

**Karen Gee**

**Layton, UT**

**An Interview by**

**Tori Fairbanks**

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and  
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**GOOD MORNING, MY NAME IS TORI FAIRBANKS, AND TODAY IS FRIDAY, JULY 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2024. WITH ME TODAY IS KRISTINE MURDOCK, WHO IS ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR THE LAYTON MUSEUM, AND WE ARE INTERVIEWING KAREN GEE FOR THE VERDELAND PARK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT. AND WE ARE AT THE LAYTON MUSEUM IN LAYTON, UT.**

**TF:** Karen, thank you for joining us today.

**KG:** Thank you for inviting me.

**TF:** I just want to be sure that we have your okay to record today.

**KG:** Yes.

**KM:** We probably should mention that Karen's maiden name was Stoddard, because that was a big name in Layton, and it was her parents who lived in Verdeland Park first.

**TF:** What I'll have you do, Karen, is introduce yourself. If you could say your full name, when and where you were born, and your parents' names.

**KG:** Okay. I'm Karen Stoddard Gee. I was born in Logan, Utah, on April 8, 1950. My parents would have liked to stay in Cache Valley, but Sardine Canyon was too hazardous. So, they moved first to Woods Cross, and then they lived in Kaysville. And then they moved to Verdeland Park. And if I recall right, our unit number was B-12. It was where the library sits now. I can't remember how long we lived there, because when you're a little kid, you don't keep track of time; but I was four or five years old.

I remember the houses had nice hardware floors, something you can't find now. And our unit had a horrible furnace. If you got too close, you'd get burned. But unit also had two bedrooms, and we were on the end, so we didn't have to listen to any neighbors, because we

were by ourselves. And since we only had two bedrooms, my parents decided it would be a good idea to get bunk beds. Well, one night, I had a nightmare, rolled off my bunk bed, and broke my collarbone.

So, I do have some memories like that of living there. (laughs) And I remember my grandparents driving down from Logan to watch TV with us, and they couldn't leave until Liberace wept on TV. (laughs) Then they'd head back up to Logan.

I was in the old First Ward in the White Chapel, and one morning, Dorothy, the mom of my good friend Ivana—I think they lived in B-3—saw my sister and I walking to Primary. So she had us come in and sit on her couch so she could take our picture, because we looked so pretty in our church clothes. But we went to the White Chapel for a long time, because even when we moved over here on Hawthorne, we still went in that church.

But anyway, I remember the washer/dryer in the kitchen of our unit in Verdeland Park, and I remember my mom mopping the floors. I think my parents put a rug down, because the floors would get cold.

**TF:** What were your parents' names?

**KG:** My dad was Calvin W Stoddard, and he worked at Hill Field. His family was more or less from the Layton area. His Grandpa Morgan—I think his grandparents were Jacob and Hannah Morgan, although I may have that wrong—were the first homesteaders here. And he was illiterate when he lived in New York, before he came to Utah. But when he died, he had a lot of property in Layton, and he owned two turkey farms.

**KM:** I remember the Morgan turkey farms.

**KG:** Yeah, he was the one who started those. But my mom was Irma Fay Eliason, and she was born and raised in Logan, Utah. Her dad was a fireman, and he was a Cache Valley native. But

my parents met on a blind date. My mom and dad both hated roller coasters. Well, their dates both went together on the roller coaster and got sick, so Dad told his friend, “You take care of my date, and I’ll take your date.” So that’s how their courtship started. They were married for over 60 years. They had five kids, and four of us lived in Verdeland Park: myself, my sister, Nyla Jean Stoddard, Elvin W., who was the second, and the youngest, Keith Stoddard. And Nyla and Elvin have passed, but Keith is alive, and he lives in East Layton.

But after Verdeland Park, we moved to our other house near Hawthorne, and my sister Lauren was born. She lives in Las Vegas now.

**TF:** Where did you fit in in relation to your siblings?

**KG:** I was the oldest.

**TF:** Did you have a lot of extra responsibilities, like taking care of your siblings?

**KG:** Yeah. And my brother hated me for years. My parents would yell at him because he didn’t get good grades like I did. I mean, my grades weren’t that hot, but they were better than his. (laughs) But we didn’t go to school here.

**KM:** You didn’t go to school at Verdeland Park Elementary?

**KG:** Lauren did.

**KM:** By the way, Hawthorne is just right around the corner from the library. (to Karen) So you didn’t move very far.

**KG:** Well, first we lived in Hill Villa, then we built our house near Hawthorne.

**TF:** What were some of the things you enjoyed doing growing up?

**KG:** Maybe I shouldn’t say. (laughs) I mean, we were kids, so I hope they weren’t too bad. But like you said, being the oldest, I had more responsibility, so I didn’t get to play a lot. I do

remember one time when I was eight, I was riding my bike, and my shirt came undone. And I knew why boys wore their shirts open, because that felt so cool. (laughs)

But I liked to read, I liked mutual, I liked going to church, and I had good friends. But I was like the second mom to my siblings.

