yes).

SM: Oh, that's funny. So, you'd go down to the Grand Canyon, is that what you were saying?

CM: Well, I remember my first trip to the Grand Canyon. My dad used to catch the fawns, you know, I guess it was right along the beginning of the Depression when they started catching these fawns and ship them around the United States and we'd have to feed them on bottles. We'd have, oh, I don't know, some people in town had a whole lot- we had about twenty-five, I think.

SM: You'd keep them on your property?

CM: Yes, and we'd have them in the corral and we'd have to go out and feed them on these bottles all the time.

SM: Did you enjoy that?

CM: (Yes), it was fun.
SM: Oh, they must have been really cute.

CM: Oh, they were. Yeah.

SM: So, this was a way of making a living during the Depression.

CM: (Yes)

SM: I never heard that before, that's really interesting. So, a lot of people would go out and catch these fawns and then raise them and sell them? How would you ship them out?

CM: Well, the government was behind it and they'd allow so many to be caught and then they'd ship them out to different... I guess the parks or zoos or something in the United States, but I know they were shipped all over the United States. They were these mule deer.

SM: Do you know how they caught the fawns?

CM: I used to watch them but I don't know...

SM: Did they rope them?

CM: No, I think they'd catch them when they were real tiny and just... they'd go pick them up from the mother.

SM: I see. The trips down to the Grand Canyon would be in search of little fawns.

CM: Well, (yes) we'd live out there sometimes in the summer and catch the fawn and...
SM: Was it really isolated out in the Grand Canyon at that time of year?

CM: Oh, yeah, it was. Everything was isolated then, I mean, (laughs) you can't believe when you pass all these cars now.

SM: Do you miss that?

CM: No. Not really.

SM: Did you ever have a sense of isolation; did you ever feel isolated?

CM: I thought that was life.

SM: You didn't have anything to compare it to did you? What was the first time you ever remember realizing that you were isolated out here?

CM: I don't think I ever realized it till after I left here and come back.

SM: Oh, yeah? When you left it where did you go?

CM: My first job was in Cedar City, no it wasn't, it was at Grand Canyon. When the first lodge burned out there I went out in the fall, the first year I was out of school and waited tables at the construction camp where they were building the lodge. And then the next summer I went to Zion to work and waited tables down there for about five years. Five summers. And then I went to Cedar and worked at the El Escalante for three or four years and that was about the time of the war. And then I went to work at Hill Field and did radio repair work.
SM: Hill Field, huh? That was during the war?

CM: That’s right. In fact we were the first girls to get in radar, the class I was in, and they sent us back to Philadelphia to study it.

SM: Oh, how neat. So you were in Philadelphia then came back.

CM: We went back there two or three different times to study.

SM: Did you adapt pretty well to the city? Philadelphia’s a pretty big city.

CM: Oh, I loved it. (Laughs)

SM: You did? So it wasn’t a real stretch for you to go from being a country girl in isolation to a city?

CM: No.

SM: It was easy? Plus you were probably making a little more money at the time, too.

CM: Oh, yeah. When we went to work at Zion we made forty dollars a month and our board and room.

SM: What was the restaurant there called?

CM: It's Zion Lodge.
SM: Same one that's there now?

CM: Well, it burned and they've rebuilt it but it's the same place. Then in the winter, I worked there in the summer, and in the winter I worked at the Kanab Drug Store.

SM: Oh, I see. Tell me about working there. What was stocked on the shelves?

CM: About like it is today, probably less, you know, at that time it seemed like it. And I remember we'd get our order in about once a week and I had to stock all the shelves. And Mr. and Mrs. Edith owned it and I remember he would, every morning at eight o'clock, he'd put that key in the door. He was so methodical about everything he did. And I used to think I didn't want to ever work in an office.

SM: Too structured.

CM: I didn't want to get up in the morning and go to work and I just didn't want to be routine. So when I went on to college I never would take any kind of office work, I never took typing. Half a year in high school and then they had to send the typewriters to Orderville for half a year. But when we were little we had to, in the fourth grade, there wasn't enough teachers or rooms in school and we went to school in the courthouse - two rooms in the courthouse. And one teacher taught two classes one year. And we had about forty-two in our first grade.

