

Pete Horrocks & Frankie Monroe

Layton, UT

An Interview by

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LAYTON HISTORY COLLECTION

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**Layton City
and
Heritage Museum of Layton**

HELLO, MY NAME IS TORI FAIRBANKS, AND TODAY IS WEDNESDAY, APRIL 17TH, 2024. I'M AT THE LAYTON HERITAGE MUSEUM IN LAYTON, UT, AND JOINING ME TODAY ARE PETE HORROCKS, AND HIS SISTER, FRANKIE MONROE. I AM INTERVIEWING THEM FOR THE VERDELAND PARK ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.

TF: Thanks for joining me. I'm going to start out by asking you some general questions, like where and when you were born, your parents' names, and things like that. Frankie, let's go ahead and start with you.

FM: I was born July 6th, 1944—a million years ago—at the old Dee Memorial Hospital in Ogden. It's since been torn down. Pete here is my brother, and I have five brothers, and one sister.

TF: Where did you fit in?

FM: I'm the oldest. So, I was in charge of the whole group. (laughs)

TF: All the little ones.

FM: They're not so little anymore. (laughs) They're all grown up.

TF: What was your childhood like when you were little? Were you in Layton, or did you live in Ogden?

FM: Actually, we lived in another development just like Verdeland Park called Washington Terrace. We lived there until I was about twelve, and then they started remodeling those homes, and my parents didn't have the money to do that. So, we ended up moving to Verdeland Park.

TF: What years did they live in Washington Terrace?

FM: Well, it was back as far back as I can remember, but I'm not exactly sure when they moved. I think I was probably two or three years old when they moved there, because I think they lived in another housing development before they went to Washington Terrace.

TF: And you said you were twelve when you moved from Washington Terrace to Verdeland Park.

FM: Yes.

TF: Okay Pete, can you tell me the same thing? Where and when were you born?

PH: I was born in the same hospital as Frankie, and I was born February 16th, 1952.

TF: How old were you when your family moved to Verdeland Park?

PH: I was probably three or four—I don't know for sure; but I was pretty young. It was a couple years before I started kindergarten, and we were then until I was in sixth grade.

TF: Okay. Before we talk about your memories of Verdeland Park, Frankie, what do you remember about Washington Terrace?

FM: It was just a really good community. Most of the people didn't have a lot of money, but they were very friendly, and things were good. I was there when they had the very first fire department in Washington Terrace, and we thought that was really cool. That was a long time back. But it was a neat community, and I loved it there. We lived in two different spots there before we moved, but I think I was in seventh grade, going into eighth grade, before we moved.

But as a young girl, I had a lot of fun. I was a tomboy, so I did a lot of things with the boys.

TF: What were some of the things that you did with the boys?

FM: We used to play Kick the Can down by the [unclear], and I went searching for worms in an area that was almost to Riverdale. We were looking for worms for one of the kids who was

going fishing. But me and my other little friend, who was a girl, had no idea how far it was, and we didn't know where we were. All we knew is that we were digging for worms in this little stream, and a policeman came by and told to get out of the stream—that it was some man's drinking water. (laughs)

So, he moved us along, but when we started down the road, we couldn't go home, because we didn't know how to get there. So, we kept walking, and we found a big water hole, and there were a bunch of little naked boys in the water. So, the policeman came along again and got after them, and it was all just quite the ordeal. We didn't go digging for any more worms after that. (laughs)

TF: Yeah, no more naked boys. (laughs)

FM: No more digging for worms. But we had so much fun in Washington Terrace. We dug a great big hole in the field—it was probably about five feet deep—and we put cardboard boxes on top of it. Then, we put dirt on top of it, and we had this little hidey-hole. We'd get some snacks from home, and we'd go there to talk, and just goof off.

Well one day, when we were on our way there, the fire department was already there. They said, "We're tearing this down." And we just started crying. I said, "Why are you taking our hut down?" And the fireman said, "You're a nuisance. You've broken all the rules." So, they took it down, and we went home crying. It broke our hearts.

TF: I'm guessing you lived in Washington Terrace because your parents worked at Hill Field.

FM: My dad worked at the Naval Supply Depot in Clearfield. He was actually a chauffeur. He fought in the war, and he was injured really bad. So after he got home, he got a job at the Naval Supply Depot and was a chauffeur for them.

TF: Did he serve in the Navy during the war?

FM: He was in the Army.

TF: What did he do in the Army?

PH: He was in the infantry. He carried a VR gun over in New Guinea.

FM: It was a rough place.

TF: How long did he serve?

PH: He was only there for a year before he got shot in the back. Then he went to Australia for a year to heal, then he came home.

TF: Did that affect him for the rest of his?

FM: Yeah. It was really bad.

TF: Well, I'm glad he made it back.

PH: I wouldn't be here if he didn't.

FM: Yeah, there are seven of us. None of us would

TF: Were your mom and dad married when he left for the war?

FM: No. My mom met him ... well, I think he transferred to the army hospital up in Brigham City from an Army base in California, and my mom's best friend was dating his nephew. So, they all went up there to see him, and that's how she met him. He was still recovering from his wound, and it took him a long time to heal. But that's how they met, and they got married in 1943. I think he was only in the army from '41 to '42.

TF: Did he get discharged before they got married?

FM: Yeah, he got an honorable discharge.

TF: Was he still considered active duty until he was released from the hospital?

PH: I would think so. I mean, they were taking care of him, so they would still have been paying him.

FM: But I'm guessing they got married after he got released.

TF: So, your parents moved from Washington Terrace to Verdeland Park because they were remodeling the houses?

FM: They took that whole group of houses, and they put brick on the outside, and residents could then buy a two or three-bedroom house. And they could even put a basement under them. So, a lot of people did that.

TF: In another interview I did, they said Washington Terrace passed an ordinance that let residents buy the units, but they weren't able to pass a similar ordinance here in Verdeland Park. So, things were more temporary here, as opposed to Washington Terrace.