**TF:** Well, going back a little bit, what did your dad do at Hill Field?

**KG:** He worked in supply, and he eventually became a manager. But when he was younger, before he got that job, he worked for the Civilian Conservation Corps clearing land at Hill Field. And he spent a lot of his time chasing jack rabbits. But he had the job there because his family was definitely poor. His family lived in Salt Lake, and I don't know if he was staying here with one of his aunts or what, but he worked up there to clear the land to get Hill Field started.

**TF:** How old was he when he did that?

**KG:** Probably twelve or thirteen.

**TF:** Wow, he was young. So it was his job to sort of lay the groundwork for Hill Field and get the jack rabbits out?

**KG:** Well, he was supposed to clear out the sagebrush, but he chased a lot of jackrabbits, because he was just a kid, and that's what kids do. But he was in the Navy when he turned 17.

**TF:** I was going to ask if he served in WWII.

**KG:** He did.

**TF:** What theater did he serve in?

**KG:** He was in the Pacific.

**TF:** If he joined when he was 17, did he serve during the full war?

**KG:** No, he joined in '44, so he served for a year and a half; but he got injured, and he was discharged in 1946, because he was still in the hospital. He had scars all over his legs, so he never wore shorts, because he didn't want people to see his legs.

**TF:** Do you know how he got those scars?

**KG:** He was in a fire of some kind.

**KM:** Was he on a ship?

**KG:** Yeah.

**KM:** Do you know what ship it was?

**KG:** Well, he said he was on the Quincy, but the Quincy didn't get blown up; so we don't know for sure. His naval records, along with a whole bunch of other WWII records, were burned in a fire. But he stuck to the story, and his friend was actually killed in that fire.

But he was the oldest of four sisters, and it made their life a living you know what.

**TF:** As brothers often do. (laughs)

**KG:** But his mom remarried and had six more kids, and his younger brother is just two years older than me. He's like my mean older brother.

**TF:** Did he ever share any memories of what it was like to be there when the Hill Air Force Base was being built?

**KG:** He just talked about chasing the jackrabbits and pulling weeds, because that's about all there was. He couldn't use machinery—only a shovel, or a hoe, or something like that.

**TF:** He must have seen a lot of history after clearing that ground, and watching the Base being built. Then serving in the war.

**KG:** When he was discharged from the Navy, he actually worked for the railroad; but then he got a chance to work at the Base, and he ended up settling here in Layton.

**TF:** When he started working at Hill, did they move directly into Verdeland Park?

**KG:** No, they lived in Woods Cross first. Then they moved out of that house, because Mom was taking us out of the tub one time, and part of the roof of the house fell into the tub, on top of my sister Nyla. (to Kristine) Do you remember the Tingies? My parents rented an apartment from them. Mom just adored them. Then they moved to Verdeland Park, then Hill Villa, and then their house on Hawthorne. Maybe they just liked to move—I don't know. (laughs) But when they got to Hawthorne, they stayed.

**TF:** Earlier, you were talking a little bit about your unit in Verdeland Park. Do you remember anything about the tub?

**KG:** Only that we took baths. (laughs) I think it was made out of metal, but I don't remember for sure.

**TF:** I've heard some interesting stories about the tubs, because some of the early ones were made out of cement. And then later on, it seems like maybe they were upgraded to enamel or something—I'm not sure. Or maybe they had just been painted a lot of times. But some kids who lived in Verdeland Park in the early days have memories of those concrete tubs.

**KG:** I don't remember that. I don't remember hating taking baths when we were there.

**TF:** Do you remember who your neighbors were when you lived there?

**KG:** I remember [Dale?] Schow, and Linda Smiley. She lived across the street in C-Court. We played with her a little bit. And Ivana Torvand.

**KM:** Did you live close to Karen Vandagnia?

**KG:** No. But later on, our houses ended up not far apart.

**TF:** Do you remember any other friends you had who lived in Verdeland Park?

**KM:** There was Cheryl.

**KG:** She didn't live in Verdeland Park, but I knew her from primary. She was a Ronnekamp.

**TF:** Were you and your siblings allowed to go to the Hollow?

**KG:** Bad things happened there. My brother snuck down there a lot, but when my dad told me not to do something. I didn't do it.

