

Dr. Radke-Moss Women's Oral History Collection

Loraine Parson Lindstrom-Life Experiences

By Loraine Lindstrom

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Box 1 Folder 16

Oral Interview conducted by Alina Mower

Transcribed by Alina Mower

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Brigham Young University- Idaho

AM: Hello. This is Alina Mower and I'm interviewing Loraine Lindstrom, my mother. Today is December twenty-ninth?

LL: Yep.

AM: December twenty-ninth, 2004, just before the New Year. Say Hello Loraine!

LL: *Hello* Alina!

AM: Some of these questions are—I want you to tell me where you were born, what your family was like, what your childhood memories were.

LL: Alright. I was born in Rexburg, Idaho, in 1957—January 8th 1957. I was the eighth child of my parents, Oliver and Myra Parson, Oliver Parson and Myra *Barker* Parson. My father was from Kansas; my mother was born in northern Utah, in North Ogden. And they moved to Rexburg when my father took a job at Ricks College as the Art Department. He was *the* Art Department. He was the only art teacher at that time when he first came. And so he basically he built the art department from nothing to something over the twenty-five years he taught there.

AM: Was it Ricks College at that time?

LL: Yeah, it was Ricks College.

AM: How many buildings were there?

LL: Let's see he came in 1954. Course I wasn't born until 1957, but the art department was housed in what was called the lambing shed, they had been originally married students housing and they called them the lambing sheds, because they were just these little almost like portable sheds, and that was what the art department was housed in. There were two main buildings: the Spori, it was the administration building and the Field House, can't remember the name of the Field House, it was where the gym was. So it was a big gym and a swimming pool in the basement of the gym. The gym was on the top and the swimming pool was in the basement. And, there must have been other buildings but...Oh, the Kirkham! That's right, the Kirkham was there, the auditorium.

AM: Were there any kind of academic classes?

LL: Oh yeah there were! But they must have been in old buildings that I don't remember. I do remember when they built the—I was very young when they built the Romney Science building, and I remember when they built the Manwaring Center, I was probably, I don't know, eight or nine when they built the Manwaring Center, or younger maybe. And then the field house, the new field house they built when I was probably eleven or twelve.

AM: Is that why in the Hart gym today, there's that Field House, it's called the Field House? Did you know that? It's just on the very west end of the Hart Building with a big, kind of a gym where there's like four different courts?

LL: And that's called the Field House?

AM: They call it the Field House, and they have a bunch of activities there, they have the Halloween Carnival there, you know ward activities.

LL: Oh, we always called the whole thing the Field House.

AM: The whole gym?

LL: The whole gym. In the Hart building. I don't know. But when I was really little, and they had the *old* gym, that was by the Spori, we would go as a family on every Saturday night and go swimming, we would reserve the swimming pool for just our family. And we did it in the winter time; we didn't do it in the summer time. In the winter time we'd go on Saturday night, and sometimes the Neilsons would join us. And there was no shallow end, it was all deep. We'd take giant inter-tubes and we'd swim and play for several hours, and then we'd all shower in the locker rooms. We'd get our Sunday or Saturday-night shower. And then we would go home and my mom would fix like two dozen hot dogs. She just dumped this huge package of hot dogs in the frying pan and fry them up, and we'd eat like three or four hot dogs each. I mean that was our Saturday night ritual. I loved it!

AM: What was Christmas like and stuff like that?

LL: Well, because my dad was a teacher, he didn't have a huge salary. He did sell paintings, of course, and so that was a supplement. But our Christmases were very, not very opulent, I guess. We always had the most beautiful Christmas tree. I remember just, being able to lay underneath it, and watch it, kind of like that Disney cartoon with Chip 'n Dale where you see the lights blinking on and off. That's how it was for me 'cause we'd have—they were all big lights, they weren't twinkle lights, they were all the big, big lights, but we had a few blinkers. And so they'd blink and they'd make patterns on the ceiling, and I just loved laying underneath it and watch the patterns, and dream of Christmas, and—I don't know why kids love Christmas so much, 'cause it wasn't like we got a huge amount of stuff, but we just loved it. I loved Christmas. But we almost always went to California for Christmas to visit both my grandparents. My mom's parents lived in Woodland Hills and my Dad's parents lived in Torrance. So we would always have Christmas morning early—a couple days early, soon as we'd get out of school. Sometimes we'd skip the last few days of school and we'd go to California and have Christmas there. Which, I guess was okay. It was just something we always did.

AM: Would you have preferred to stay home for Christmas?

LL: I don't know. We did stay home once or twice. One time because my father became very ill, and it was hard staying home, we didn't know what to do.

<Interruption>

AM: Do you remember any particular gifts that were just amazing to you?

LL: Well my doll house! Oh that I gave?

AM: Either one, either way.