FM: Yeah. And when they sold the land Verdeland Park was on to the city, they started selling off the units. They sold them for \$500. But it was interesting: if you had a three-bedroom unit, the house on the other end was a one-bedroom unit. Or there would be two-bedroom units on both ends.

TF: Frankie, what do you remember about moving from Washington Terrace to Verdeland Park?

FM: Well, it's always scary when you're a kid, and you have to go through change. I was entering eighth grade at the time, so I went in being the new girl, and that was kind of rough. But I got introduced to some kids who were my age, and they were really nice. They got me going to church, and that's where I met a bunch of people. We had a really good group of kids who hung out together.

So, once I was there, I had a really good time. My brother Dave, who's a little bit older than me, really made a lot of friends there. The neighbors were all friendly, and after supper every night—all the yards were connected; there were no fences—we just took a blanket out, and

we'd sit on the lawn, and the neighbors would come over. It was a community gabfest at night. (laughs) Everyone would be out there visiting until it was time for the kids to come home and get ready to go to bed.

It was a really neat community where you got to know your neighbors. I live in a cul-de-sac now, and I hardly ever see my neighbors. So, that was a really nice thing about Verdeland Park. And at that time, our church met in the old city building, because we didn't have a church house. And the junior Sunday school met in the elementary school. That's how we went to church. And then after a while, they moved us to the White Chapel.

TF: What unit did you live in?

FM: We lived in L-Court, which is the horseshoe that's there now.

PH: We were on the very end in L-7, and it's close to that road that goes back ... well, there's a tree there now that was in our back yard when we lived there.

FM: I remember planting that.

PH: That's how I know where our house was. I mean, it was quite a ways from the house in the back yard, so that would have put the house clear out in the middle of that road that goes back.

TF: So, when you say the road that goes back, I'm thinking of the one that goes back by the Vietnam Wall.

PH: Yeah, the one on the west side. But our house would probably be close to the middle of the road, then the cul-de-sac road was east of that.

FM: So Pete, you went to kindergarten at Verdeland Park Elementary?

PH: I went there until I was in fifth grade, then they moved me over to Whitesides Elementary. And in sixth grade, I went to Central Davis Junior High. We spent four years there, because Layton High was just getting built. So then, we went to ninth grade there. It was crazy.

TF: Pete, do you have any memories of when you moved from Washington Terrace to Verdeland Park?

PH: I really don't. I was pretty little. I do remember in Washington Terrace, there was a witch up on the corner scared me and my little sister all the time. She was probably just a little old lady, but to us, she was a witch, and we never, ever wanted to go past her house. That's about all I remember.

TF: So, most of your memories are from Verdeland Park.

PH: Yeah.

TF: Tell me about some of the things you remember growing up here.

PH: Well, I remember in kindergarten, my mom took me to school, and I was fighting the whole way. And as soon as she was gone and out of sight, I went right back home. We had some steps that came down out of the house, and it was kind of enclosed, except on one side. So, I crawled under there and spent the whole day there. There were spiders and spider webs, but to me, being there was better than going to school. (laughs)

But anyway, I guess I finally got used to it; but I met a lot of people there who became lifelong friends, because whatever school I went to, they were there too. I had tons and tons of friends. I had one friend who lived in Kaysville—although he lived in Verdeland Park before that—and he described Verdeland Park as big campground. That's what it was like to him, and when I thought about it, it made sense, because, like Frankie was saying, everybody would go out on their front porches at night and just visit.

I think we were one of the first households in Verdeland Park to get a TV. Nobody else had one. I think my dad wanted a TV before he wanted a car. (laughs) But I remember kids coming over and watching The Flintstones on Monday night, or something like that. So, we'd have a room full of kids who came over just so they could watch the Flintstones. And our parents would finally say, "Okay, out the door." And that was maybe at 7:00 or 8:00 at night.

But for me, Verdeland Park was all about friends, and it was all about The Hollow. This was our stomping ground. This is where we did everything.

FM: That's where they found turtles. And they brought actually brought home a tortoise one time.

PH: That turtle was gigantic. My brother traded a kids 2000 marbles for it.

TF: 2000?!?

PH: Yeah. Dave and I were marble champs, so we had tons of marbles. But there was this guy who was showing us a turtle in his back yard, and it was huge. So, we traded him 2000 marbles for it, and we brought it home. Well, there was a little awning, or overhead thing on our porch, and my dad took it off and put it in the back yard so our turtle could have a house.

We'd go down to Winegars at the end of the road, and we'd rob their dumpster. (laughs) They'd throw away all their produce, so we'd take all the lettuce for our tortoise.

But anyway, where was I before I got onto that?

TF: You were talking about The Hollow.

PH: Oh yeah. We had to go through The Hollow to go to school. It was called Teenagers Bridge. We went out kind of past where the swimming pool is now, and that was a big field. There was nothing there. We'd go out across that field, then down this trail, and back up to the other side. Then we could get over to Central. That's what everybody did.

FM: Yeah, that's how we all got there. Otherwise, we'd have to go all the way around. Wasn't there a path between those two houses after you got up on the other side?

PH: Yeah, you had to walk between two houses. It was just kind of a gravel trail with fences on either side. But I remember an orchard on the north end—

FM: Yeah, the guy who had it had a little adobe house owned it.

PH: We'd go over there and climb up in the trees with a salt shaker, and we'd sit there and eat green apples, either until we were sick, or he caught us. (laughs)

FM: He came out a couple of times with his shotgun.

PH: Yeah, he had a shotgun that had rock salt in it, and he used it to chase us out. But what we really liked to do on his property was ... well, there was a cement ditch that went down to the other side of the field. It wound clear around, and it ended up down in the creek at the bottom. But it will get full of moss, and the water would really come down it. So, we could get in that thing, and it would just shoot us down. (laughs) But there was kind of a turn down at the end, and we had to watch out, because we'd be going so fast, we could crack our head open. It went like this, and we could go like that, and it was scary. (everyone laughs) We couldn't stop because of the moss—we just kept going.

FM: It was a perfect place for boys to grow up.

PH: It was.