**KM:** (gives mock expression of surprise, laughs)

**KG:** I'm serious, Kris. (laughs) But now, if I tell my grandkids not to do something, I might as well tell them to go for it.

**KM:** That's my mantra. If you tell me, "You can't do that," I said, "Watch me!" (laughs)

**KG:** Well, I was kind of afraid of my dad. So if he told me not to do something, I didn't do it.

**TF:** What were some of the bad things that supposedly happened in The Hollow?

**KG:** Kids smoked down there, and I think other things went on. But I don't know for sure, because I wasn't allowed to go there. We always were told there was a wolverine there, and those are supposed to be really mean. Although I know there were critters down there.

It's so much nicer now that they've turned it into a park. But we weren't allowed to play in The Hollow.

**TF:** Did you have trouble keeping your siblings out of The Hollow when you had to watch them?

**KG:** Well, when we lived on Hawthorne, my brother [unclear]; but my sister and I didn't. My dad said, "Stay out of there. You could get in trouble or get hurt." And the water was so nasty that we didn't want to be around it.

**TF:** Right. So you lived in a two-bedroom unit. Where did everybody sleep?

**KG:** I think our bedroom was in the front of the house, and my parents' bedroom was in the back.



**TF:** Did all of your siblings share the same room? You mentioned having bunk beds.

**KG:** I think Keith was still a baby, so my parents had him in their room, and [Elvin?] was in with us. I think he was two years old, because my two brothers are only a year apart.

**TF:** And do you have any memories of the milkman, or the iceman? Some people I've talked to have memories of when the milkman came, or trying to get small pieces of ice when the iceman came to deliver ice for ice boxes.

**KG:** We had a refrigerator.

**TF:** Do you remember anything else being delivered, like vegetables or milk?

**KG:** We always went to the grocery store for vegetables, and I don't remember having milk delivered.

**TF:** Do you remember if there was much interaction between residents of Verderland Park and people outside of Verdeland Park, besides church and school?

**KG:** When we were little, we were kept in close proximity to our house.

**TF:** What about when you moved to Hawthorne? Did you have much interaction with the kids Verdeland Park after you moved?

**KG:** Not really, because we made friends in the new neighborhood. I've always been friends with Ivana. We were actually due on the same day, so that's how long we've known each other. And our parents were friends, so we stayed close to them.

**TF:** After you moved to Hawthorne, do you remember if Verdeland Park changed much?

**KG:** It got scary, so we stayed away. There were gangs, and it was kind of scary at night. A lot of the people still lived there, but they got booted out when they tore it down to build Layton High School.

**TF:** I didn't know there were gangs. Were they, like, teenage gangs, or in their early 20s? Do you remember?

**KG:** I think they were kids.

**TF:** Interesting. Do you know if those kids belonged to military families, or families who had lived here for a while?

**KG:** I don't know. Verdeland Park was kind of like a transitional spot by that point. People moved in there to get ready to live in better houses. We didn't have military families that I can remember. They more or less lived on Base in military housing.

**TF:** Do you remember much about your yard, or the yards in your neighborhood?

**KG:** I think my dad kept a nice yard no matter where we lived. So, we had a nice yard in Verdeland Park. You can see from the pictures that our grass was cut. I don't know if we planted any flowers, because we weren't there very long.

**KM:** How big was your yard?

**KG:** Well, our porch was here, and the unit next to us was here, and there was just a sidewalk between us. But we were on the very end. There were no other homes after ours.

**KM:** And she had a wooden porch. I remember them all having wooden porches.

**TF:** Tell me some of your memories of growing up in Layton in general, like the 4th of July, and things like that.

**KG:** That was the best time of year. And then over here at Fort Lane Shopping Center, Santa Claus would fly in on a helicopter. And we used to have rally car races with sports cars there in Fort Lane Shopping Center. It was a big parking lot with a lot of room. My mom worked at Safeway there, but the Kings that was there ... (to Kristine) Do you remember Mr. King's name?

**KM:** I don't.

**KG:** Anyway, I think he's the one who set up those races, and he was involved with them.

**KM:** And I remember that you could go sidewalk surfing. Anyway, that's what we called it back in the day. They encouraged that, and they actually had contests for the kids who had skateboards.

**KG:** Yeah, we got a bunch of skates from my grandpa, and we made them into skateboards. And then at one time, there were also ice skating rinks. The fire department would fill them up with water. But I couldn't stand up on the ice, and it was too cold.

**TF:** Somebody else I interviewed mentioned that, but they couldn't remember for sure where those areas were. But they said they remembered firefighters flooding certain areas to turn them into ice rinks.

**KG:** Probably where the Zions Bank is today. One time, Ivana and Vicki came over and skated with us. Nyla and I walked home, because we didn't live too far away. But they stayed and skated.

