

Jeanette Clawson

Roy, UT

An Interview by

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LAYTON HISTORY COLLECTION

Verdeland Park Oral History Project

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**Layton City
and
Heritage Museum of Layton**

GOOD MORNING, MY NAME IS TORI FAIRBANKS, AND TODAY IS MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23RD, 2024. JOINING ME TODAY IS JEANETTE CLAWSON, AND WE ARE AT HER HOME IN ROY, UT. I'M INTERVIEWING HER FOR THE VERDELAND PARK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.

TF: Thanks so much for letting me come to your house and visit with you for a little bit.

JC: You're welcome. I'm glad to do it.

TF: Let's go ahead and start out by having you tell me where and when you were born, and your parents' names. Then we'll talk a little bit about your childhood, where you grew up, and the things you enjoyed doing as a child.

JC: All right. I was born in Logan, UT. I was the sixth child in my family, and I was the only one born in a hospital. For a little while, my mom, my dad, and all six of us kids lived in with my Grandma Anderson in Millville, which is just outside of Logan. And when I was really young, we moved to Clearfield. That's when Hill Field opened, so he got a job there, and we bought a house in East Campbell Heights. I remember our brand-new little house surrounded with piles of sand all over, and I remember our toilet was sitting in the front room when we moved in. It wasn't quite ready for us yet. (laughs)

But anyway, I grew up there, and my girlfriends were Verna and Rita Dickerson, and Bonnie Reed. The four of us palled around together, and we're still friends, although we don't see each other much anymore. Once in a while, we keep in touch. But I really didn't do a lot when I was growing up, other than go to Yellowstone every year on vacation. Even after I was married and had kids, we tried to go for a week every year and stay in the little cabins they had for rent there. We had to take everything with us, even our own broom. There was just a place to sleep, and I think there was a table to eat on.

But anyway, we didn't do a lot back then. We just entertained ourselves with paper dolls. I remember playing with those a lot, and riding our bikes, and playing Kick the Can with all the neighbors. It was a lot of fun growing up there.

TF: What year were you born?

JC: 1940.

TF: And what were your parents' names?

JC: John and Loretta Anderson.

TF: Were they both from Cache Valley?

JC: My mom was from Daniels, Idaho. She grew up on a farm just outside of Malad. But my dad was from Cache Valley.

TF: What part of Cache Valley?

JC: Millville.

TF: Okay. You said you had six siblings, and you were the youngest, right?

JC: Right.

TF: I have an uncle, Larry Anderson, from Cache Valley, but I know there are quite a few Anderson families. But anyway, how old were you when you moved to Clearfield?

JC: I was three.

TF: Old enough to remember the toilet. (laughs)

JC: Yes—old enough to remember the toilet, as well as sitting on the floor and eating an orange with my mom, because we had no furniture.

TF: Those are the memories that stick with you. (laughs) Did you move to Clearfield because your dad worked at the Naval Supply Depot before Hill Field?

JC: No, he just worked at Hill Field.

TF: Do you know what he did?

JC: I know he worked on the runway all the time. Like in the winter, he'd have to plow snow and keep the runway open at all times. I think he did maintenance on the runway, and they kept him busy.

TF: I'll be they did, especially back when there was all that snow. Back when it actually *did* snow, unlike today. (laughs) You said you remembered a lot of sand around your house. Did that change as more houses were built in your neighborhood? Were there trees and grass planted later, or did it stay pretty sandy?

JC: It was still sandy, but my dad always had a beautiful yard. He'd work all day, then he'd come home and work out in the yard until it was dark outside.

TF: He worked really hard.

JC: Yeah.

TF: Did your mom stay home to raise you?

JC: She did until I got into school, then she got a job at Hill Field in the filing department.

TF: I'm guessing there were a lot of files to keep track of back then.

JC: Yeah, things like that were a lot harder back then.

TF: It's interesting how, when Hill Field came in, a lot more women went to work at that time. Do you have any memories of WWII?

JC: The only thing I remember is the rations. We could only get so much gas, and butter came in a plastic container with a little red thing in it, and we'd have to mix it to make it yellow. But I don't really have any memories of anything else.