SM: That many, huh?

CM: (Yes), and graduated with thirty-five. So, that was pretty good.

SM: Quite a class for a small town, you know.
CM: And now they complain because they have to have eighteen in their class. And then we'd have one teacher sometimes for two rooms.

SM: Do you think it was a good education you got?

CM: Yes. When I went to the University of Utah we had to take that placement test for English. And I had been out of school for about eleven years when I went there, I was going to go into nurses training and I went to school with some of these kids that had just graduated from high school in Cedar. We all took that test and every one of them had to take that English-A, you know, beginners English, and I didn't. So I think we got a good education here, really.

SM: So after your father died at age eight, right? You don't have a whole lot of memories of him I would imagine he was out shepherding a lot of the time?

CM: Yes he was.

SM: So, I want to talk about your mother and in your best words can you describe your mother to me, and your relationship with your mother.

CM: My mother was the sweetest woman. I had a brother-in-law and one day we were talking about my kids.... Nancy, she is the most patient, she had eight children and when her last one was born she said she had to go back to school cause she only had one year of college. So she went back to school to become a teacher. And when her baby was six months old she was back in school studying. And one day I said to Garn, "I don't know where I got her. I don't think she's mine." And he says, "She is, she's exactly like your mother, just exactly."
SM: This is your daughter?

CM: (Yes). And she was such a pretty little girl and he says, "And not only that, she looks just like her."

SM: Oh. So your mother was sweet.

CM: Yes, and we used to laugh because every one of the in-laws in the family figured that the one they were married to were mother's favorite. She had a way of making them all feel like they were her favorite.

SM: So, did you ever feel that way?

CM: Yeah, we all did.

SM: Oh, that's incredible. What do you remember her as her role in the family and what she did everyday. What do you remember?

CM: Mother did everything. She milked the cows; she did everything. There wasn't anything mother didn't do. And my dad died seven months before her last baby was born and when he was about a year old, they put her in as recorder down at the courthouse. And she went to work from then until the time she died. I think the baby of the family was about sixteen when she died. But she worked all the time.

SM: So she would work every day and then come home and try to take care of the kids?

CM: Well, by that time my oldest sister was... She got married right soon after mother went to
work and she used to take care of the baby.

SM: I see. What were her duties as a woman? I want to talk about the role of women in keeping a household.

CM: She did everything, she chopped the wood, she built the fire, she did everything. Of course my dad was always at the ranch. So there wasn't anything mother didn't do.

SM: Did she maintain a garden down in Kanab?

CM: Oh, yes.

SM: Do you remember helping with that?

CM: Yes, we had to go out and weed it and water it.

SM: And that's what you ate. That's what fed the family?

CM: Yeah, and then at that time we had lots of...of course we always raised a pig to have in the fall and then we always had some cattle that they'd kill and we ate lots of venison and chickens, we always chickens to take care of.

SM: So, she was a hard working woman.

CM: She sure was.

SM: Did you find that it was always a struggle to have enough money back then?
Corris Swapp Morgan
Page #15

CM: We didn't even think about money, nobody had it. (Laughs)

SM It wasn't part of life.

CM: No, I remember on the Fourth of July if we had fifteen cents, boy that was a lot of money. We'd go down and buy ice cream, oh, we'd buy all kinds of things with fifteen cents. The house that I was born and raised in is the one that my brother's daughter just purchased, and she's building a bed and breakfast out of it down here. And it was through Sears. My dad killed a lion and the money he got from that lion, he bought this house through Sears Roebuck.

SM: A lion out here?

CM: I think it was out at Grand Canyon, I'm not sure. And for the hide for that he got enough money to buy this house. I think it cost $659 or something. And they shipped it in, it was a pre-cut, shipped it into Marysville by train and then he and one of the neighbors went up on a wagon and brought it down and built that house. It's written up in the Utah Heritage thing. They're just starting now, and they're going to build some bedrooms on it and bathrooms and she's going to have a bed and breakfast there.

SM: So that house has got some historical value in your family. And you grew up in that house?

CM: And then, when I came back home with my four kids, we lived in there. My kids all grew up in there.