LL: When I was, I don't know, six maybe? Santa Clause brought Jodell and I the most spectacular doll house. And we were the envy of every girl that I know, 'cause it was a Barbie doll house that was *made*, but it had wonderful details like a television set with a picture on it and a fireplace, and sofas, and beds with the cute little—they were poster beds, like four poster beds and bedspreads and little drawers. Everything was just blocks of wood but they were painted so that they looked perfectly plausible. And the kitchen—there was a kitchen set, it was painted yellow, that was really wonderful. Anyway we were the envy, the total envy of all our friends. That Christmas I remember there was a gift under the tree for me and I could feel it, you know, I was feeling it and I said "I think it's a boy Barbie Doll." Because you could feel the legs and stuff. It was from Leon. And Leon was furious with me that I had guessed what his present was because—and I go well why? *You* always guess! Because Leon was the best guesser. He knew everything, always. And he was so mad. Anyway that present disappeared. And I was so sad because I thought that he had taken it away from me and I wasn't going to get it. But they had it in the doll house—the doll was in the doll house when, on Christmas morning. So I remember that. I also remember probably my very first Christmas memory was, I was probably three or four. I remember my dad carrying me down the stairs, and there was a little rocking chair that I still have, and I remember them putting me in the rocking chair with a little dolly. I was very small, but that was just one of the first Christmas memories I have. Oh and one year! Nolan gave me a set of skis. Total outfitted me with skis. I don't know why he did it. He just felt benevolent that year I guess. Kind of like Lars this year maybe, I don't know! He had money for the first time in his life. He took me to a sports place, and he bought me skis and poles and boots. And it was a lot of money; it was probably 70 dollars or more. So I could learn how to ski. I'd never skied before. I learned how to ski with him. It was really fun.

AM: What do you remember about your mother?

LL: My mom was actually I think, quiet. She was more quiet. I don't know why Parsons are so loud. 'Cause I don't remember my mom being loud ever! I don't know why our siblings are so outspoken and noisy and, you know, performers! Every one of us are just gregarious and...

AM: So what do you mean by quiet?

LL: She just didn't talk a lot. And she just was—she was never a performer, you know like, she never commanded attention.

AM: Not like *you*!

LL: Well! Most of my siblings are like me I think, aren't they?

AM: Do you have any brothers or sisters that are sort of like your mom in that aspect? Or are they all just kind of blah, blah, blah, blah? Showy off, attention on me?

LL: Well . . .

AM: Do you think Nolan is more or Kelvin even? Subdued?

LL: We all have our performance genes, I don't know if there's any that are more subdued than others. But our mother just—the thing that I remember most, the thing that I think about most when I think about my mother is she was very smart, very intelligent. And you couldn't ask her a question that she didn't know the answer to. She just always—or if she didn't quite know, she'd go to the encyclopedia or—and you know that was way before internet, but she'd find the answer of anything. And she was just really, really, really smart and I just loved her, loved that in her. But my mom had suffered from scoliosis, severe scoliosis. So her back was twisted and she only stood four foot ten, as high as Kathy Parson. And her ribs and her hips were all fused together into some solid mass of bone. So she was in pain a lot, and it displaced her organs, and she didn't have a cute figure. And I think she always felt a little bit bad about that. Especially since my dad was an artist, I think she felt bad that she couldn't have a beautiful body for him. The doctors told her when she was young, actually they told her parents to never let her get married, because if she ever did get pregnant that it would kill her because her organs were so displaced. And so when she became engaged to my father, her parents sat her down and said, you know the doctors say you shouldn't get pregnant. And she told them, that her patriarchal blessing blessed her with sons and daughters and that she was going to believe in the Lord and not the doctors. And it took her a while to get pregnant, took her three years before she got pregnant, but once she got pregnant, it was like boom, boom, boom! She had nine kids!

AM: Did she have any miscarries?

LL: She did. She actually lost a little baby that was—she lost a baby that was still-born. At about six or seven months I think, a little boy, it was between Kelvin and I. And she didn't even go to the hospital, she had it at home. I don't know why. I wish I knew more about it. But I don't. But I remember that she was pretty sad about it. I mean I don't remember it personally. I just know that from what I heard.

AM: Did they name him?

LL: I don't think they named him.

AM: Do you remember anything about her mannerisms, or cooking, or things that she did with you?

LL: I wasn't as close to my mother as I was my father, I was closer to my dad.

AM: Why?

LL: I think my dad and I just were kindred spirits. That's all I can—that's the only thing I can think. We were just carefree a little bit. Or, kind of wild. I don't know, my dad wasn't wild and I wasn't wild, but we just saw eye to eye a lot and so I just preferred being with my dad. I loved being with dad! If he had a trip, an art trip to go to, to like deliver paintings or pick up paintings or set up a gallery or show or something, I was always the first to be elected to go. I loved doing it! Even when I was little—probably nine or ten. I loved going. And I would help him put the wires on the paintings, and I'd help him hang them and I'd help determine you know what should hang next to what. I'd help him do the whole show.

AM: When you were in junior high or high school?

LL: Yeah! As long as I could, as long as I was able. And because like I said he was the sole Art Department when he first came to Ricks, and they first built the Manwaring Center, they decided as kind of a kick-off thing, they were going to have a summer art show. It was an invitational from all over the country, all over the United States. And they had it in the what's now the cafeteria area, but which was the ballroom then. It was the ballroom at that time, but now it's a cafeteria. And I'd help him hang that show, and then they'd hire college students during the week to sit at the desk you know as people came to see the show, but they didn't want to hire kids on Sunday, so he'd have us kids do it on Sunday. And so, after church they'd just open the show after church or whatever, or between Sunday school and Sacrament Meeting. And so, I loved it! Jodell and I would do it quite often, but I loved just sitting there for those art shows on Sunday afternoons, I just loved it. I miss that, kind of. Every September we'd get ready for the Madison County Fair and the Blackfoot Fair, and we'd submit our paintings and there'd be a frenzy the night before the Blackfoot Fair just getting all the paintings ready, and loading them up, and all us kids would be matting our paintings or our drawings or whatever and we'd all come home with ribbons, everyone of us; come home with a blue ribbon or red ribbon. *Seldom* a white ribbon. And dad *often* came home with the sweepstakes. Until one year, Del won the sweepstakes. And dad was so disgusted!