TF: Do you have any memories of the Naval Supply Depot?

JC: I remember hearing them play [Reveille] every night; but I never could quite figure out why they had a Navy base in Utah.

TF: It does seem unusual, because when you think of the Navy, you think of water.

JC: Right.

TF: It seems like at the time you lived in Clearfield, there were mostly sailors who lived at the Anchorage, by the Supply Depot, as opposed to families. Did you know any families or have any classmates who lived there?

JC: I don't remember. I know we had a few neighbors who were in the Air Force who lived around there.

TF: Do you remember the POW camp there? I think it wasn't far from there.

JC: No, I don't.

TF: I found some old pictures of the Supply Depot when it was being built, and there were one or two pictures of the POW camp that was near there. But I don't know where it was in relation to the Supply Depot.

JC: I didn't actually hear about it until just a few years ago, and I was really surprised.

TF: I grew up in Cache Valley, and I guess some of the older buildings at the fairgrounds actually housed some POW's during the war as well.

Do you have any memories from the winter of '48 and '49, with all the record-breaking snow?

JC: Yes. I remember my dad shoveling the snow, and it was high on both sides of the sidewalk. And I remember jumping off the porch into it, and I sunk down into it. (laughs) We had some really good snowstorms that year. I remember some of those.

TF: Was school ever cancelled when you had those big snowstorms?

JC: I don't remember for sure.

TF: I wondered, because growing up in Cache Valley, we only ever had school cancelled once, and it was when the snow on the roads came up past our knees. Cache Valley was just to getting big snowstorms. (laughs) We never had snow days.

Did your dad serve in the military?

JC: Yeah, he was in the National Guard, but he never had to go active duty.

TF: That's good. I think the Guard is a good way to go.

JC: Yeah, especially where our family had so many kids.

TF: Yeah. Sometimes, it's better to serve in the Guard than going active duty. What was Clearfield like when you were growing up, and how have you seen it change over time?

JC: I feel like it was the best time to grow up there. It was so different than it is now.

TF: What are some of your memories about growing up in that particular area, and during that particular time?

JC: We didn't have any worries, really. We knew it was time to go home when the street lights came on, and the neighbor kids—both boys and girls—played together all the time. We were all good friends, and we all got along. We had a lot of fun together.

TF: In a lot of interviews I've done with people who grew up in Verdeland Park, they talk about the kids playing together in those enclosed court areas, and how that made them close. And they all felt safe. Was the neighborhood you grew up in similar to that?

JC: Yes.

TF: And you lived in Verdeland Park after you were married, is that correct?

JC: Yeah. We lived in B-8, and it was a single unit. We were the eighth one as you went in, and there was a single unit facing us. I met some great neighbors there. And then on the other end were some other good friends of ours.

TF: When you lived in Clearfield as a child before that, did you have that same ... I guess you would say "sense of community", maybe, as children who grew up in place like Verdeland Park? With that sense of closeness to all the kids around you?

JC: Well, everybody knew everybody in our neighborhood, and there was just a single row of houses. We were the seventh one down. But everybody was friends, and everyone got along great. I grew up in a good neighborhood.

TF: What are some of the changes that you've seen since then, besides the growth in the area?

JC: The people. Everyone is so different now. I know there are still a lot of good people, but it seems like everybody is so busy. Back then, it was so much more laid back, and people had time for everything.

TF: Right. So, did you grow up in Clearfield all through high school?

JC: Yes.

TF: And after high school, did you moved to a different area? Or did you stay here after you got married?

JC: We had a basement apartment on East Gentile. Clay and Grace Adams had a big house, right where the overpass is on Gentile. We lived in their basement. They had a grocery store, and they were wonderful people. They just took us under their wings.

TF: Did you live in Verdeland Park before or after you lived in the basement apartment?

JC: Well, we moved into a duplex up on Mountain Rd. that Ken Walton had, and we were there for a couple years. Then my husband Ron got a job at Mountain Fuel Supply in Salt Lake,

so we thought, "Let's move to Bountiful and save money on gas." But we were back in Layton every day after he got off work, because we missed our families and friends so much. So, we started looking for a place to move back to, and we found the house in Verdeland Park.