FM: They would go out all day long, then Mom would go out and look for them. We had a big black dog that was so cute. We called him Blackie, and Mom and say, "Come on Blackie, let's go find the boys." And he would take Mom to them, wherever they were.

PH: Well, the weeds in that field were so tall. So we'd go in there and smash them down, and we were really well hidden. Nobody could find us, except for Blackie. That's mostly where he and my mom would find us. And we'd take our BB guns over there—

FM: They'd shoot cans—

PH: —shoot birds—

FM: Shoot each other. (everyone laughs)

PH: I remember that, being from Verdeland Park, I had this little bicycle that was made from about four other bicycles. It was this little ratty-looking thing. But one time, I was going down Teenagers Bridge on one side, and it was all bushes and trees, so I really couldn't see what was going on on the other side. But I went cooking down one side, and I ended up running into this kid named Donnie King. He ended up becoming a really good friend of the family, but at that time, we didn't know each other. But we got down to the bottom and just collided. We ran right into each other. I went off into one side of the ditch, and he went off into the other side. He had this fancy ten-speed bike, and it got all beat up. The wheel was bent and everything. But I just dragged my little bike out of the ditch and rode home. (laughs)

But anyway, after that, Donnie became really good friends with my older brother, because he was close to his age. But one time my dad went up to the dump, and he found this dog out there that had porcupine quills all over his mouth. So, my dad brought him home and pulled all the quills out. He also gave him a shot of penicillin, or something like that.

FM: Our dad could get shots like that because of his injury. If he needed penicillin shots, the pharmacy would just give it to him.

PH: It seems like he even gave us our polio shots.

FM: He was our own doctor. (laughs)

PH: But anyway, he fixed his dog up, and we called him Duke. But one day, Donnie, came over, and he was looking at our dog, and he was like, “Oh my gosh, I used to have a dog that looked just like that.” So he said to the dog, “Bullet!” And that dog perked right up. (laughs) It was his dog, and here we had him. I guess what happened is Donny’s dad told him the dog got hit by a car or something, but what really happened was he’d taken him up to the dump. So then, my dad found him there and brought him back down, here we came together right in the back yard. It was just crazy.

FM: Well, I think the way Dad told it was the guy said he wanted his dog back, and Dad said, “You can have him back, but this is how much it cost me for his medication, and I’ve boarded him this long. So, this is what it’s going to cost you.” So, the guy said, “Keep him.”

TF: So did you have two dogs at once?

FM: I think Blackie was gone by then.

PH: He might’ve gotten hit by a car—I don’t remember for sure. In Verdeland Park, anything could happen.

FM: He was such a good dog, so I think it must have been something like that, because he never left our side.

PH: My dad was a funny character. I remember he would have watermelon busts. The maintenance building was just west of us, and you could go over there and get a lawn mower to mow your lawn. It had all the equipment needed to take care of your lawns and your yard. But it also had picnic stuff.

So, my dad would go over there and drag some picnic tables over into the back yard. Then he’d get a bunch of watermelons and just start cutting them up, and the whole neighborhood would come over and eat watermelon. And he’d do something similar when he

gave haircuts. He'd only knew how to give one haircut—a buzzcut. He'd buzz your hair all off. But he'd put a chair in the yard at the first of the month and give haircuts. Kids would line up down the street, and they would sit down, and he would just give them a buzz right right there in our front yard. I mean, our yard was the hairiest yard around. (everyone laughs)

FM: He never gave a different haircut. It was always the same.

PH: Yeah, all us boys looked the same—we were all buzzed. (laughs) But he was a character. He took care of everybody's yard. He was always mowing and watering.

FM: He was disabled by then.

PH: We used to chase the ice cream truck around. We never had any money to get one, but we still chased it around, wherever it went. But one time, this buddy of mine grabbed a hold of the bumper on the ice cream truck and started running with it. But then he tripped, and the ice cream truck was dragging him. So, I chucked a rock at the truck and hit the back of it. So the driver stopped and came out just madder than anything, but then he saw Ivan laying there. And Ivan was in a swimming suit, so he was all torn up.

But anyway, I remember that ice cream guy coming around every day and stopping at Ivan's house and giving him an ice cream, because he was all bandaged up.

FM: I have so many memories. I think the guy who lived in the unit in front of us was a TV repairman. And the family behind us ... I think his name was Butch.

PH: And wasn't there a guy named Ernie?

FM: Yeah. But I think Butch had maybe four or five kids; but he ran the projector at Dave's Drive-in. So, it was really fun to get in with him. And one time, his family told they'd pay me to help with their kids, if I went on a vacation with them. I think they ended up taking George too.

But they went down to Bryce and Zion, and all I had to do was help with the kids. That was really a fun experience. They were a really cute family.

And then, the house in front of them had a little Black family, and they had two boys. I remember one time, she got really sick and had to go to the hospital, and he was working. So, my dad took in their washing and did it for them for a while. He was always kind that way—always very considerate.

PH: I had a friend named Jody [Corsi?], and they lived across the street from us. And Jody and I would always go over to The Hollow and shoot birds. Then we'd bring them back and lay them on the ground, and we'd see what kind they were. They were kind of like trophies. Well, one day, his mom said, "You're not going to get into heaven unless you can remember every bird that you ever killed, and what kind they were, and what day you shot them." So, we started trying to remember all the birds we'd shot, and we thought that we for sure weren't going to make it to heaven, because we'd shot so many birds, and we couldn't remember what kind they all were. I was a scared dude for quite a while. I thought, "I'm doomed!" (laughs)

FM: One time when I was a teenager, we were in this big group, and one of the guys—I don't know if it was Donny or not—but he knew this lady who had this ... I don't know exactly what it was. It was kind of like a canal with water shooting out of it. So, everyone decided to ride their bicycles up there. I didn't have a bike, so I must have ridden in the car. But anyway, we got up there, and this lady had a horse, and our friend said, "Oh, she lets me take the horse all the time." Well, the lady wasn't home, but he took her horse out anyway, and we all rode it around in the big field up there.

Well, I just got up out of the canal, and the horse took a step back, and it stepped on my foot.

PH: I remember that.