SM: Oh, really. And you've just recently moved out of there?
CM: Oh, it's been quite a few years. My youngest is 42 so...

SM: So, going back to your mother and her role... so you never thought about money and you just never thought you were poor or had any idea that you...

CM: Well, we knew that we didn't have any money but neither did anyone else.

SM: (Yes), and so you didn't feel poor, you felt just as rich as anyone. Do you think poor would be the wrong word to use because you guys had so much in a lot of ways, didn't you?

CM: Yeah, well, it just all depends on the way you look at it the words cause as far as money went, no, we didn't have any. Well, and then when mother went to work, she worked at the courthouse for about seventeen years, so she was one of the few people that had a job, around.

SM: Right, and was that during the Depression that she had that job?

CM: (Yes).

SM: And so, you were doing okay through the Depression then I guess.

CM: Well, we thought we were. Do I remember what?

SM: Going without more during the Depression than any other time?

CM: No. This oldest sister of mine sewed, she was quite a seamstress, so we always had nice clothes. At least we thought we did. (Laughs).
SM: All perception, huh? Do you remember any hardship the family went through, any sickness, any kind of problems that occurred, being that you were so isolated out here that you didn't have access to more modern facilities? Did anyone get sick?

CM: No, we always had Aunt Laurie.

SM: Who was a midwife, sort of caretaker?

CM: (Yes)

SM: Do you remember her helping you through any kind of...using any kind of medicine?

CM: I remember when I was about three or four years old, we used to have these kerosene lights and one night I was thirsty and I went in and there was a little pound lard bucket on the table. And I looked in it and I thought it was water and I picked it up and drank it. It was kerosene! And I can remember just sitting on Aunt Laurie's lap and coughing, this is when old Doc Norris was here. And I just coughed and coughed and coughed, and I think they said she held me for about three days, they didn't think I'd live.

SM: Did you drink the whole cup?

CM: Yeah, anyway I drank enough of it that it about killed me. (Laughs) But, as I got older I can remember walking down the street and I'd meet old Doc Norris and he'd come up and put his hand on my head and he'd say, "And you're still alive!" (Laughter)

SM: Oh, that's funny. So you remember that experience. What did they do for you, just wait it out and see kind of thing?
CM: (Yes).

SM: You never had a bout with any other kind of sickness?

CM: No, and then my brother was shot up on the ranch. One of my sister's girlfriends— they were out shooting birds or something, and she by accident shot him in the head. And they put him on a wagon and brought him into town. Doc Norris operated on him, took the bullet out of his head, and sewed it up and Ella was telling me awhile back, that she would... mother had all these other kids at home and she couldn't do much about it, but anyway, Ella would put him in the buggy and she'd push him down to Doc Norris and he'd take care of this and then bring him back home.

SM: Oh, my gosh!

CM: He's still alive.

SM: He took a bullet to his head and he's still living.

CM: (Yes)

SM: Wow. What do you think got you by? I guess I'm touching on faith. Do you think there was so much spirituality that people depended really on to get by?

CM: Oh, yes. Well, I just think we didn't know any better, I mean, that's all there was. You just did what you had to do— could do.

SM: So Doc Norris took a large part of the burden as far as curing people.
CM:   He... (Yes), I think he was about 93 when he died and he was still taking care of people.

SM:   Was he really? So, you didn't have to use any kind of traditional therapies or remedies that you remember? Like I know when I talk to some people they drank cod liver oil and they...

CM:   I drank cod liver oil. I took that... Oooo, it was the syrupy kind. I was a skinny little thing and I can remember when I was supposed to take the cod liver oil and I'd go in the kitchen and stand by the table and my brother would come in and he'd say, "Now, if we put a little bit of salt on this it will taste just like fish." And I'd just stand and scream and they'd finally get it down me. Oh!

SM:   You hated it!

CM:   (Laughs)

SM:   And why did they give it to you – cod liver oil?

CM:   Cause I was just such a skinny little soul. (Laughs)

SM:   So they were just trying to maintain your health with that?

CM:   (Yes)

SM:   Was there anything else they used that you took ritually that helped?

CM:   Well, like, I can remember, whenever we got a stomach ache, mother would always make
ginger tea, we'd drink ginger tea. I think we used - they weren't herbs as herbs, they were just stuff out of the cupboard - seasonings.