AM: Your brother!

LL: Because it was a modern, it was a very modernized, stylized version of the Tetons, and he won the sweepstakes. And everybody—Dad was so upset! Or, actually for a long time Dad was the judge of the shows and so, there was a while there when he didn't win anything because he was the judge. Another thing that I loved what he would do is he would bring his students' work home and we'd grade them. It was great! And what we'd

do is we'd just line them up along the length of our living room floor which we could—it was a very long room. So we'd line them up the length of the living room floor, and then we'd each take turns picking up what we thought was the best and we'd move it to the top and we'd take the worst down to the bottom until everybody had had a turn, the whole family, mom and everybody included, we'd all have our turns and then dad'd go “K, does that look right?” and we'd all go, “Yeah.” So he'd just start at the top: A+, A you know, and he'd go down all the way down!

AM: There was like Fs and stuff at the bottom?

LL: I don't think he ever gave Fs. Well, he might have if they were really bad, And I often, even when I was in junior high I would get up—Dad always had a seven o'clock figure drawing class, and so I'd get up and go to school with him to that seven o'clock class. And I would draw until it was time for me to go to school, and then I'd walk to the junior high. So I'd go with him to his seven o'clock class all winter long. Crazy, now that I think about it. Why'd I do that?

But my mom she started teaching again when I was in the third grade, so she started teaching out at Terreton, which was in West Jefferson, and she'd have to leave early in the morning and she wouldn't get home until about five in the evening. And she was so tired all the time. I was in the third grade and so it was just, felt like, I didn't really get to talk to her much after that. She was just too tired. And my Dad instigated at one point soon after she started teaching he says, “Okay, we all have to help with breakfast and dinners.” So we all had partners, Leon was my partner. And we had to—we had a turn cooking a breakfast and a turn cooking a supper. And Leon, who I adored and worshipped by the way, always wanted to put like food coloring in the potatoes or salad, and so! We had a great time being partners, I just loved it. I loved being with Leon 'cause it was always something weird.

AM: How much older was he?

LL: Leon is six years older than me. So if I was about nine when we started doing that...

AM: He was 15?

LL: Leon was probably 15. And we did it for a couple years 'til, probably 'til, the older kids were gone, Leon and Delwin were gone, Jodell and Nolan and Kelvin and I could pretty much fend for ourselves. And we always were supposed to have the kitchen cleaned after school, we were supposed to clean the kitchen, before mom got home. Anyway, we were all supposed to clean the kitchen before mom got home from school, and we'd get home and we'd watch TV of course. We watched *Bewitched*, and *I Dream of Jeannie*, and our favorite show was this one called *Dark Shadows*, and it was really bad, and all of a sudden we'd see mom drive up, and we'd *run* to the kitchen and try to clean the kitchen before she got out of the car and into the house.

AM: Did it work?

LL: NO! And she never, you know...

AM: Well you see, your kids do it too!

LL: I know! That's why every time you kids, when I drive up and I'd see people sneaking past the window, it just cracked me up! 'Cause I knew exactly! I'd see you run from the TV room around to the kitchen or whatever. It just so cracked me up because I knew that's exactly what I had done.

AM: That's so funny you never even told us!

LL: I would just sit in the car and laugh. Sometimes I'd think about saying, "So, I wonder if I ran and put my hand on the TV if it'd be warm!" So she taught in Terreton for a few years, and then she moved to Rigby, which was closer and she didn't have to travel as far. But every time we'd get out of school for blizzards and stuff, Rigby was always in. So she'd have to go to school, even in the most terrible blizzards. I was always felt so bad for her! 'Cause I just wanted her to be able stay home with us and kick back, you know, just play all afternoon or all morning or whatever... she never got to. She always had to go [to] school in the worst weather. Let's see her birthday was May, May 22 and I always tried from the time I was, probably twelve, I'd always make her a beautiful cake and she loved nuts, and so I'd always chop walnuts and put on the frosting or pat it onto the frosting, I always just tried to make the most beautiful cake I could come up with for her birthday. We often ate outside, even though it was usually muddy because it was in the spring, but we were all so anxious to be outside but we'd try and brave it and go outside. What else?

AM: Tell me about, you went on a mission didn't you?

LL: Yep. Tell you about my mission?

AM: Yeah, tell me about, I guess graduating from high school, college, mission, meeting dad, getting married, you know.

LL: Okay. Oh did you want me to talk about the war a little bit?

AM: Yeah I'm going to get to that stuff later.

LL: Okay, well when I was eight years old, no I was seven years old, my oldest sister Anita went on a mission, and I remember sitting in sacrament meeting for her farewell and they sang *I Stand All Amazed*, and they sang *The Lord is My Sheppard*. And I remember—and *I Need Thee Every Hour*. And I just remember being touched so sweetly. It was just one of the sweetest memories of being in church that I have ever had.