**TF:** Did the fire department only do that one year?

**KG:** I think they did it for a couple of years.

**TF:** How many months did the ice skating rinks last?

**KG:** Just as long as it was cold. There wasn't anything to keep the ice cold; they just flooded some areas with their hoses and made some ice spots.

**KM:** They just flooded some areas with their hoses?

**KG:** Yeah, and they probably used fire hydrants. But the 4th of July was the big event of the year, and the parade. Jennifer's grandpa was in the parade with his wagon.

**KM:** And Del Adams, aka Jim Bridger. (laughs)

**KG:** He was going to film with President David O. McKay. He went up to Huntsville. Jennifer's got a lot of film from that. Are the guns he donated to the museum still in the basement?

**TF:** A lot of them are actually on display down here to your right.

**KM:** A lot of his guns are in Pioneer Village at Lagoon. And Delaney, who lives in Del Adams' home now, is trying to track those down. Some of them went to Pioneer Village not too long ago, and they got put into a building that's not very well maintained. So, she started to research that, but no one has gotten back to her. The whole area is run down. I think at one time, the Sons of Utah Pioneers had records of them; but anyway, that's a different story. (Kris and Karen talk briefly about different location of Del's gun collection)

**TF:** Karen, tell me what you remember about shopping on Main Street. What were some of the stores there?

**KG:** There was Ben Franklin, the five and dime store.

**KM:** The Morgan sisters turned that into Variety Plus—Beth Sando and her sister Leah Cooper. They were both Morgans.

**KG:** And the Buchanan's from Kaysville ran the Layton Department Store. It used to be JC Penney's. Do you remember that?

**KM:** Yeah, They had a short run in Layton.

**KG:** I bought material there, and some Keds. And then there was Kowley Drug. We always went there on Christmas Eve for their big drawings. We never won. (laughs) But I remember good old Mary Ann Wiggill. She ran the soda fountain. She was a relative of mine.

**KM:** What did people win in the drawing?

**KG:** There was some good stuff, like hair dryers, makeup, and jewelry. We got tickets, but we never won. But we always went there, just in case. And there was Adams Market, and they had the best bakery ever. Shirley Crockett worked there when she was just married and started having her kids. I think she had twelve kids. But she worked in the bakery, as well as Ted Adams' mom. She was a neat lady.

**KM:** And Mrs. Wixom had a little case there where she sold her chocolates.

**KG:** One time, we were sitting in the parking lot of Adams Market. My Mom and my Aunt Barbara left seven of us kids out in the car while they went in to go shopping. Well, the Hostess cupcake truck pulled up, and we made the oldest one, Leanne, ask if we could all have a cupcake. And he was like, "Sure." So, he gave us all a cupcake. Well, then we made her feel so bad, like she was a thief. And when my mom and Aunt Barbara come out, they said, "He couldn't have given those all to you." So, poor Leanne was crying, and we started eating our cupcakes. (laughs) But then we thought we'd better tell our moms what really happened. (laughs)

**KM:** Those were your guilt cupcakes. (laughs)

**KG:** (to Kristine) And remember the Noodle Parlor? It's an antique store now. They would just kind of open whenever they felt like it.

**KM:** Yeah.

**KG:** And where Great Harvest Bread is now, there used to be the Layton Theater, one of the hot spots on Friday night.

**KM:** And every night before the movie started, Butch Owen, the owner, would get up and lecture us about not talking. (laughs) And he would stop the movie if people were talking, or throwing things, or kissing too much. (laughs) We were little brats.

**KG:** Not me. I never got in trouble.

**KM:** I spent a lot of time at the Kaysville Theater; however, on Friday nights, I did sometimes go to the Layton Theater. This would have been in '63 or '64. My brother Brent got a band together, and they called themselves The Hustlers. They got a gig playing at the Layton Theater before the movies started, and they had quite a lot of groupies. (laughs) That was in junior high. If you don't believe me, it's in my diary. (laughs) But the Layton Theater had different groups playing to kind of entertain the audience I guess, and keep us a little bit under control until the movie started.