FM: So here I was, barely able to walk, and I had to get a ride home, while everyone else left on their bikes. Well, by the time that lady got home, she had no idea what had gone on, but her horse was missing. So, she called the police, and as we were driving by, we got to see the kids who were on bikes, who had to go down to the police station and face the music. (everyone laughs) So in a way, I was glad the horse stepped on my foot, although I had to limp around for quite a while.

Another thing we did—and this was bad, but kids got away with stuff like this back then—but I think it was Halloween, and the guys in our group decided it'd be fun to cut down some lady's clothesline, because they wanted a string. And then, they found somebody's garbage can, and they tied the string to a car, then they tied the other end to the garbage can. Then, they dragged it behind their car. I was in the car with them, and we were watching the metal sparks coming from the garbage can. (laughs)

Later on, I thought, "Those people were poor. I'm sure that lady really missed her clothesline, and she probably couldn't afford to buy a new one. And the poor person with the missing garbage can ..." (laughs) Afterwards, as I got older, I thought, "Oh, we were naughty kids." (laughs)

PH: My brother Dave and I used to venture up on the mountain. Well, one time, we walked clear up to the foothills, and we were looking around, and we stumbled across this human skull. And we were like, "Oh my gosh!" We thought it was with the coolest thing that had ever happened to us. We looked around some more, and we found a whole skeleton—all the bones, and everything. So, we went right home, and we went to the neighbor's house, because Dad wasn't around. So, we told our neighbor that we'd found this skeleton on the mountain. I mean,

we were thinking somebody got killed up there—that it was some big murder mystery, or something. (laughs)

So, our neighbor went and reported it to the police, and the police had us go up with them and show them what we'd found. Well, it turned out that the skeleton was from the Davis High School science department. Somebody stole it and had gotten rid of it on the mountain. (laughs) So, that was the biggest let down ever. In the end, it was kind of a bummer.

FM: One thing about our house—I don't know if my dad built it, or if it was already there—but there was a dirt cellar. Well, Mom and Dad only got paid once a month, so they would go buy bushels of potatoes, or carrots, or whatever, because we were a big family, and they would store them in the cellar. It was really handy for Mom to be able to store them there, to keep them cool, and to keep us fed.

PH: And it was nice on hot summer days to go down there and eat an apple, or whatever, because it was cool. We weren't supposed to go down there, but we'd sneak down there every once in a while.

FM: But life was so different than what it's like today. It was carefree then, and your friends were your friends forever. My husband was actually in the court next to us. We lived in L-Court, and his family lived in M-Court. And that's how he and I met. We all went to church together, and everyone started pairing off. The [Kurls?] were two houses up from us, and their dad was in our group. I had a friend who came down from Afton, Wyoming, and her sister lived down here. So during the summer, she'd come down to Layton.

Anyway, they met and fell in love, and I think they got married their senior year. And my sister-in-law was my best friend. They were all three years older than I was, so I would sneak

away during junior high so I could go to the high school games with them. (laughs) That was fun.

But almost everyone in our group paired off eventually. I ended up marrying Jerry, and my best friend married Jerry's brother, Ned. They were the Monroes—Bonnie and Roy Monroe—and they lived in M-Court. And Joan Murdock lived over there. She should be here, because she can remember a lot. Her family was in Verdeland Park a lot earlier than we were, and she has a good memory. She could tell you about all the people who were here before we came.

But there was a field between L-Court and M-Court. There was a horseshoe-shape, and M-Court must have started over where the seminary building is now. But there was a field there, and then there was L-Court, which was a cul-de-sac. But that horseshoe doesn't look so big now. (laughs)

PH: Everything looked a lot bigger then. But it was all grass too. We'd go out there and just goof around. And there was an old ditch that ran down the middle of it that they weren't using anymore. So, we'd to get friends together, and we'd play "snipe". We'd give them a bag, and we'd tell them to go to that ditch, and scream, "Snipe!" And we'd be over there just busting a gut, laughing. (everyone laughs)

TF: Yeah, I remember snipe hunting. (laughs)

PH: Another time, my brother, Al Garcia, I went up to the mountains. Al had a dog named Frisky, and I had this little 15 pound bow with a target-tip arrow. Well, we ran into this skunk, and he was back in against this rock. So, I figured I would shoot it and kill it. Well, I pulled the arrow back to shoot it, but it just bounced off the skunk. And I thought, "How do I get my arrow back?" So, I held my breath, I went in, and tried to grab my arrow, then came back out.

Well, I tried to do that two or three times, then I finally decided, “Enough is enough. The skunk wins.” And on the way home, my brother made me walk with Frisky about 50 yards behind them, because Frisky had gotten in there with the skunk too. (laughs) But what was embarrassing is when I got home, Mom had company. Our uncle was there in the living room, and Mom made me take everything off right there. So, had to streak through the front room to get to the bathroom.

FM: And did she give you tomato juice?

PH: Yep. I had to bathe in tomato juice to get rid of that stink, and I think she just threw my clothes away. (laughs) But my brother and I used to do everything together.

FM: They were always in trouble with principals, and the police department.

PH: You must have had a big reputation! (laughs)

PH: And it got worse as we got older.

FM: Wasn't it the Principal Warren who took David to get a haircut?

PH: I don't know. It might have been.

PH: I think it was. They were in the first group that grew “Beattle” haircuts, and he did *not* want to get his hair cut. But the principal was like, “Yeah, you're getting a haircut.” I remember he took him to the barber, and David cried the whole time they were cutting his hair. (laughs)

PH: I remember there was a barber right down there where that little shopping center was, and my dad used to go to him. But one time, when I was in seventh grade, Melvin Manning got a hold of me, and he said, “You go into the barber and you get your hair cut.” So I went to the barber, and of course, I only had him cut this much off. So, I ended up making five trips, back and forth, to that barber to cut more off, because it wasn't enough for Mr. Manning. Each time, the barber was like, “That's not short enough. He'll just send you back here. So, I'll see you in

about 20 minutes.” And he was right. By the time we were done, I had hardly any hair left.