TF: What year did you move there?

JC: 1959.

TF: It seems like they started selling things off in '61 or '62. Had they already started moving units out by the time you got there?

JC: We moved out in 1960, so they hadn't started doing that yet.

TF: Describe what Verdeland Park was like when you moved in.

JC: Well, we had to do quite a bit of work to the house when we moved in, but I was so excited, because they gave us all the paint we needed. So, we painted it and cleaned it up. And I think we had a cement tub, and it was pretty bad. So, I decided I would just paint it. I don't know what kind of paint it was, but everything I ate for two or three days after tasted just like paint. (laughs) It probably wasn't too good for me.

But anyway, I loved it there. It was such a fun place to live. We were crowded, because we lived in the single unit, but it was still fun. Jerry and Hannah Williamson lived in the single unit facing us, and they had five little kids. And on the other side of us were our friends, Bob and Cheryl Park, and they had two little kids.

TF: Did you have any kids at that time, or was it just you and your husband?

JC: We had two boys—Brad and Brent. Brent was born when we lived there.

TF: Was it hard to give them baths in the tub, where it was made out of cement?

JC: I don't think so. It was fine.

TF: I've interviewed some people who lived there in the '40s say that the tubs were rough, because they were made out of cement. They said that they were better though, once they were painted.

JC: I put a lot of paint on ours. (laughs)

TF: When you moved in, did it seem like some of the older families started moving out, and younger families were moving in?

JC: In our area, there were younger families. And actually, my husband's sister and her husband moved over in just across the street from us as well.

TF: During the time you were there, do you remember any delivery men who came through? I've heard of the milkman, and I've heard of a person selling produce.

JC: I don't remember anyone selling produce, but I do remember the milkman.

TF: Do you have any memories of shopping on Main Street when you lived there?

JC: Oh yes. Shopping on Main Street, and West Gentile, like B&B—Brailsford and Biggs.

TF: And you mentioned the Adams store. Was it called Adams Market?

JC: It seemed like it was Adams Supermarket, or something like that.

TF: Did you ever go to Kowley drug?

JC: Oh yes. I have good memories of Kowley Drug.

TF: You mentioned your neighbors, the Williamsons and the Parks. Do you remember any of your other neighbors?

JC: No, not really.

TF: What was your yard in Verdeland Park like? Were you able to plant rose bushes, or anything like that?

JC: I remember that it didn't have much grass, and I remember my husband mowing it with a push mower.

TF: Do you remember how big the trees were? People I've interviewed who lived there when it was first built say there weren't any trees, or that the trees were small, because they'd just planted them. When you lived there, were the trees big enough to give you shade?

JC: I don't think we had much shade. It was pretty sparse.

TF: Okay. Where did you move after you lived in Verdeland Park?

JC: We bought a home up on 217 Aircraft Ave.

TF: Did your husband continue to work in Salt Lake?

JC: Yes.

TF: So, he kept commuting. What was it about Layton that made you stay?

JC: Well, he was raised in Layton, and his mom and dad lived down on West Gentile. And I always loved Layton. Although I was raised in Clearfield, I call Layton my home.

TF: Did you see any major differences between Clearfield and Layton?

JC: Layton had a lot more to offer, like shopping. We were so excited when Kings came to Layton. That was a big thing.

TF: I remember our Kings in Cache Valley. I would go to their lower floor because, they had a big toy selection. If my sister and I were good during the week, we got to go to Kings and choose a toy.

JC: Yeah. And Santa Claus always came to our Kings. He would usually land in a helicopter.

TF: I've heard people say that he sometimes came in a fire truck, but I didn't know he came in a helicopter.

JC: They also had reindeer there.

TF: I heard someone else say that a local farmer would bring his reindeer in when Santa came.

JC: Yeah. They had some kind of fencing around them, and you could see him all the time. It was great.

TF: You don't get to see reindeer anymore at Christmas. (laughs) What part of Layton was this?

JC: Kings was on East Gentile.

TF: Okay. Well, I think Santa coming in on a helicopter is one of the best ways for him to come. So, how many kids did you end up having?