**KG:** I can still remember seeing *The Birds* there. And we had power lines in our back yard at home. Well, the next morning, those power lines were full of birds, and I didn't dare go outside. (laughs)

**TF:** Have you seen the scene where all the birds are flying, and one actually hits the wall and falls? (laughs)

**KM:** Ouch.

**KG:** Well, that movie made me scared to go outside. (laughs) But anyway, we also had fun in the library. I checked a book out one time, and Mrs. Schofeld looked at me and said, "How old are you?" I think I was twelve at the time. And she said, "Okay, you take it home." It was about the facts of life. I got home and started looking at the pictures, and reading, and I thought, "My parents would do this!" (laughs)

**KM:** When you say "the library," which one are you talking about? There were different libraries.

**KG:** The white building that was on Gentile.

**KM:** The old city building?

**KG:** There was a fabric store there later—Anne's Fabric—but it was the library first.

**KM:** Did you ever go to the Verdeland Park library?

**KG:** I was too little when we lived there. And then for a long time, they didn't have that dirt bridge between Wasatch and Hawthorne, so you had to go all the way around.

**TF:** Did you ever ride the Banburger? Or was it still around?

**KG:** No.

**TF:** Okay. And do you remember when the freeway was put in?

**KG:** Oh, yeah. We all snuck in and drove on it before they opened it. Verdanne Floral used to be there, but they tore it down. It was the neatest building. It was perfect for a florist.

**KM:** That was a neat building. They ruined the whole thing when they put in the freeway. Well, I guess they had to make the overpass right there on Gentile. That's where the Bamberger Station was also.

**KG:** But that floral shop was so cute. The owner used to be at Fairfield Care Center with Mom, but she just passed away.

**TF:** That's too bad.

**KG:** She and Golda used to have lunch together.

**KM:** The way I understood it is that it was called Verdanne Floral because his name was Verd Cook, and her name was Anne.

**KG:** They also named their daughter that.

**TF:** I heard someone say that Verdeland park was named after Verd Cook.

**KG:** I don't know for sure. Verdeland Park came in during World War II.

**TF:** Was that before the flower shop?

**KM:** Yes, but Verd Cook was not one of the original six families who owned that land. I always thought it was named Verdeland Park because it was this beautiful, green farmland, and

verde in Spanish means green. Anyway, that's what I had heard. And I think Verd Cook worked at the bank before he opened Verdanne Floral.

**KG:** I talked to her at the care center, because Jennifer introduced me to her, but I never asked her about that stuff.

**KM:** I don't think they had any association with Verdeland Park. The concept for Verdeland Park started in '41 or '42, and he wouldn't have been in business then. And his family wasn't one of the ones that owned the land that was purchased to build Verdeland Park. In doing my research, I've found the six original families, exactly how many acres they each owned, and how much money they got for selling it so Verdeland Park could be built.

**KG:** What families owned land there?

**KM:** There were the Ronnenkamps, the Wiggills, Leo Green—that was Billie Jean's uncle. He also owned the land Fort Lane Shopping Center was built on. Originally, they were going to call it the Leo Green Shopping Center.

**KG:** I think their house was on Gentile, right where that antique store was, by those restaurants.

**KM:** But anyway, there were six families that had different amounts of land, but it was just all really pretty, green farmland. So I heard that that's why they named it Verdeland Park—because of the green fields.

**TF:** If either of you have any contact information for any of the Ronnenkamps, that would be great. I've heard that name a lot.

**KG:** Kristine does. I was just with their daughter, Cheryl Ronnenkamp, two weeks ago. Diane lives in Kaysville, but her health isn't good. And there's Steve Ronnenkamp. He's a sealer at the Layton Temple. You could probably talk to him.



**TF:** Did he grow up here?

**KG:** Yeah, just over on Fort Lane.

**KM:** Yeah, Ronnekamp is a good Layton name. They were doing big things during that time frame, and they owned some of that land that was confiscated by the government to build Verdeland Park.

**TF:** Do you have any memories of going to Lagoon when you were young?

**KG:** Oh, yeah. We'd always go with Billie Jean Sanders, because she was pretty. And we got a lot of free rides. (laughs) Do you know Greg Sanders, or Rod Sanders?

**TF:** I've seen the name Greg Sanders. Is he in the same family?

**KG:** I think Greg was a stake president over on West Gentile, but now he lives up in East Layton on Fernwood. But anyway, back when Lagoon was cheap and families could still afford to go, we'd take a picnic and go back in the Bowery. It was normally safe, but one time some lady who was sitting by us opened her picnic basket, and some kid had put a garden snake in her basket. And she was screaming. (laughs) But going there was fun when it was cheaper.