SM: Oh, yeah? They didn't get the herbs from the garden or anything?

CM: Oh, some, yeah.

SM: What about if you were congested? Is there anything you remember about that?

CM: They used Mentholatum.

SM: Oh, yeah. They'd rub it on your chest or something?

CM: And I can remember when you had a sore throat, they would make a poultice of onions and sugar and put around your neck.

SM: Really! And, it was a paste?

CM: No, they just sugar the onions and put them on a towel and just wrap it up.

SM: Really! I hadn't heard that one either. Do you think it worked?

CM: It did.

SM: Do you ever use any of those traditional remedies still?

CM: Well, I've never used that one but I'll tell you, I've always been interested in herbs. I really swear by herbs.
SM: Really? Which ones do you use?

CM: All of them. (Laughs) Echinacea, Valerian root. All of them.

SM: Well I'm going to turn over this tape and we'll continue.

End of Side One, Tape One
Begin Side Two, Tape One

SM: So, we're going to talk now about education for women in Kanab and I'm wondering, I know you went on in school...do you think it was equal opportunity for women and men or girls and boys to get an education back then? Did they encourage girls to go on in school or boys to go on in school?

CM: The only thing that ever upset me was our family was always interested in Geology, and I have two brothers that were both geologists. And I wanted to study geology and when I went to the University of Utah I tried to take it and they wouldn't let girls take it.

SM: Really?

CM: I was so mad! But that's the only thing I remember getting upset about.

SM: So they just wouldn't let you register for that class?

CM: No. Well, and then my daughter, Nancy, when she was in high school, she wanted to take mechanics. They wouldn't let her register for that cause she was a girl.
Corris Swapp Morgan
Page #22.

SM: Ah, so there was a little bit of discrimination going on. Tell me about your career in school, just all you can remember. Were females influential to you? Start by describing the schoolhouse.

CM: Well, we only had one school and everybody was in it. I think there was about 300 students in the first to the twelfth grade when I was in school. And, oh, I don't know, I remember having the same teachers year after year, not in succession, but we'd skip a year or two and then we'd have that same teacher again.

SM: Was that all right?

CM: Yes.

SM: How many grades did you complete?

CM: Twelve.

SM: So you graduated.

CM: All of our family graduated, there wasn't one that didn't.

SM: Really? So all the girls and boys graduated. Was it encouraged by your mother to?

CM: Oh, yeah. Mother, as high as the classes went when Mother was little, she went to the eighth grade. But she always worked, well, like recorder, and her dad had a store and she worked in the store and Mother had a lot to do with the Indians. They always used to come in and talk to her in the store. And I remember after she died, my sister was down in our old house and this old Indian that used to know mother a lot...mother lived down
Corris Swapp Morgan
Page #23

on Main Street and the Indians used to come down there a lot and sit on their lawn. Come out to moccasin and…

SM: What Indians were they, the Paiutes?

CM: The Paiutes. And so this one old Indian came up home and she knocked on the door and Ella went to the door and she said, "Your mama." Ella says, "Mama died." And she says that Indian woman just covered up her face and just cried and sat out on the lawn all afternoon.

SM: Oh. That's amazing. So she had a really tight relationship with....

CM: (Yes), she did a lot of translating for the Indians.

SM: Did she speak Paiute?

CM: Well, she could understand everything they said I guess.

SM: Wow! Did that rub off on you in any way?

CM: No. You know, I get along with them all right. I worked at Barco and I'd have to give these tests all the time. I'll tell you, those Paiutes always got the highest score out of everyone. But, they'd do what they wanted to do after they got to work. They wouldn't do as much as they should, but they're smart.

SM: Were you ever part of that placement program, where they put Indian children into homes.
CM: No, but my brother was.

SM: Do you have a take on how that worked or whether that was effective?

CM: It was fine, the only thing was- now my brother and his wife took this one girl from out in House Rock Valley and in fact she still... My brother died but this gal I went to St. George with yesterday is my sister-in-law- she was married to him. And they took in this girl and I think they had her about three years, and her mother and dad come and brought a new baby boy to them and wanted them to take him. So, Clyde went to the church and talked about it and they said, "Don't do it." They said, "They tell you that they want you to take them but they want you to take it just till it's old enough so they can handle it and then they'll take him back." They just didn't want to take care of them while they were that little. These were Navajos.