JC: We had four.

TF: That's wonderful. We they all raised here in Layton?

JC: Yes.

TF: Great. Well, how do you feel that Layton shaped you as a person? And how did living here shape your perspective on life?

JC: Well, everybody was so friendly, and it was just a great place to raise kids. That was the most important thing to us.

TF: And it seemed like family was really central to a lot of people who lived here, and it seems like the community—even though there were different parts of Layton—it seems like there was mostly a strong sense of community in whatever part of Layton people lived in.

Tell me what you remember about diversity. I've heard that both Clearfield and Layton were pretty diverse for Utah during this time because of the military, and the families that Hill Air Force Base brought in. Do you remember a lot of diversity?

JC: I remember more diversity in Clearfield.

TF: I've heard that there were also, for example, Japanese and Hispanic families that had farms in the area. Do you remember specific groups like that when you were growing up?

JC: No, mostly just our close neighbors in Verdeland Park. Then when we moved to Aircraft, there were a lot of members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints on that street.

TF: Did you associate mostly with families who had lived in Layton for a long time? Or did you associate any with any military families who lived in your neighborhood?

JC: I don't recall any military families in our neighborhood.

TF: They might have in different areas. And when you moved to Aircraft, were those newer homes? Or had they been around for a little while?

JC: They were fairly new. There is an older part of Aircraft off of Gentile, but we lived in the newer subdivision maybe half a block away. We faced east, and then there was a row of houses facing west. And Whitesides Elementary was right there.

TF: Right. Well, this is kind of unrelated, but do you have any memories of Vietnam, or JFK, or anything else that happened during that time?

JC: I remember what I was doing the day that JFK was shot. I was going to go have my hair done for Thanksgiving at my friend's house.

TF: Did you hear about it on the radio, or TV?

JC: It was on TV while I was getting ready to go have my hair done.

TF: What were your feelings during that time?

JC: It was horrible. I couldn't believe that that had happened.

TF: It was such a different time then. I was too young to remember when there was an attempt on Reagan, but that was the closest comparable thing that would have happened when I was young.

What do you remember about the Vietnam years?

JC: Not a lot. I remember there were a lot of people against it, and I thought it was pretty sad that so many children and people were being killed. It just didn't make sense.

TF: Right. Do you have any memories of the 4th of July in Layton?

JC: Well, we lived just a block east of the fire station in Layton, and they would have that siren going off at 6:00 AM, telling everyone to come have breakfast. And they also had a truck with a speaker saying, "Get up and come have breakfast!" And the parades were great. My husband was in the National Guard, and they let him drive the big artillery tanks down the road in the parades.

The parades always went down West Gentile, right past my in-law's house. And we'd have the whole family over afterwards for a big BBQ—aunts, uncles, and cousins. I have great memories of the 4th of July.

TF: I'll bet your children just loved that.

JC: They did. And we made homemade ice cream every year.

TF: Yeah, I remember making homemade ice cream growing up.

JC: Homemade ice cream was always a part of the 4th of July for us.

TF: That was always my favorite time of year.

This is unrelated, but do you have any memories of going to Yellowstone? I only went a couple times growing up, but now we try to go every year.

JC: It's definitely not the same now. When I was growing up, so many bears would come up to your car and beg for food. So, we would throw food out the window, and they come pound on our car windows. Like, "Bring me food!" (laughs) But it was a great place. And we went fishing. It was beautiful. I never liked the smell there, but it was still amazing. And I think of

how lucky we are to live so close, because people come from all over the world to see Yellowstone; but when you're younger, you kind of take it for granted.

TF: Did you mostly fish for trout, or for salmon?

JC: I'm not sure. My dad and my grandpa did the fishing. They'd get up early to fish, and we ate a lot of fish growing up.

TF: Well, is there anything that we haven't covered in this interview that you would like to include?

JC: I don't think so. We've pretty much covered everything that I remember.

TF: Thank you for sharing what you remember, because every memory we record is so important. It helps us reconstruct the history of the area, because it's changed so much over the years.

JC: Oh yeah, it's not the same. (Jeanette and Tori talk about places Jeanette has lived in recent years, recording stops)