**KM:** You didn't have to pay to get into the park back then.

**KG:** But you had to buy tickets for the individual rides.

**KM:** In junior high when I was a teenager—like 1962 through 1965—it was the place to be every day during the summer.

**KG:** Yeah, we just walked around.

**KM:** Strolled for boys.

**KG:** But when they went to that \$100 concept, that kind of ruined it.

**TF:** Did you take swimming lessons there?

**KG:** No.

**KM:** I took swimming lessons at Lagoon, which is why I still can't swim to this day. (laughs) I think it was a Davis County thing. We would take a bus from Kaysville Elementary, and I think the PTA set it up. But I remember the water was so cold, and everybody's lips were blue. So all us little kids had blue lips and goosebumps all over, and our teeth were chattering. And I remember doing the dead man's float and thinking, "I'm going to become a dead girl doing this." (laughs)

**KG:** I was there one time when they were filming a movie, and the Davis High Band was in it. But when the movie came out, it was R-rated, so I couldn't go see it. I can't remember the name of it now.

**TF:** Did you ever go to concerts there?

**KG:** No, I wasn't allowed.

**KM:** She actually did what her dad told her to. He probably said, "Don't go to the concert," so she didn't. (laughs) I went to a lot of concerts though.

**KG:** Paul Revere and the Raiders were there. Nyla went, but I didn't.

**KM:** I saw the Beach Boys there three or four times, and I saw the Doors.

**TF:** I didn't know the Doors performed there.

**KM:** They did when they were a new band. I think it was in, like, 1968. They performed in the Terrace Ballroom, and Jim Morrison had those leather pants on. (laughs) He was kind of new, but I was standing really close to him; I was about as close to him as I am to you right now. And he was so high, I don't think he even knew where he was. He had that glazed donut look, like, "Come on baby, I want to light *my* fire." (everyone laughs)

**KG:** Too bad he was so high, he probably couldn't find the match.

**KM:** It was a huge culture shock. But I saw Sam, the Sham, and the Pharaohs, and they were all glitzy and glammy, dressed up in their Pharaoh outfits. But you could also dance, so it was like just going to a dance.

**KG:** The Beach Boys came a lot. They must have loved you, Kris. (laughs)

**KM:** When the guys would ask us to dance, there was usually drinking involved. They'd drink a beer, then they'd get up enough nerve to ask you to dance. I won't say who I danced with, but several guys asked me to dance. It was like, "You're obviously drunk if you're asking *me* to dance."

**KG:** Oh, stop it.

**KM:** I'm kidding. But I saw a lot of groups at Lagoon. And another one of my favorite things to do at Lagoon in the '60s was spin art. I still have the ones I did there. There was a booth where they had, like, mustard and ketchup bottles full of different colors of paint that you could put on a piece of cardboard you bought. Then you'd squirt it all over, and the worker would spin it around, and however it landed, it turned into a work of art. The bad part was you had to wait until you were almost ready to go home to do it, because otherwise, you had to carry it around with you all day, and it wouldn't dry. But sometimes, if you knew the person who was running the booth, they would save it for you, and you could go back and get it at the end of the day.

**TF:** Well, Karen, tell me some of your memories about Crestview Elementary. Do you remember any of your teachers or classmates?

**KG:** I remember Mrs. Anderson. She was an awesome lady. All five of us had her for first grade, and every Friday, my brother Keith would hug her and kiss her goodbye. He loved her. And then I had Ms. Thompson, Mrs. [Brotherson?], and Mr. Bates. He kicked me out of school. I got expelled for fighting over a tetherball game. I won't mention the name of the girl who got me

in trouble. (laughs) (42:43 – 43:09) But he sent me home. It was January, and it was cold. He got in a lot of trouble over that.

Randy Hatch was another one Mr. Bates liked to kick out of class, and Kenny Eckman too. But Kenny's mom didn't work, and Randy's mom was home. But my mom wasn't. She worked.

**TF:** I'm curious—what happened with the fight over the tether ball game?

**KG:** Oh, I allegedly stepped over the line. I didn't really, but the other girl was screaming, "Yes you did! Yes you did!"

**TF:** By the time we had tether ball at our school, there were never lines. But there were sometimes fights when people got hit in the head.

**KM:** Oh, yeah. That was one of the hazards. (laughs)

**KG:** Oh, I accidentally hit Shauna Williams one time. I hit a baseball and threw the bat, and accidentally hit her in the face.

**KM:** Now, if I know Karen well enough, she has all of her school photos with all the kids' names on the back. Am I correct?

**KG:** I don't have *all* the names.

**KM:** But you know who everybody is. You should write their names down.

**KG:** Yeah. That school was also where I met Charlie Garcia. He was our buddy.

**KM:** He had lots of memories of Verdeland Park. He was good people. His whole family was good people. His memories were really encapsulated in that poem that he wrote. It really says a lot, especially from the Hispanic point of view. He felt there was no racism there.

**KG:** Yeah, everybody played together. But we moved out when I was six, and that's when I went to Layton Elementary, because Crestview wasn't quite ready. And then I started first grade.