(laughs)

Dave and I used to take a gunny sacks and go up one side of Fort Lane, and we’d collect all the pop bottles. We’d get all the up to Highway 193, and it was just a big sand hill. And we knew where the lizards were. Well, we had a shoe box, so we’d catch lizards and put them in our shoe box. Then, we’d go back down the other side of Fort Lane collecting more pop bottles, and we’d take them down and trade them in. Then we’d go get penny candy at the drugstore.

And then, we’d take the lizards to school and sell them for five cents apiece, and that’s how we made our money. (laughs)

FM: Dad had an account with Layton Drug, because he had to get medication a lot. So, he had an open account. So, my brother George, who was just younger than me, took a friend up there, and ... what did he do?

PH: They used to have this great big counter, with a bunch of chairs, and you could you get a huge malt, or different things like that. And weirdly enough, my favorite thing to get was a grilled tuna fish sandwich.

FM: I loved the root beer floats.

PH: But George just ordered everything for everybody for, I don’t know—maybe weeks.

FM: And then, Dad got his bill. (laughs) But at the time, George thought he was cool. He had it made!

PH: And he had friends up the wazoo.

FM: He was like, “Just put it on Dad’s bill,” and they did. So, dad said, “George, we need to have a little talk,” and that ended his shopping spree. (laughs)

But anyway, when we lived in Verdeland Park, there was hardly anything east of Fort Lane. It was all fields, and orchards, and a little farming community. And there were just a few stores on Main Street where we shopped. There was JC Penny's, and a shoe store, and Stockman's Bar. That bar has always been there. Then there was Kowley Drug, and Adams Market. Our brother worked there.

But we walked everywhere, until we got old enough to drive. That got a lot of our energy out. (laughs) But we practically lived outdoors. It was such a fun place to grow up. And we loved church. I got so involved in church, and we had so many fun activities. We had road shows, dances, and weddings. My girlfriend got married in the temple, then they did the reception at the White Chapel. And now, she's my sister-in-law, so we're still friends today. And we're really old. (laughs). My friend Marie is still married to her husband, and I think they live in Syracuse. So, a lot of couples our age stayed together.

PH: I remember when my dad had an old Buick, and over where the swimming pool and ball diamond are, all of that used to be a field. But my dad would get a rope, and he would tie it to inner tubes behind his Buick in the winter. And he'd go out through that field in his Buick, pulling these tubes behind him with about ten kids, just flying around the field. And kids would go flying off the tubes. I think my dad had more fun than we did.

FM: Yeah, he did. But you couldn't get away with any of that today, like not wearing seat belts. We had a million kids in the back of the car, and there were no seatbelts. (laughs) But we survived. We road in the back of trucks, and all that stuff. That's how we got around, and it was fun. I mean, there were a lot more kids than there were drivers.

But my father passed away in 1963, and about that time, they started selling the homes in Verdland Park. So then, Mom bought a home over in Vayview, and the boys moved over there with her. And they were still mischievous there too.

TF: Remind me where Vayview was.

FM: It's right off of Antelope, to the south.

PH: I have a lot of friends over there. But I remember there was a trout in the creek down here, and I chased that thing for years, trying to catch it. I didn't have fishing pole or anything, so it was just a matter of diving into creek and trying to grab it. But I went home wet so many times after trying to catch that thing.

FM: Wasn't that Three-Point Creek?

PH: Yeah.

FM: As you went down there, there were all these wild trees and stuff. It wasn't like it is today.

PH: We saw all kinds of different animals down in there. It was like a jungle. It wouldn't seem very big today, but back in the day, it was huge.

TF: Was there a rope swing there that you used to jump into the water?

PH: No, that was at Hobbs [Reservoir]. Hobbs had two rope swings. And I have a funny story about that. Me and about four of my friends were there—

FM: How old were you? Was this after you left Verdland Park?

PH: I don't remember. But anyway, the thing with Hobbs is you never took a swimming suit; you just had your clothes. So, when we got there, and we took all our clothes off, and we went swimming. Well, we were trespassing, and we were down in the water, and we heard these voices. So, we just hid, because we didn't know who was coming. Well, it was the police, and

they gathered all of our clothes and left us a note saying, “If you want your clothes back, come down to the police station. Well, we didn’t have any clothes, and we didn’t have a car. So, we got out of there, and we had to go around in all the bushes; we managed to find enough of them. But there were burrs in them, and they ripped us up, but that’s all we had for cover.

So, we got down to the police station, and they were waiting for us. They got the camera out, and everything. And it was the most embarrassing thing. (laughs) And then, we got a trespassing ticket on top of it.

FM: Hobbs is where you lost your good ring.

PH: Yeah, I had a ring passed down to me by namesake. But I dove off the rope, and the rope had a big knot at the bottom, so that when you dove in, you could throw the rope and dive into the water. But when I threw that rope, it caught on my ring, and I could actually see it as I was diving in. And as I hit the water, I just started grabbing for it, just hoping I could get a hold of it.

FM: But it was lost, never to be found again. He was actually named after a cousin, His real name is Oliver Keith. But how he got the name that Pete, our little cousin, couldn’t say his name. She would say, “What a pee-dee baby.” (laughs) So, everybody started calling him Pete.

PH: You didn’t need to tell that story.

TF: Sisters do things like that, right? So, how many bedrooms did your unit at Verdeland Park have?

PH: Three.

TF: Okay. And how many of you were there living in the house?

PH: There were four boys in the back bedroom. There were two of us in each bed, so there must have been two double beds.

FM: So, there were six, seven, and eight with Mom and Dad. But the boys had the back bedroom, because it was the biggest, and my little sister and I had the middle bedroom. Then Mom and Dad had the other one that was a little bit bigger. Those rooms would all be really teeny now; but the boys caused so much trouble at night. They were fighting and carrying on.

PH: We were just playing, we weren't fighting. (laughs)

FM: The neighbors complained and complained. So, Dad finally said, "I've had it." So, he gave Ruthie and I the back bedroom, and we had all this extra space. We thought was so great—and the boys got shoved into the smaller room. So, that's what happened to the four of them.