AM: Was she the first Parson to go on a mission?

LL: I think so!

AM: For some reason I thought she was.

LL: I think you're right. First Parson to go on a mission. And I just remember saying, I just remember looking up to my mom and saying, "I'm going to go on a mission. Just like Anita." And she just, you know smiled or whatever, but I never forgot it and I often told people that I was going to go on a mission and they'd all go, "No you won't." And they'd all say, "You'll be married before you're 21." It used to make me so mad. No I won't! So, going through High School, there was a phase I went through, the navy phase. I was going to join the navy! I had navy posters all over my room. And my mom would just go, "(*grunt*) What happened to the mission idea?" I'd go, "Well it's either the mission or the navy!" And she'd go, "Okay! Let's hope it's the mission." I just think she would just roll her eyes at that whole navy phase!

AM: Did you like wear navy outfits or something?

LL: Oh I did! I did. Because we'd always go to California you know for the summer, or we'd always go in the summer and we'd always go at Christmas. And our favorite thing was to go to the thrift stores. Well, Aunt Laura lived in San Diego, so we'd go to the thrift stores and there'd be racks of old—of navy uniforms. And so I always bought—I had a navy pea coat, and a navy shirt, and army shirts or marine shirts, and I wore those to school all the time! When I was in High School. It was so bad! And my hair was curly, but the style was straight, and so I'd put my hair up on giant rollers to try and control it and it would last for one day, but I always had to pull it back. It'd last okay for one day and then it'd just get frizzy and ugly and so I'd just wear bandanas to school for the rest of the time 'til I washed again. I hated washing it because it was such an ordeal. Hated my hair! Chopped it all off once when I was in—the summer before eighth grade I locked myself in the bathroom and chopped it all off, and then I tried straightening it which ruined it! Totally ruined it, and then they really had to cut it off to... ugh! I hated my hair. But in high school I was a bit of an eccentric I guess. I loved wearing hats and bandanas and army shirts and navy shirts.

AM: This in the sixties?

LL: It was actually early seventies. I graduated in 1975. So I was a senior, the Vietnam War had actually ended by the time I was a senior. But I loved drama, and so I was in every play that the high school did. I wanted to be in every play. I actually had a couple of starring roles. I was the star of *Our Town*. I was Emily in *Our Town*, and I was the star of the *Imaginary Invalid*. And I was one of the ugly step-sisters in *Cinderella*, which I didn't think was the star, but looking back on, it was! Trudy and I were—Trudy and I were the best, we were just the team, the bomb!

AM: I still hear people...

LL: You're kidding!

AM: Well yeah! At school, Brother Gary Benson, well I remember when your mother was the step-sister, and that was the funniest thing!

LL: I ran into him by the way last summer. And just told him how much you loved him and everything, and he just said how much he loved you.

AM: Well he should. What do you remember—oh yeah, keep finishing with school and your mission and then getting married.

LL: Okay, so! After high school, I went to Ricks College of course. Loved it very much!

AM: What did you, what kind of classes did you take.

LL: I was kind of equal between drama and art to begin with. I remember Trudy and I took a creative writing class together and I got an A+ and she got a—I hope she didn't get a C, but she got a bad grade in the class, and she was so put out. She couldn't figure out how I could possibly pull that off 'cause I was always kind of trailing Trudy always, you know, I always trailed Trudy in grades and everything, and she was really put out that I would get a better grade! But after my first year at college, I auditioned for Playmill. Trudy and I auditioned for Playmill, and she made it and I didn't, and it devastated me, and I was—I don't think I've ever gotten over it. I was devastated! So hurt, that I would—I always couldn't figure out how I could not get into Playmill and so as a concession I guess my parents let me go on a discovery, which was a science kind of camp thing for five weeks, four or five weeks. And just after I got home from that, the Teton Dam burst and we had the flood. And that kind of changed my life forever. It destroyed our home that I grew up in, and just kind of, kind of was like a pause in our lives. It changed everything. The boy I had been dating disappeared. I was supposed to have a date with him the day of the flood, and he disappeared. I didn't see him for two months. 'Cause his family's house was completely washed away and they just, they just drove off to Montana to live with relatives for a while and I didn't hear from him at all! For two months! It was just weird, and then, because our house was destroyed we got a lot of money from it, my parents bought a little trailer to kind of, for temporary use. But my parents had a lot of money and in the fall, I heard somebody talk about going to Europe on a study abroad tour with BYU. And I asked my Dad if he'd let me go to Europe to study and he just said, "Well we'd never had cash in our hands before, but we do now." So he let me go, he paid for me to go to Europe. And, which also changed my life I think. 'Cause I'd studied art—It was just...

<Interruption>

AM: Changed your life?

LL: I loved—I love Europe so much, we went you know, from museum to museum to museum. I loved being in the center of that history. I loved being able to see firsthand the art that I had studied all my life, 'cause I—I loved studying art history. I loved sitting in my dad's office and just going through his art books. I just did it over, and over, and over,

and over. And so to see paintings that I had seen in his art books firsthand was just like—it was so surreal and so wonderful and just so amazing that I was able to be a part of it! It was a wonderful experience. I fell in love with Europe, I fell in love with a *boy* in Europe of course! And thought I was going to marry him, and that was horrible.