SM: Was that placement program mostly with Navajo Indians?

CM: As far as I know. I know a lot of them they'd take them up to Brigham City to that school up there.

SM: So there was not necessarily a real trust between the Indian nation and the white people of Kanab.

CM: Well, it's just that the Navajos just wanted them to take them as long as they were a problem and then they wanted them back.

SM: I see, yeah, and so that wouldn't have been very easy thing to do, give up a child after raising them.
CM: No. Oh, if Clyde could have got that little boy and kept him he would have loved it, but when they said, no, he decided not to do it.

SM: Do you remember any Indian kids in your class?

CM: We never had any Indians. I remember the only two Negroes I ever saw. (Laughs)

SM: Oh, really. Where? I've never seen a black person in Kanab.

CM: The first Negroes I ever saw was when I went to Los Angeles. I worked for TWA for about ten years and of course all the porters were Negroes, and I just loved them, they were just wonderful. And then when my husband went in the service, we were in Houston and that's when I first started hearing about how bad they were. So, in Kanab we didn't know any. And when I was working at Parry's, one day we had this bus come in, there was two busloads of Negroes from the south and they slept there that night and they said they just couldn't wait to get out of here, they were scared to death of these hills. They'd been to Zion and Bryce and they were just going crazy, they just hated it. They didn't ever want to be around these hills. So I think that's why a lot of them, you know, why we've never had any down here.

SM: It's just not really their style.

CM: They were frightened.

SM: So, yeah, there wasn't a whole lot of ethnic diversity in this area, it was mostly whites.

CM: And at that time, of course, the Indians didn't go to school with us or anything.
SM: Didn't come around a lot. You don't remember playing with any Indian children?

CM: (Yes), I remember this – we used to call her SallyAnn – used to do mother's washing. And she had some little kids and she'd bring them with her and we'd play with them.

SM: And did you have a good time with them?

CM: Oh, yeah.

SM: Oh, well, that's interesting. Did you learn anything that you could share right now? Did they do anything differently that you did?

CM: Not that I realized, no.

SM: Kids don't really separate things at all which is great. I wish we could all continue like that.

CM: I do too, it would be nice.

SM: Let's talk about entertainment. When you were a young girl, there wasn't much TV or movies, at least not very often. What did you do for entertainment? What do you remember? How did you play? What entertained you back then?

CM: Do you know, I remember one Christmas Day, the sun was shining and there was no snow and we had all of our toys. We'd get up about four o'clock in the morning and we'd run to all the neighbors, just all over town, you'd have to go see what everybody got. And then we'd leave all the toys in the house and go out and we'd have a ball that we made out of yarn of stockings, put a little rubber thing in the middle of it and wrap it
around and have this ball, we'd go out and play softball in the road all day.

SM: Oh really? So you'd wrap a rubber ball with the yarn for your softball. What else did you do?

CM: We used to climb the hills a lot. And we played paper dolls, cut them out of the Sears catalog and make little houses.

SM: Oh, that's cute. Do you remember any specific games you played?

CM: Oh, yeah, we'd go out in the evening and play 'Run Sheepy Run' and 'Kick the Can' and tag and hide-and-go-seek, anything. But we always would go out in the evening and play games.

SM: Did you ever swim?

CM: Uh, John Cram built the swimming pool down here. Course right up there was a reservoir, before he built the swimming pool, and we used to go up there and swim a lot. And then there was two reservoirs down below town and we'd go down there and swim. But when he built this swimming pool down here, we were talking about this the other day, he and his wife would let us work, do different things, like, oh, wash windows and pick up fruit off the ground and clean the yards and stuff, so we could go swimming free cause we didn't have any money to go swimming there.

SM: It was the barter system, a little work for some free swimming in the pool time.

CM: Yeah, he just sort of saved the town as far as I was concerned. He built the dance hall up here too.
SM: Tell me about that.

CM: Up here on the hill there's a... What do they call it? I don't remember, but anyway there's a dance hall, the floor's still up there.