PH: But it didn't quiet us down any.

FM: No, the neighbors still complained.

TF: Did that back bedroom join with the other one?

PH: Yeah, it was connected with the other wall, and the walls were paper thin. You could hear other people talking. Abe and his wife were in that room, and that wasn't good. We always had our ears up to that wall.

TF: Was there drama?

PH: Oh yeah.

FM: He used to get drunk, then he'd come home and hit her.

FM: She would call out, "George, come save me. He's beating me!" She was always calling for my dad.

PH: I remember day one, Dad went over there and took a gun away from him. He was so mad. But Abe wasn't very big.

PH: It was funny, because his wife was quite large. She was tall and big, but he was really small. So, I always thought it was interesting that he was beating her, when she could easily have outdone him.

PH: But that's Verdeland Park for you. (laughs)

FM: Another thing that happened when I was dating Jerry ... he brought me back after a date one time, and we were just sitting there in the car talking. And all of a sudden, I looked at the house where Ray and them used to live. It was kind of kitty corner from us. But it was nighttime, and they had their window open, because there was no air conditioning. The lights were out, and this guy outside, leaning over and looking in the window. And I whispered to Jerry, "What should we do?" I was afraid to get out of the car. So, we probably sat there for ten to fifteen minutes, trying to figure out what to do.

I finally said, "I'm going to go tell Dad." So, I got out of the car, I ran into the house, and I said, "Dad, there's a guy peeking into the window across the street!" So, my dad grabbed this little BB rifle and headed out the door. Well, this guy must have seen me, so he ran around the other way, and my mom had her window up. So, my dad went after the guy across the street one way, and my mom started shouting, "George! George! He's looking in our window!" And by the time Dad got over there, he couldn't find him, so he came back. But my mom was shouting, "He's looking in our window!" But by the time Dad got back to our house, the guy had taken off. He was gone, and we never caught him.

But I just remember sitting with Jerry, and I was so scared. I didn't know if he was a murderer, or what.

TF: Oh my goodness! Did they ever find him?

FM: No. He made it clear get-away. So, that was quite the conundrum, whether or not I should get out of the car.

PH: I remember when they finally built the swimming pool over here. We basically lived there, because it was right across from our house. And every year ... I don't remember if it was on the 4th of July, or what, but they would turn fish loose in the pool. Kids could dive in and try to get them, and they would give out coins to kids who caught them. Well, they also put a carp in there, and if you caught it, it was worth \$5, or something. But these fish all had a price tag on them, and if you caught one, that's how much you got.

FM: That was after I had left.

PH: I remember Harry [Mathis?] got a hold of a carp, and he was all scratched up. But he managed to drag it into the kiddie pool.

FM: What did they do with the fish afterwards?

PH: Well, they got rid of them. They were chlorinated. I mean, they survived long enough for the event. (laughs)

FM: There were a lot of things people got away with back then that they wouldn't now.

PH: We used to go across the street from where the temple is, and we had sticks that we'd wire forks to the end of. And we'd bend back the two center prongs. But we called it Frog Paradise, because we'd get tons and tons of frogs. We'd cut the legs off and bring them home, and we'd have Mom cook them for us.

FM: She did *not*.

PH: Yeah, she did. (laughs)

FM: I can't believe that. Mom was squeamish about things like that.

PH: She knew how to cook them good. She breaded them, and fried them, and everything. She must have looked at cookbook, or something.

FM: And she'd cook liver.

PH: Oh, don't even talk about that.

FM: I don't know how she did it, but it was terrible. She always made it smell so good for my brother George and I. And it wasn't like she made it that often—maybe once every two or three months, or something. But when she made it, she made it smell so good—liver and onions. We would be just waiting. And we knew we didn't like it, but every time we took a bite of that stuff, we'd just gag and gag. Every single time. We loved the smell, but we couldn't stand to eat it.

PH: At our House, if it was on your plate, you ate it, whether you liked it or not.

FM: They would always tell us, "Kids are starving in China." But it sat there until it got really cold.

TF: Do you have any memories of the tub in your unit? We've had a lot of stories about the tubs, and how they were made out of concrete. Do you have any memories about that?

FM: Just that it was fun to bathe in, because it was big.

PH: The bathroom wasn't very big though. It was really dinky.

FM: The whole house was small though, as we got older and thought about it.

PH: I don't remember the tub being made out of cement though; I just remember it being huge. I don't know—maybe some of them were made out of concrete.

FM: I remember it being kind of cast iron but not cement.

TF: Okay. I've heard that some of the earlier tubs were made out of cement, then maybe later on, like the late '50s or early '60s, they had a smoother cover on them. So, maybe they weren't made from cement anymore. Or maybe it depended on the unit.

FM: We lived there earlier than that, though. I was twelve, so that would have been in 1955 or '56. I don't remember it being cement though. I don't remember anything weird about it.

PH: After they sold the homes in Verdeland Park, we used to see some of them at Smith and Edwards. The guy there bought some.

TF: Are they still there?

PH: I don't know. That was several years ago.

FM: They used to have several units on their property, but they got old and dilapidated.

PH: You could tell they were Verdeland Park homes. I heard that he would fix them up and as cabins, then he would haul them off into the hills. But my brother Tracy was the youngest member of our family, and he was the last baby born in Verdeland Park. When he got older, he got a job working at Thiokol. So, he rented from a gentleman that had bought a Verdeland Park home and put it on his property. All he did was have a foundation put on. And the only thing I saw that he did different was to put on a back door, probably in the bedroom.

But when we walked inside it, it was like *deja vu*. They were so tiny. And where the table and chairs were ... well, my dad and his brother tore all that out. But when you went in, you had the table and chairs, and that was the little kitchen area. But there was also a really big pantry.

PH: I think Dad put the pantry in there.

FM: No, Dad tore the pantry and everything out, because there were too many of us to fit in that little tiny spot in the kitchen. After he did that, we had a big table where we could all sit together in the kitchen, and I think he and him Uncle Kenny put some shelves up on the wall. But that's how he made it work.