AM: I never heard about that!

LL: It was awful! And in the meantime, I had been dating Nils Lindstrom, before I had left for Europe. I guess I should back up huh? Do you want me tell how I met him?

AM: Yeah sure! That'd be great!

LL: Oh well.

AM: Just tell how you met him.

LL: Okay. I'm going to back up here, when I was 16 I was in a dance festival, and it was a regional dance festival from all over the Valley, and they held it in Pocatello at the big arena that they have there, called the—at that time they called it the Mini Dome. And before the show started I was talking to my family on the bleachers and my dad suddenly said, "Look at that kid walking up the steps of the bleachers. I painted him the other day! I did a portrait of him." And I said, "Oh yeah! I remember seeing that portrait!"

<Interruption>

AM: Look at that kid going up the bleachers . . .

LL: Okay, look at that kid, and then my dad said, "Lorraine! It'd be so funny if you pretended like you knew him! Just go talk to him, and pretend like you know him. And Leon was there and Nolan was there, and everybody just thought it would be so funny. And I go no, no, no. And they go, "Come on! Come on!" And my dad said, "I think his name is Nie-els." And we all laughed! We thought that was the funniest name. And we—he'd already gone past us at that point, several steps up above us. Finally I said okay, and I jumped out onto the steps and I just screamed at the top of my lungs, "Nie-els! Nie-els!" and he kind of stopped, and he hesitated and he looked behind him, and I was waving at him, and so I ran up the steps and I was just, pretended to be just so excited to see him, and he was in shock! And he could not—I could just see his mind just racing—who in the heck is this girl?! And I was just, wouldn't even let him have a chance to say anything. I was just going, "Nie-els! Nie-els! I'm so happy to see you! I can't believe I'm seeing you! It's been so long! and how's your mom and dad? and your sisters? I hear you're going to school, do you like it and . . .?" And he was just stammering all over, and just—oh, he was so—I could tell he was just mortified, that he couldn't place me! Finally, finally he just goes, "You know, I'm—I feel so stupid but I can't quite remember your name!" And I looked all hurt, and I go, "OH! You can't remember my name?!" And he goes, "It's right here on the tip of my tongue!" Which cracked me up! Made me laugh! And I just laughed, and I says, "Oh! I'm just teasing you. You don't really know me. My

dad's Professor Parson, he's down sitting down there, we looked down and my whole family is just in hysterics, laughing! And dad—his face was just—he just looked so hurt! Because he goes, “Professor Parson?” Which he had idolized my Dad his whole life! ‘Cause he'd heard about Professor Parson forever! And he was so hurt that my dad would pull such a prank! Anyway, I just laughed and I said, “Well, Goodbye!” and I didn't think I'd *ever* see him again, and was totally, flipped and bobbed, you know jumped down the steps and ran off.

But our paths kept crossing. Finally a couple years later after his mission we were both up at Ricks, and he was a art major and I was too, so our paths crossed enough that we just finally became friends and, we didn't really start dating though until after the flood, and after that summer, so it was the fall semester after the flood was when we had our first date. Well he was smitten for some *weird* reason! And I was not. I thought he was so fun! He was the funnest guy I had ever been with. He was just interesting, was so clever and so funny and so interesting to talk to and be with, that I really loved being with him, but I was just not in love with him. But he was smitten by me and he proposed on our third date, nearly made me run screaming! But I didn't. I decided we could still be friends, so we dated the whole fall, and then that January I went to Europe. I was gone for six months. Fell in love with a Prince Charming (sigh) named Christopher. But, just before I came home, Christopher broke my heart, so I had to come home, I cried for—the thirteen hour flight I cried all the way home. It was so sad! But I got home and Daddy was, or Nils was waiting, hoping I'd still be friends. But actually I wrote him in February and said forget it! Don't wait for me! I'm not interested. But he kept writing to me anyway and waited for me to come home and we—you know the first I saw him I said, “You know I meant it! I just don't think there's anything here for us.” And he said “Fine, we'll just be friends,” which was probably really smart of him to do.

So we dated all summer, just as friends, and that fall I went off to BYU, and he worked while he got ready to go to Art Center in January. He couldn't leave well enough alone, he decided to propose again. Told me we should get married before he went to California. And I said NO. And then he wanted to break up for good, he never wanted to see me again, and totally devastated me, because he was such a fun—I loved him for his friendship! I just loved his friendship! So it was, probably a smart thing for him to do—to break up with me. ‘Cause I realized how much I liked him, how much I enjoyed being with him. We became friends long enough at Christmas time for me to decide to go on a mission and for him to go off to California, and we wrote slightly to each other. He was having the time of his life in California, and I was having a great time on my mission, and I went to Sweden! When I got my mission call, Grandpa Lindstrom [said it was a sign because he went to Sweden on his mission].

<Interruption>

AM: As you were growing up, which kind of historical events or culture things affected you the most, or do you remember the most?

LL: Well, we were always afraid of the Germans. I don't know why!

AM: Were they stereotyped where you were?

LL: Probably. Even though I was half German! I don't know. It's just that whenever we—we were always afraid the Nazi's were coming to get us.

AM: Like for real? You weren't scared of Japanese?