SM: The floor's still up there?

CM: Yes, that's where Norm has his house.

SM: By that water tank there? Is it right there?

CM: Yes, and sometimes they'd have these orchestras come in like...well it was at the time when the CCs were here. And they'd have these, I remember a Philippino orchestra that used to come here and, oh, that was more fun. I think I was a sophomore and we hired them for our sophomore skid and that night we took in $400. They'd never heard of taking that much money in for a dance and I think we charged ten cents a ticket.

SM: Wow! (Laughter)

CM: But that was really something because these CCs were here and they just brought somebody in to do something. But, I was thinking about Whit Parry. He would do anything to get people into town.

SM: Really. Is he the one who hired the Philippino band?

CM: No, he wasn't even here then, he was from Cedar. No, it was just our class that did it.
SM: Did you go up to the dances quite often?

CM: Oh, yeah, we always danced.

SM: And that was a good time.

CM: Yes. And then at that time they had the show house down here too- we went to that.

SM: What kind of movies?

CM: You know, I have always been able to remember names and all of a sudden I can't remember names. It really upsets me. But, oh, we had a lot of western shows, I remember that. I remember they'd have a serial, Red Rider, or something and we'd have to go to the show that night when that serial was on. (Laughs)

SM: You loved it, huh? So there was a fair amount of entertainment.

CM: Yes, well, as far as we were concerned there was.

SM: Yes, it was quite a bit. Anything in comparison I suppose. So as you grew up and you finished high school, tell me a little bit about meeting your husband. I understand he was a car salesman.

CM: Well, I was married before that. When I worked in Cedar, I married...well, we were going to get married, in fact, we were on our way to Las Vegas to get married when they bombed Pearl Harbor, so we decided not to. So then he come back and joined the Air Corps and I went up to Hill Field to work. Two years later we were married. Well, I guess it wasn't that long, anyway, he graduated as a pilot and we were married about the
same night he graduated. And then he was training in Oklahoma and the night before they were supposed to go overseas they were flying formation in the B-17s, you know, (used to fly like this) they were the lead plane. His pilot was the, he'd been the instructor there for so many years, training the pilots. And the plane right behind them came down and the propeller cut the tail off the plane and that plane nose-dived and they were all killed.

SM: So, devastation for you, you were freshly married and lost a husband. So then you had to go on.

CM: Yes. So, the first thing I did, we went to Los Angeles, a couple of friends and I, and that was when everything you did you had to get in line, you know, down there. You'd get in line and you didn't even know what you were in line for. We'd see a big line so we'd go get in the line just to see...(Laughter)

SM: You would? (Laughs)

CM: So we got in this one line and when we got to the other end it was the employment office. All three of us got a job at the airport. One gal was secretary to Grant, president of the church; he was president of Western Airlines. She was his secretary. And then her sister went to work sending messages, you know, with the airline, and I went to work at the front desk.

SM: So after all you ended up in a routine job, huh?

CM: Well, we were going to stay two weeks when we went down there so when the two weeks were up these two gals come and they said, "Well, we're going on over to Phoenix like we planned, are you going with us?" And I said, "Yes" so I went out and told my boss that
we were going to leave and he said, "Corris, we've just trained you, we just got you where you can do it" and he says, "Please stay till we train somebody!" And I said okay, so I stayed ten years. (Laughter)

SM: Oh, my gosh. So did you girlfriends leave?

CM: They left.

SM: And you stayed by yourself in L.A.?

CM: (Yes), by that time I knew someone so they found me a place to live and stuff.

SM: Oh, really. Now, is that where you met your second husband?

CM: No. It was when I was working at the Hotel Utah was when I met him. He came up there from California and I met him and married and had four children.

SM: Wow!

CM: And then we lived in practically every state in the union.

SM: Was that hard on the kids, to move so much?

CM: I don't think it was hard on them, they don't remember it being hard on them. When my daughter first married up there to Alton, she said, "All of them are going to Salt Lake" and I said, "Aren't you going?" And she said, "No" I said, "Don't you want to, do you feel bad cause you're not going?" She says, "No," she says, "Mother, I've traveled so much in my life I don't care if I never travel again." (Laughter)
SM: Really, she got it out of her system, huh?