PH: The thing I remember about that kitchen was how Mom used to clean. I mean, she'd clean, then she'd come back clean again. Well, one time, Dad and my uncle brought in this deer

that they'd shot. They flopped it down on our kitchen table and started cutting it up. And I remember Mom just going through the ceiling. (laughs) They were just sitting there, cutting it up like she wasn't even there. But they did clean up pretty good afterwards.

FM: He did that in Washington Terrace, too. Well, actually, I think they hit the deer, and it died.

PH: Well, whatever works. (laughs)

FM: So, they brought it home, and Mom did the same thing. But they put a cover on the floor, then threw it on top of that. And they gutted it, then cleaned up the kitchen. And again, Mom had the mess to deal with. I'm sure Dad cleaned up the best he could, but it wasn't as good as Mom.

But Mom didn't have a lot of money, and we had only the bare necessities in our house—like we had blinds, but we didn't have curtains. We had blankets, but we didn't have bedspreads. And we didn't have a lot of rugs. But she kept everything clean, and she taught all of us how to clean good. But I just think that if kids now had to live the way we did, they would think we were rednecks. (laughs)

TF: Do you remember a lot of interaction between people from Verdeland Park and those who lived outside of the park? Because I've heard both sides. I've heard people say that there wasn't a lot of interaction, and that people were just friends within this community ...

PH: No, I had other friends. There were a lot of people who moved out of Verdeland Park and into that subdivision east of here.

FM: Yeah, on Church Street. Our bishop was one of those. He built a home there. There were quite a few people who left. We were the old Sixth Ward, and a lot of people who lived here transferred over to Church St.

PH: I had friends from everywhere.

FM: Well, you got around. (laughs) But once we were in school, we got to know people from outside Verdeland Park. But I don't think we really had to go far. I mean, we were just a big community.

PH: Well, I think it's like you said: when we were younger, we were just a little close-knit community. When I went to Verdeland Park School that's the way it was; but after that, when we went to junior high, we branched out a little bit.

FM: Verdeland Park Elementary had one little hallway down the middle, and there were rooms on each side. Pete, did you have to pack a lunch to school?

PH: No, we ate in the classroom. There was a place where they would make our lunches, and each class would go through there, and we'd get our lunches. Then, we would go back to our rooms and eat.

FM: Were they hot lunches?

PH: Yeah.

FM: Okay. I never had to do that. But the other day, I was thinking about how, when my daughter, Stacy, was in sixth grade—she was EG King Elementary—that school got too crowded, so they sent some kids to Verdeland Park Elementary. The school was still there. But I remember Stacy's teacher saying he was having the hardest time, because by then, there was nothing there—no books, no maps, nothing. And he was having a really rough time, because he had kids who were behind academically, and trying to find materials to teach them was rough.

And they brought in lunch from EG King. But they still used that school for that year. I don't know if they used it after that, but I thought that was interesting. We also had junior Sunday school there when we were in Verdeland Park, so that little school really was a prize. It was a fun little school.

PH: I remember there were two doors to get into Verdeland Park Elementary, one on the north, and one on the south. And out towards the creek, there was a flat spot where you could go out and play basketball. And on the south end of the building, there were swings, sand, and all that other stuff. I remember that clear as day.

FM: I can't remember what year it was that they tore the city and county building down, but it was after that that they started selling the houses.

PH: That was a sad deal. I had a lot of memories there. There was a row of buildings, like the maintenance building on the end—

FM: Both the city and county had offices there, and they had a big conference room, and that's where we went to church.

TF: Do you know how many people lived in Verdeland Park?

FM: I don't. I know there were quite a few people. It seems like at one point, it was, like, the second biggest city in the county, or something like that.

TF: This probably won't be right, but I want to say that at its height, it had around 4000 people. I'm probably wrong about that, but it might say in our exhibit here at the museum.

FM: I was looking at that a long time ago, and they have our unit in the wrong spot on the map. But anyway, it was a really fun place to grow up. I mean, there was that one guy, but for the most part—

PH: Well, that guy was a fluke. Nobody ever harmed anybody. And as a matter of fact, everybody helped everybody. That was the cool thing about Verdeland Park—it didn't matter whose house I went to—if they were Hispanic, or they were Black—they'd take me into their house, sit me down, and feed me. It just didn't matter. I ate some interesting food when I was a kid. It was stuff that they had all the time, but I wasn't used to it. (laughs) I'd look at my buddy

and think, “What is this?” And sometimes, I didn’t want to know. (laughs) But Verdeland Park was a cool place.

FM: We knew almost everybody in our cul-de-sac, and we knew pretty much everybody in L-Court and M-Court.

PH: I had friends in almost all of them.

FM: I think we had a couple others who were in our ward, but most of our friends were in L-Court and M-Court.

PH: Actually, I only had two friends in L-Court. Most of my friends—well, there were the Dixons. I was friends with two or three of them. And the Holstons, and the Mormans.

FM: A lot of times, the Dixon’s would go by initials, like JL. SL was Jerry’s age, and JL was my age.

PH: JL played professional baseball. And then there were the Nelsons who lived over there, and one of them played professional football. But I had friends who didn’t live in Verdeland Park. I would go to their houses, and I felt like I was in a mansion. They weren’t actually mansions, but in comparison to where I lived, their houses seemed so big. I just thought all those people were rich. But I look at their houses now, and I think, “Oh my gosh, what was I thinking?”

FM: Yeah, things seem so big when you’re a kid, then you go back as an adult, and you realize things aren’t so big. But I don’t really remember thinking our house was crowded. Do you Pete?

PH: No.

FM: We were used to it, so it didn’t feel crowded. But I’m sure it felt that way to Mom.

PH: Especially on Flintstone night, when everyone would come over to watch TV. (laughs)
Then it was quite crowded.

FM: But I think the greatest thing about Verdeland Park was the sense of community, and the different people that came and went. They were all good, hard-working people just trying to raise their kids; but it was just a really special community. I miss it. I mean, today, everyone has their phones, so you just miss that personal contact with people.

