

Crowder, Dr. David L. Oral History Project

Hazel Pearson- Life during the Depression

By Hazel Pearson

November 29, 1975

Box 2 Folder 21

Oral Interview conducted by Sandra Williams

Transcribed by Sarah McCorristin February 2005

Brigham Young University- Idaho

SW: This is an oral history and I am Sandra Williams and today is November 29, 1975. I am going to interview Hazel Pearson and the general topic will be the depression. Mrs. Pearson, where were you born?

HP: I was born in Moreland, Idaho on the sixth of September 1906 in Moreland, Idaho.

SW: How long did you live there?

HP: Until I was eighteen.

SW: Where were your parents born?

HP: My dad was born in Hooper, Utah; and my mother was born in Neillyville, Idaho.

SW: What was your occupation?

HP: My occupation was just to run around and wait on kids.

SW: After you were eighteen, what did you do?

HP: I went in training at the LDS Hospital.

SW: Training to become a nurse?

HP: That's it, graduated when I was—in 1928.

SW: What did you do after that?

HP: I worked as a trained nurse, registered nurse, for a year and a half.

SW: How much did you get, money wise?

HP: Not much.

SW: How much is not much?

HP: We worked for twenty hours for seven dollars.

SW: That isn't too bad. Let's see, okay. Then when did you get married?

HP: On the twenty-ninth or twenty-third of November 1929.

SW: To?

HP: To Henry Pearson, my husband.

SW: This was right after the depression started, where did you live?

HP: Lived in Shelley.

SW: And you paid rent?

HP: Yes.

SW: How much was it?

HP: Well, the first rent we paid, I think, was sixteen dollars a month for two rooms and a bath, bath privilege.

SW: Where did your husband work right after you got married?

HP: He had no work until spring.

SW: Well, what did he do in the spring?

HP: Worked for Mr. Johnson at Shelley there on a farm.

SW: How much did he get paid?

HP: Oh, I don't know how much it was, but it was about twenty-five cents an hour, I think.

SW: And did he herd cattle?

HP: No, he worked on a farm.

SW: Hauling hay?

HP: Irrigating and hauling hay.

SW: When did you start having children after you were married?

HP: Oh, we had our first baby in October of 1930. He was born in Shelley, no born in Shelley, no born in Moreland at my mother's place.

SW: So you didn't go to the hospital?

HP: No.

SW: So you didn't have to pay the doctor fees?

HP: I didn't have to, I did though.

We lived in a little two room house where the rent was only five dollars a month. The first summer, we lived in Shelley and that fall, my baby boy was born, my oldest son. Then we moved the next spring or than next fall, it was really 'cause we had gone to Moreland to hunt work and all over the next summer. And come back to Shelley in the fall and my second child was born in Shelley, not in Shelley, but we lived in Shelley and I went home to have it. She was born in January the twentieth in 1932. Well, in '32 and then we, he worked there in Shelley for a while that fall and we were without work for nearly all the winter and in the spring they moved to Moreland. Moved onto a grubby little farm and my third child was born in May of 1933. And, I don't know, then we never moved back to Shelley ever again, it was our move to Moreland to stay. And that's all.

SW: Okay, with all these kids what did you, what food did you give them? How much did things cost in the store and where did you get your money and stuff to buy them?

HP: My father gave me a cow. So we had a cow for the milk and we bought our flour and we had our own vegetables and sometimes bought a pig or something for meat. We had no refrigeration or anything, we couldn't keep it long and so we didn't buy very much of that to keep. We canned and....

SW: You did a lot of your own canning?

HP: Yes a lot, nobody did any for me. I didn't have any money.

SW: Did you plant gardens?

HP: There they are. Oh, yes. A big garden and I used to raise tomatoes for sale and things like that.

SW: How much could you usually sell your tomatoes for?

HP: Oh, between fifty and seventy-five cents a bushel. But that was enough.

SW: Then what would you buy with the money? Would you buy your cereal?

HP: My boy a pair of overalls. Something else like that, clothes for the kids.

SW: What did you do for your Christmases?

HP: I remember one Christmas I made Henry some handkerchiefs our of sugar sacks, ten pound sugar sacks. That's all he got and I didn't get anything because he didn't have any money either and he couldn't make handkerchiefs our of sugar sacks like I did.

SW: So you usually didn't get much. What did you give your kids?

HP: Oh, we usually make rag dolls for them or something else, you know. He made hobby horse, took an old broom stick and I made a horse's head on it and it was a hobby horse and a few things like that. One day, when he was plowing he plowed up a little old tractor that somebody had had, you know. A little iron body one, and he put wheels on it and painted it up for the Christmas, that's what we did. We didn't fuss much.

SW: Thank you very much. This tape will be placed in the Library at Ricks College for further use by researchers.