CM: Yeah, but she likes to travel now, she still goes. We all do.

SM: That's fun. So, your husband was a car salesman, tell me about, he would travel all over and sell cars?

CM: Yeah! Just get settled and then he'd move. And we lived in Florida for two years and that was when I decided I wasn't going to stay there any longer. He was a womanizer.

SM: Really. Oh, boy. So he moved the family everywhere and he was just not a good man. You fell out of love with the guy.

CM: So, I just piled the kids all in the car and everything I could get in the car and we came home.

SM: That was a pretty brave move, wasn't it?

CM: Well, I just couldn't think of anything else to do. I knew I wasn't going to stay.

SM: Retrospectively, was that a good thing to do?

CM: Oh, yeah. It was the only thing to do.

SM: So you have been here ever since? And did you ever remarry?

CM: No.
SM: So, did Kanab change in the time that you left and came back?

CM: You know, I was thinking about that the other day. When I left here there were about 1200 people here. In all these years that I was married, there were still 1200 people every time I’d come back. And all of a sudden, when I moved back in 1960, they said there was 1600 people. And now they say there’s, well they printed anyway, 3000. Depends on...you can ride down the street and see the empty houses sometimes and figure that’s about 3000. When they get filled up there’s a lot more than that. But, they fill up in the summer and in the winter they die out.

SM: The town basically shuts down in the winter, doesn’t it?

CM: It doesn’t as much as it used to, though. When I was working in the drug store, oh, there were just so few people. I remember one Christmas, a bus came in one night and they were snowed in here for two weeks and they used to come in the drugstore for ice cream sodas and Cokes. Oh, we were busy those two weeks.

SM: Cause everyone was stuck here and you were the only store open? That would be scary to be stuck here in the winter, there’s not a lot going on! (Laughter) Let’s talk about your time at the Parry Lodge. Just tell me a little chronology of how you came to work there and what you remember about the whole scene there and this crazy Hollywood scene that came into town.

CM: Well, this was just when I left my husband and I was looking for a job. My sister lived in Flagstaff and I went there with her first and we went to Phoenix and looked for a job and we went to Salt Lake and looked for a job. And this was about February, and I came in here and my sister said, “Why don’t you go down and see if you can work at Parry
Lodge?'' Whit had just come back to take the lodge back over. So I went down and he was out in the yard working. And I walked up there and I said, "I'm looking for a job." And he says, "Corris, I remember you working at TWA in Los Angeles, I used to go in there and fly out" and he says, "I remember going to the Hotel Utah and you were working there." He says, "I'm looking for you!"  (Laughter) So I went to work for him. In April I started.

SM:  Was he a good guy?

CM:  Oh, he was wonderful. You know, I guess he was quite wild, he had a quite a wild name, but anyway, he would do anything for anybody if they needed it. I just loved him. He was so good to my kids.

SM:  What was he like?

CM:  (Laughs) He was so different, he was everything.

SM:  I guess he was quite a connoisseur of food.

CM:  Oh, yes. I remember this one year he went as a...I don't know what his position was, he took this boat trip around the world and he came back and he had all kinds of recipes. He had all these local housewives were his cooks. And he would go in and take them these recipes and have them make them and he could taste it and tell them whether it was good or not and if it wasn't he'd have them change it to his way. And he had to have it served exactly like he wanted it. When he'd order his meat- Bernel Lewis was the bishop, the mayor, the judge and the butcher, all the same time, and I remember standing there by the telephone one day and Whit picked it up and he dialed and he says, "I want to know whether I have the butcher, the mayor, the judge or the bishop."  (Laughter) He says,
"Well, I want to talk to the butcher." And he just swore a blue streak at him. And when he got through he says, "Don't ever send me any meat like that again!" Boy, he had to have nothing but the best. And then at night when (I worked mostly days because I did the books) but he said he closed the dining room at ten and if someone got in late and wanted to eat, he'd have somebody stay till after twelve to serve them, because he says, "They've come so far here to eat..." You know, he was noted all over for his food, and people would just drive for miles to get here to eat his food.

SM: Really! He would really bring them in then.

CM: Oh, and those cooks he had were just wonderful.