**TF:** I was going to ask if you remembered anything about the diversity, because in surrounding towns, there really wasn't a whole lot of diversity at the time. But Verdeland Park brought a lot of that in.

**KG:** The first student body president at Layton High School was Black. Layton High was outstanding with racial diversity.

**KM:** I always thought Todd Morgan was the first student body president.

**KG:** I thought it was a black kid.

**TF:** Do you remember his name by chance?

**KG:** It'll probably come to me. But anyway, I was at Crestview in fifth grade when the furnace blew up. The newspaper showed the back of Jill Stevenson's head as she watched the firemen. So, they had to bus us to Whitesides Elementary. We got the night shift, so we'd get home from school at six o'clock at night. And I can't remember if it was two or four weeks until they got the school cleaned up and the new furnace put in.

**KM:** I talked to Mary Ann Ford Lush about it—she lived in Verdeland Park—and I have the newspaper article. It was several years ago, but I think it was a stove that blew up, and her mother was burned.

**TF:** What were some of the changes you saw in Layton when you were growing up?

**KG:** Well, when I was younger, it was just a little tiny town; but by the time I was married, Layton was the place everybody wanted to live. It just boomed like crazy, and all the farmland is covered with houses now. When my husband and I bought our first house, that was all farmland, and that was in '75 or '76. But Layton just became a boom town, and everybody wanted to live in East Layton. I guess that's why I'm there now.

**KM:** And I'm still stuck in West Layton. (laughs)

**KG:** Well, that's where everybody wants to go now is West Layton.

**KM:** Yeah. It used to be that if you lived west of the railroad tracks—

**KG:** You were a farmer.

**KM:** Yeah. But if you lived in East Layton, you had dollar signs in your future; you were rich. But if you lived west of the tracks, you were not.

**KG:** Our first house was just east of the tracks. The houses behind us had the tracks. I grew up in Central Layton.

**KM:** I still live west of the tracks. (laughs)

**TF:** Because you're a rebel. (laughs)

**KM:** I am.

**TF:** Karen, did you stay in Layton after you got married, or did you live somewhere else?

**KG:** No, I married a jerk and lived in Ogden for five years. Then I moved back to Layton when I divorced him. Then I met my second husband, we got married, and he eventually decided we needed to go to Alabama for a couple of years. So in '97, he went down to work at The Space Agency, and he worked on the space station as a quality assurance specialist. That was when he passed away. So, I lived in Alabama for two years, but I came back to Layton, and I've been here ever since.

**TF:** What did he do on the space station as a quality assurance specialist?

**KG:** He made sure all the bolts were on tight.

**TF:** That's an important job.

**KG:** He worked on the lab at one of the sleeping quarters, but then he died in September. And they launched it as my boys and I were driving back to Utah in December.

**TF:** How did your husband pass away?

**KG:** Cancer. He was only 48. Kris knew him.

**KM:** Yes. He was a very nice, kind man.

**KG:** That's why I've never remarried. I could never replace him.

**TF:** What brought you back to Layton?

**KG:** Family. I thought about staying in Alabama. I liked it, but I have Kris and all my other friends here.

**KM:** We have a lot of friends here.

**TF:** Tell me about your classmate Kenny Ekman, who was killed in Vietnam. Did you know him very well?

**KG:** Oh yeah, he lived just down the street from me.

**TF:** So you grew up with him.

**KG:** Yeah. I did not like his dad. He wasn't very nice to Kenny. But Kenny was a boy, and I was a girl, and we didn't play together. But he was still a friend. Kris got to know his folks better than I did.

**KM:** Yeah, I talked to his parents many times. I still have the letters I got from his mother, Jane.

**KG:** His mom was nice.

**KM:** His mother was a very nice lady. In fact, she just died this year at the age of 100.

**KG:** She died at 100? Bless her heart. But like I said, I didn't play with Kenny a lot, because I had dinner cooking when my dad got home from work at 4 o'clock. We had to stay in the house, because my mom worked. So, I didn't socialize a lot, although I was good friends with Billie Jean.

**KM:** And whatever Karen was doing, I was doing the opposite. (laughs)

**KG:** I just had a strict upbringing.

**KM:** Yeah. Like you cooked dinner? I never helped cook dinner at my house. And you stayed in the house? I never stayed inside my house. (laughs)

**KG:** We couldn't even go out in the backyard. We had to stay inside. One time, a lady actually started a rumor about me messing with the [unclear last name] boys, and Billie Jean's mom hit the roof. She went down and told that lady off. She said, "They're good kids, and they're always in their house. Don't you ever say stuff like that about them."