LL: NO! I never remember being scared of Japanese, and I remember at some point someone saying, well it's the Communists! It's the Russians you should be afraid of. But Jodell and I whenever we plotted our escape, it was the Germans we were running from! And probably because our dad when he fought in World War II he was in France. He fought the Germans, and that's probably where that came from. But, we had—upstairs in our house there were two bedrooms where the closets were back to back, that my dad had built. Dad had built the upstairs. But there was a hole, like they'd never finished the sheet rock or something in the back of the closet between these two bedrooms. So we always imagined that the Germans would be running up the stairs with their bayonets to get us! And we'd hide in the closet of one bedroom, while they searched the other bedroom, and then we'd jump through that hole, into the closet of the other bedroom while they searched the one we had just been in. So it was the Germans we were afraid of.

But at some point, I became—probably as I grew up more, I became aware of the Communists. You know the Soviet Union and we in Idaho, nobody thought well of the Communists. Nobody. And, we were afraid of nuclear wars, nuclear attacks. We had a spud cellar, and vaguely I remember hearing, well if in the event of a bomb scare of some kind, we would all have to go into that little spud cellar, which was—which they had dug out and it was a underground kind of thing. But it was creepy and smelly, it always smelled of rotten spuds, and it was just dirt! And it was these little stone steps that went down into it, and it was cold and spiders and, really icky! So I always was afraid of that. Also under our house, we had a—when we had built our basement, there was a place that—I don't know how it got there, I never asked my dad, but it was almost like a cave under our house that you could get to by—there was a hole in the cinderblock wall in the basement. And you climb into this cave that was under the house, and we always kind of talked like, well this would—we would prefer to be in our cave than the spud cellar, because the spud cellar was so icky. So we preferred to be in the cave.

And then we started our super-heroes club. Leon started it, Leon was Super Boy. And he had a costume that *was* Super Boy! That he modeled completely, identically out of the comic book, and so he was Super Boy. And because I loved Leon so much I decided to be Super Girl. But everybody else had original ideas. Jodell was Electricity Girl! And she'd go around shocking people! Nolan was Eagle Lad! And he could fly. I just wanted to be Super Girl, so that I could be with Leon!

AM: Did he ever get annoyed with you!

LL: I don't think so! I never remember Leon getting annoyed with me. He was—Leon had the best imagination of anyone. But beyond that, beyond his imagination, he could make anything! So if he'd get an idea, he would make sure it happened. For instance, there were some giant, giant cottonwood trees that lined our street, and Leon decided how cool it would be to have a tree house for the neighborhood, and he built it! And it wasn't

a boy's haphazard tree house. It was perfectly square, perfectly level, perfectly sealed. It was so wonderful! So one summer he built the tree house. The next summer he built another level up to the next tree. So it was almost like a split-level tree house. The first level was on the first two trees, and then the second level went from the middle tree to the next tree down. And it was such a wonderful place, but they tore the trees down eventually. But Leon could always make things like that happen. He was just so amazing! Amazingly talented.

AM: So you idolized his talent? Or just him?

LL: I think I was in awe of his talent, but he was just so fun to be with, because he had the best imagination and spirit and cleverness, and fun. And he came up with a character in high school called Skitzo, I think? That was you know a play on *Schizophrenia*. But he drew this character on everything! The Skitzo. And I mean I could still draw it. 'Cause we all started drawing Skitzo. The only time I remember being mad at Leon was one time he called me an adolescent. And I was crushed! "Mom! Leon just called me an Adolescent!" She goes, "Oh Le-on! Cut it out, will ya?"

As far as you know Vietnam War, I should have been more aware of it. In the back of our all minds it was a fear. It was a fear that our brothers were going to go to Vietnam. I didn't personally know too many, I did know one man who his wife was a friend of our—well actually they were friends of our family, but his wife that we kind of befriended while he was in Vietnam. And then he came home, and I just remember it being a really hard thing for him. And Delwin and Leon were so afraid of the draft. And I can't remember what Delwin's draft number was, but it was pretty high. I mean it was pretty, I should say it was pretty low, and the lower it was, the scarier it was. Leon's was high. I don't know how Del and Leon both got out of it, but neither of them had to go to Vietnam. I didn't really study it too much, I really wasn't into the politics of it and the history, it was just a vague fear. That's probably the best way to describe it.

And, I remember my parents not liking President Johnson. I remember them voting for President Nixon. And we were all hopeful that with President Nixon the war would end. Which it did! And then Watergate happened. Watergate happened I think in 1974, so I think I was either a junior, I think I was a junior in high school. Maybe it was '73 that it happened. It was a scandal! It was a terrible scandal, even though, I couldn't for the life of me figure it out. I couldn't understand what all the scandal was about! And I remember having political friends try to explain it to me, and they were just all so scandalized and up in arms, and they were all so angry at President Nixon! And I just couldn't figure out what the whole hullabaloo was about, so I just didn't really pay too much attention to it. I was kind of into my own thing, more.

AM: Which was?

LL: Fun!

AM: Boys?