SM: So what do you remember about the movie scene?

CM: Well, and that's another thing, I remember once, it was fall and it hadn't been a very good summer, we hadn't had any movies and it hadn't been a very good summer. He didn't have enough money to give them their last paychecks. So he called this Glen Cook who was head of the serial, Death Valley Days. He called him and wanted him to come out and film some series. And it was getting a little late in the season, September is what it was. And Glen Cook said, "But what if we don't have good weather and then we'd all just sit around there." So Whit says, "I'll tell you what, you come out and any time you can't film, you won't have to pay your hotel bill." He was quite a gambler. He says, "I'll just take a chance on it." Well, the first night they got here it snowed, September the 15th. And it snowed. I remember over in Parowan they said it just froze all the peaches, all these big, ripe peaches on the trees, it just froze them. But, anyway, this plane was coming in the next morning with all of the stars on it and stuff, cause they were supposed to start filming the next day. And the next day the sun come out and melted all the snow and they started filming that day. But he worked deals like that; he was just wonderful.
SM: So, he boosted the economy quite a bit.

CM: He really did. One time the waitresses- he would only pay the waitresses 80 cents and the one across the street would pay them a dollar. So they had complained to the state and the state come down and was going close Whit down cause he wouldn't pay his waitresses more than 80 cents. He says, "I absolutely refuse. They make more than anybody in this town on tips." He says, "I see the money they take out of here and I'm not going to pay them a dollar an hour." He says, "If they want the dollar they can go over to Peaches." And so the next morning he went down to the bank and they'd closed his account, the state had because he refused to pay that. So he called somebody that was head of it. Course he went to school in Salt Lake, he knew all these men up there. And he called this one and he said, "You know, I'm the biggest payroll in the county and if that bank account isn't open in one hour I close my back door and I'll never open it again."

SM: So they opened it?

CM: It was opened.

SM: Wow! He had a lot of pull!

CM: He really did.

SM: I mean he got away with his own rules.

CM: Yeah, he did.
SM: That's amazing. Do you remember, I guess you didn't get tips, but do you know what people would tip back then, or how much money people would make?

CM: I don't know. I remember when I got up to two dollars an hour. And I had four kids to take care of. And then in the winter when they'd close down, we'd all go over to Panguitch, they didn't have an office here, we'd go over to Panguitch to get our unemployment, sign up for that. But I usually, I think there was only one winter, maybe a month, that I drew the unemployment. The rest of the time I'd go to work for Forest Service or BLM or somebody.

SM: You always had a job, though.

CM: I usually had a job.

SM: Do you remember those days as really good days, the time when Whit Parry was here?

CM: Oh, yeah. I worked such long hours though. I always was at work at six o'clock in the morning and sometimes I was working at eleven o'clock at night.

SM: Really! You didn't get a chance to be with your kids much then?

CM: Oh, I was with them a lot. Like I said, I didn't ever do much housework, my house you can't get in it. But when I'd have a day off I'd just pile the kids in the car and we'd go someplace.

SM: Really. Well, that's more important anyway.

CM: I always felt like it was. And I guess they think it was cause they think it was great.
SM: Well, I don't have any more questions for you, do you have anything else you'd like to say or add to this history of Kanab?

CM: Well, the only thing I can say, it's funny, you compare it to other places and you think there's isn't a lot going on here, but I think nearly every kid that ever grows up here wants to come back and live here. They always want to come back.

SM: An attachment to the land and the memories.

CM: I don't think I've ever heard anyone say they didn't want to come back and live here when they get older.

SM: It's a beautiful place to be.

CM: Yes.

SM: Well, that's a good way to end. Thanks Corris very much for a great interview.

CM: Thank you.
Interview Agreement and Deed of Gift

In view of the historical value of this oral history interview and my interest in Utah history,
1. [Signature: Corris Swapp Morgan.]

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   April 8/99.

Primary Subject   Life experiences in Kansas and time at
                  the Barry Lodge.

Other Topics   entertainment; jobs; wartime; family

Number of Tapes  1

Signature   Corris Morgan

Address   177 East 450 North
           84741

Date   April 8/99.

Phone   694-2323

Preserving and Sharing Utah's Past for the Present and Future