**TF:** Well Kris, are there any other questions you can think of?

**KM:** Karen, when you talked about downtown Main Street, I was thinking about JC Penney's.

**KG:** They had that tube that they would send things in.

**KM:** Yeah. That tube was so mesmerizing. (laughs)

**KG:** I think it was called a pneumatic tube. It's like what they have at the bank, only this was on a string.

**KM:** Yeah. It was on a string that went up to the second floor. I think they used it for cash and making change. When you'd pay for something, they'd put your money in the tube, send it up to the second floor, and get your change for you. Then they'd send it back down.

**TF:** But it wasn't a bank, right?

**KM:** No, they'd just send the money to their cashier upstairs.

**TF:** Okay. When I was growing up in Logan, I would go with my mom to the credit union, and they had one of those, but I don't remember ever seeing one in a department store.

**KM:** Yeah, it was unique. It was the only one I ever remember seeing at a department store.

**KG:** I think the JC Pennies in Logan had one.

**TF:** Did they really?



**KG:** Yeah. But when you're a little kid, and you get to watch that little tube get pushed up to the second floor, it's fascinating.

**KM:** The other thing about JC Penney's was that right in the middle part of the store, you could buy the top ten singles records. And they also had the little KNAC or KCPX—the radio stations—they had their little top 100 folders that you could get for free. So, I would go there every week and get the latest pamphlet.

**KG:** I still have my 45s, my 33s, and a 30. I have all my vinyls, and I have a record player.

**KM:** Then just down off of Main and Gentile was Brailsford and Biggs—the B&B Department Store. It was more upscale, and it was *the* place to get your back-to-school clothes.

**KG:** I didn't really go there, because it was expensive, and there were five of us. So, I went to Buchanan's and bought material, and I made my own clothes.

**KM:** My mother didn't sew.

**KG:** My mom didn't either, but I did. I made my own clothes.

**KM:** Wow, that's impressive, Karen. (to Tori) That's why she's such a good quilter.

**KG:** I got that from my grandma.

**TF:** Well, is there anything else we haven't included in this interview that you would like to add?

**KG:** I don't know. What have you got, Kris? (Tori's phone goes off, she turns it off) Layton was just a fun town. I liked the Cowley Home. Now it's a reception center. And for years, the Catholic church—St. Rose of Lima—tried to get Mrs. Cowley to sell her house so they could have it. And she would say, "No." But now, she'd probably be happy, because it's a wedding place. But her son, Hal Cowley, was a pharmacist at Kowley Drug.

**KM:** When I was in high school, St. Rose had that gymnasium, and I went to a few dances there, because I was told not to.

**KG:** Oh, I forgot to talk about Adams's hamburgers at Little Joes. They made the hamburger patties by hand, and fresh french fries.

**KM:** It was just a little, tiny building on Main Street.

**KG:** Yeah. It just had a bar where you'd wait to get a hamburger. And they'd say, "You want spuds with your hamburger?"

**KM:** Joe and Leah Adams that ran it.

**KG:** Yeah. They just made good old hamburgers with cheese, if that's what you wanted. And they'd put everything on them, like onions, and a slice of tomato. Christy Donahue took me there for my the first time. She loved that place. We'd go there after work, and I'd always get a Diet Coke. It was really good.

**KM:** Karen and I used to work in Layton at the Fort Lane Mountain Bell, which is now pretty much closed up.

**KG:** We worked with a fun group of people. I remember someone who worked there at night—maybe it was Linda Valdez—and she got scared to death by the ghost.

**KM:** Yeah, there was a ghost in the Fort Lane office.

**KG:** There's a garage there now. (says to Kris) But wasn't someone electrocuted in the building?

**KM:** There was a rumor that someone was killed or died when the building was being built. I could probably research that. Sometimes I find stories about ghosts.

**TF:** Right. I sometimes ask people I interview if there were any ghosts at Verdeland Park, or anything like that.

**KM:** (says to Karen) Do you know of any ghost stories in Layton?

**KG:** Well, there's a woman in white who supposedly walks along the mountains up here east of us.

**KM:** I've never heard that one.

**KG:** Yeah. She's supposed to wear a flowing white dress, and she just walks along the mountains at night.

**TF:** Do you know why? Like, what happened to her?

**KG:** No, I just heard someone talk about her. But I guess people just see her every once in a while, just walking along the mountains.

**KM:** Would this be up by Ivana's place?

**KG:** Probably, way up in East Layton, up in the hills.

**TF:** Where does Ivana live?

**KG:** She lives up on Snoqualmie.

**TF:** Okay, I know where that is. I wonder what the backstory of this woman is.

**KG:** (to Kristine) There's another one you can research.

**KM:** Yeah. (They discuss a few more people that Tori can interview, recording stops)