LL: Boys! And Millions of Boys! I did! I was a terrible floozy. A hopeless floozy. Which Grandma Lindstrom delighted in calling me *before* I got engaged to her son. Oh Kennedy's Assassination I—I was in first grade. I was in first grade at the Washington Elementary School and it was during recess or lunch time, I think it might have been lunch time, and the older kids always got the swings and us little kids just had to wait to see if we could a get chance to get on. Well, some older girls were swinging on the swings and I was standing by the pole waiting for a chance to swing. And some older kids came running out of the school, and they were so distraught, and they said to the kids on swings, "Come quick! Come quick. Teacher just told us that President Kennedy's been shot." And I didn't know who that was. I didn't know why they were so upset. They all jumped off the swings and left, and I just thought of it as, Oh good! I get my chance to swing. So I did, I swang, but you know, I was swinging, but I was the only one out on the playground, and I felt kind of uneasy about it. That afternoon when we got home from school, I remember coming in from the bus and my mom was sitting in front of the television sobbing and sobbing! And I just said, "What happened? Tell us what happened!" I couldn't understand what the upset was, I didn't understand who he was, or why everyone was so sad and so upset. But I do remember her watching the funeral procession and watching the news and feeling distraught myself but not understanding why.

Another traumatic time I remember is, again not with President Kennedy but, my dad decided to go... I think he was on a sabbatical leave or something. He went to New York, he was supposed to go for six months I think. So he was leaving my mom. Kelvin was a baby, Kelvin was just newborn I think! Maybe a couple months old. And I remember going with Mom to the bus station there on Main Street in Rexburg. And she said goodbye to my dad, and Jodell and Nolan and I and baby Kelvin were in the car, and she got back in the car and *burst* into tears! And just sobbed and sobbed and sobbed, just horribly hysterically sobbed, and she was trying to drive us home. Well we were so scared, we all started to ball and we were howling crying so loud! And she finally stopped the car near Porter Park, she got out of the car and came around and just held us in her arms, told us she was sorry, she stopped crying, tried to stop crying so that we would stop crying, and she just—I just remember we all just sat there, parked alongside Porter Park and just cried and cried and cried. And we had no idea why we were crying! We didn't know why she was crying! We didn't understand what was happening. But our dad was gone for several months, and I remember him being gone, and I just wondered how my mom managed to do it without him there. It was in the winter too. I remember the older kids got to go see a movie, *Swiss Family Robinson* and *[The] Parent Trap*. It was a double feature. And we made a tape for my dad, and they told all about the movies on the tape! Okay what next?

AM: Okay, I would now like to kind of recap this a little bit. So far, I've really noticed that you have idolized your father and even in my childhood you always talked about your dad. You talk about Leon a lot. You refused Dad three times before getting married, and your mother it seems has never really been in your life a whole lot. So when you decided to get married and become a mother yourself, how did that make you feel? Were you scared? Were you upset? Because you'd always been so independent and you always did whatever you wanted to do.

LL: Well, when I got married and daddy was in school, and I knew that—you know it's funny. Growing up I'd had big plans for career and adventure—and maybe going to Europe, and going on a mission had really satisfied that a huge extent. I did feel bad about not graduating from college. And in the back of my mind hoped that I would be able to do that someday. I had gone to BYU for just—I'd gone for just one semester. And then the study abroad, so I had several upper division credits but I just—I was a year away from graduating. But when I got married, and my sole thought was let's get Nils graduated, and then, I think I just really intended on having children, and it was a natural process, it wasn't a thought—it wasn't a decision I had to make. I didn't have to decide to have a baby. I just did! But I wanted it! I wanted to have a baby. And I was so excited to be a mother! I don't remember it being hard, I don't remember it being—I don't remember resenting it. I remember it being—feeling so natural. So natural! It was easier to have a baby. It was easier than I had ever thought it would be. To have Brita. It was when you were born that it got hard! But, I just remember being so enamored of this little person and just, I just loved her so much! I just loved holding her and nursing her and, I don't know. It was so much easier than I ever imagined it could be. I had never really thought about being a mother. I really hadn't. I had hardly—I had millions of nieces and nephews, and I'd always claimed I was never going to get married, and never going to have kids. So I really never saw myself as a mother, until it happened, and then it was wonderful! It was wonderful! And it did get harder, the more kids I had. It's like a earthquake Richter scale, you know, at multiples of ten, with each baby. Things just get hard! They do! It's like putting kittens in a box and you just—(makes shaking gesture)

But initially it was wonderful, I really loved, and with each baby I loved it. It was hardest with Erik and Myra. Up 'til that point...

AM: And you had five kids.

LL: I had five. I had Brita and you, and then Lars, and Lars was just the most hilarious fun little baby, I just! You know, he was just so much fun, and you were so adorable, and Brita was so sweet! It was really wonderful up to when I got pregnant with Erik. And then I was so distraught because I had not planned on having another baby quite that soon, that was a bit of a surprise. And Lars was only 10 months old. Or no, I guess he was 11 months old when I found out I was pregnant. And, all through that pregnancy, I was just depressed. I was depressed! All through that pregnancy. And finally Leon came to see us for some reason. I think Leon and Kathy was there that summer, were in California that summer. And I remember Leon saying, "You better repent! Because this baby knows your feelings! He can hear them! He can feel them! You better repent before this baby comes out of that womb!"

AM: What did that mean?