PH: When we moved from Verdeland Park to Vayview, it was like a slap in the face, going from a cool community where we knew everybody, to a place where nobody knew anybody else.

FM: They weren't friendly.

PH: Yeah, it was just like living in another world.

FM: The homes were big and pretty, but ...

PH: We had an old tomcat that we brought with us from Verdeland Park, and I think he was mad at my mother for taking him up there, because he would go in on her bed and use it as his bathroom. (laughs) So, I know he was mad at her. But he was a smart one. I think he ended up running away and going back to Verdeland Park. I mean, I don't know that for a fact, but ...

FM: You're just telling yourself that. (laughs) No, I think you're right. I think that's where he went.

TF: How did you feel when they started selling the units Verdeland Park and tearing everything down?

FM: I think it was a mixed bag. I hated to see it all broken up, but people were going on to bigger and better things.

PH: It kind of made me sad and mad at the same time.

FM: It was sad to see the community get separated. People either bought a unit and bought a piece of land to put it on, or they just moved somewhere else. So, watching the disbanding was hard. You just sat there and watched them take these houses and move them to other places.

PH: It was hard to even after that, seeing them build Layton High.

FM: All the trees in the Layton Commons Park today were planted by people who lived in Verdeland Park.

PH: And it's cool that a lot of them are still here.

FM: Yeah, they're all getting old. But one of the fun things our family has done is when we have family get together at Layton Commons Park, we do it down at our "horseshoe".

PH: We reminisce. That's our gathering spot. It's actually kind of across the street from where we live.

FM: I get teary eyed, every time I see people doing anything on that horseshoe. I want to say, "Leave it alone. That's our home."

TF: How did it feel when they put the Vietnam Memorial Wall?

FM: Well, I think it's great for the veterans to have that, but we used that cabana there for a lot of things. But change is always hard. As long as they keep our side clear (laughs) Dad planted that tree there.

PH: There are other trees around it now that the city planted, like pine trees, but our tree is still there. When we lived there, we'd tie the dog to that tree, and at the time, it was only about that big around, But now, it's this big around. But we can tell it's the same tree.

FM: It's been a while. (laughs) Jerry and I got married in '62, and we were living in Salt Lake when the biggest majority of people started moving out of Verdeland Park.

TF: Pete, did you guys move out before they started doing all that?

PH: Yeah.

FM: Well, no, Pete, L-Court was the last one left standing. All of the other homes were sold or torn down, and L-Court was the one part—where we were, on our side of the street—left standing, and they left it there for quite a while. I think gradually, they either used them for maintenance, or other things; but eventually, they cleared them all out. But where our home was—those were the very last ones left standing. So, we watched pretty much all of Verdeland Park get scattered.

TF: Well, is there anything else that we haven't covered in this interview that you wanted to mention, before we turn the recorder off?

FM: Well, for one thing, we walked everywhere. We walked to church, once we got the White Chapel. But we just had a lot of fun.

PH: Growing up, Little League baseball was one of the big parts of my life.

FM: Yeah, and church was a big part for me.

PH: When they built the baseball diamond over there behind the swimming pool, the big thing to do was hit balls into the swimming pool when we were playing, because the pool was in left field. So, our goal was to hit balls over that fence, and I actually did that a couple times. And there were a few other guys who hit balls over there. But I had a good time in Little League. But I remember playing on teams before that field was ever there. That was when we played city ball.

FM: But I think to the other people around Layton, we probably looked like poor folk; but we didn't feel like that. And like Pete said, once people moved out into different neighborhoods, it was just never the same. You never got back the community that we had. I still get teary eyed, thinking about it. (pauses)

PH: Yeah, it was a cool place for a kid to grow up. There were a lot of things to do, like endless trees to climb.

FM: I think it was good for parents, families, and everybody. Everybody helped each other.

PH: Talking about helping each other out, I remember one time—and I had no idea I had these allergies—but Jody and I went out and found some dandelions, and we thought it would be funny to rub our noses in them and make them yellow. But when I did that, my eyeballs just kind of turned inside out, because I was super allergic to the pollen. So, I went home, but nobody was there.

FM: When my mom saw it later, it scared her to death.

PH: When I looked in the mirror, I about had a conniption fit. I couldn't believe what I was seeing, and I didn't know what to do. But Jody went home and got his mom, and she came running over. So, she came over and looked at me, and she was probably thinking, "What happened?!? I don't know if I want to go in there. (laughs) But anyway, she came in and got all the yellow stuff off my nose. She knew what was happening. (laughs)

FM: What happened to your eyes?

PH: I just remember endless cold wash rags on my eyes, and they were so itchy. It was horrible. And after that, I got hay fever really bad, and for the longest time, Mom was trying to find some kind of pill or medication to help.

FM: Right. He was so allergic. You're not as bad now, are you?

PH: No, I'm not.

FM: There were so many things that happened here. My brother under me was mowing the lawn one time, and he chopped his toe off.

PH: Just the tip of it—nothing major. (laughs)

FM: And there were broken arms. (laughs) There were so many things that happened in this place.

PH: I remember coming home when he chopped the tip of toe off. There was a shoe sitting there, and the tip of it was gone. There was blood all over it, and it was just a shoe. And I thought, “What on earth?” So I went into the house, and Mom was all rattled about it. My dad had thrown him in the car and taken him to Tanner Clinic.

FM: My mom was not good in crisis.

PH: We would come in bleeding, she would scream, and she would run into the back room. (laughs) We were like, “Wait a second. I’m bleeding here!” (laughs) There was no help for us.

FM: One time when they went camping, the car was backfiring, and there was smoke. Well, Mother thought the car was on fire. And they hadn’t even slowed down yet, and she was opening the door, trying, to push my little sister out. (laughs)

PH: What had happened was we had an eight-man raft, and we blew it up with exhaust. We had a tube that we connected from the raft to the exhaust pipe. Well, whoever disconnected it left the rag on the tailpipe, and that’s what was causing the smoking when we were going down the road. And poor Ruth was only about four. But Dave and I were laughing our guts out.

TF: Well, thank you so much for taking time out of your day to meet with me today.

(recording stops)