LL: Just that you—'cause I was so depressed about it! "And you better tell that baby how much you love it and how much you want it before it's ever born." So I did. Started to at the end. 'Cause I didn't want Leon's prediction to come true. I wanted this baby to know

how much I loved him, and I did! Erik was just such a little Teddy Bear! He was just like a Teddy Bear! I just loved him so much! And you know it was hard because Lars was still a baby and Erik was just a little baby and you know. And then Myra was born and I had three little babies!

AM: Do you think that having children—I want to know what you think your rewards have been, what goals you made that—you know you still want to make or that you have accomplished.

LL: Well probably the number one goal through all of that was to finish school. And when Myra started kindergarten and Brita was in ninth grade I felt like that was my window of opportunity. I had to do it before Brita started college because I didn't think we would be able to afford it then. It took me four years to do it, and it was a difficult time. But that was my number one goal! And once I accomplished that, as far as goals now . . .?

AM: What are your future goals? Grandma? Mission?

LL: Oh yeah be a Grandma, go on a mission with daddy. Yeah those are all goals that...

AM: Here's a question. All your children are leaving you now. What are you going to do?

LL: I don't know. I'm going to be depressed! That is—I dread it. I don't look forward to all the children being gone. I want—I love having kids. I love having my family near me! You know, I think I told you this, when the other night—when we were at home, and I was helping Erik do a research paper and Lars got home from work it was after eleven when he got home. And I had to help Erik, we worked on it until midnight! And finally Erik was done and he went off to bed, and Lars was watching TV. And I went in and said, “Lars, you need to go to bed!” And he goes, “Mom! I was just waiting for my turn to talk to you! I need to tell you about my day!” It was so sweet that he just—he likes to talk to me, he likes somebody to talk to. When he gets home from work he just loves to have me there to ask him how things were, and for him to go through all the details. So I really enjoy that and I don't look forward to not having my kids there! I suppose I will get back into painting more, I hope. And that's about all I can—that's about all I really have to look forward to! Isn't that sad? Be a grandma, be the best grandma. I don't think I'll ever be as good as Grandma Lindstrom though. Nobody is as good as Grandma Lindstrom. Nobody!

AM: Well you have better cooking skills than Grandma Lindstrom!

LL: Well maybe that's my only, my only advantage! There is no better Grandma than Grandma Lindstrom. She lets the kids do anything. I don't think she's ever yelled at you kids. Has she ever yelled at you kids? Ever?

AM: Just Grandpa.

LL: Well you have to have a counterbalance, somewhere.

AM: You know you can do anything you want at Grandma's house until Grandpa came.

LL: That's right.

AM: Then you had to be careful. To finish up, I want to know what your views are about women in society. I want to know if you've worked out of the home. I know you have, but tell about what you think about stay home moms, working women, how you think women are viewed in society, their rights. . .

LL: Well, here's a little speech I made. I was in a women's history class in California at a university, the university I was going to. I think it was last semester actually. And I was in this women's history class. And it was taught by a strict feminist woman. And we had gone through the history of American women from Indians through the pilgrims and...

AM: 17th, 18th centuries?

LL: Yes, through all the centuries and how—and the conclusion that we finally had reached was that women had been liberated to the point where they finally were getting—you know being able to have independence and have their worth valued. And I don't deny that, that is true. Women throughout history have suffered. I do agree with that. It is a shameful thing how women have been treated throughout history. However, at the conclusion of this class, the emphasis was that women through the 1950s were so bored to tears being housewives that they got hooked on valium and finally realized in the 60s that they didn't have to be mothers and housewives, and in the 70s became career women, and finally it was the 90s and they were on their way to a better life. Well, I finally stood up at the end—you know it was near the end of the semester and I raised my hand, and I said, "I need to give a speech. And I want everyone to just sit down and listen." Including the teacher. And she said, fine, great. And it was in an auditorium, so it was a large class. And I just stood up and I said, I am older than any person in this room. I was in the 50s, I lived through the turbulent 60s. I was liberated in the 70s and I had—I was married and had babies in the 80s. Here it is the 90s, and you seem to think that mothers are obsolete. Well I'm here to tell you that they're not. You say you had women in the 50s hooked on valium, well now we have children in the 90s who are hooked on Prozac and Ritalin. We have children who are shooting each other. We have children who are so out of control that they don't know who they are. I said it's because of an absence of mothers and fathers. It's an absence of parental guidance. And I told them that I had a 15-year-old daughter, which was you. That came to me one evening, and you were stressed, and you were in tears. And you put your head on my shoulder and you said—I said, "What's the matter honey?" And you said, "I need a Mother." I told my class that there is nothing, *nothing* equal to that. She didn't need a friend. She didn't need a counselor. She didn't need an advisor. She didn't need anything else, but she asked for a mother. That's what she needed, and that's what she wanted. And I said, that is more valuable than *all* your talk about liberation or emancipation or value. That is what the true value is! Is that our

children have mothers that they know they can count on! That they know that they can go to and ask, will you be my mother? And your mother is there.

And well, I finished my speech and the class was pretty quiet. But the teacher got back up and she said, “Thank you. I don’t think I’ve ever had anyone talk to me like that before.” And she dismissed the class, and it was over for that day.

AM: So was that the last day of class?

LL: It wasn’t the last day of class, no, we had another week or so, but—I firmly believe that a woman *must* be aware of her children and their needs. A father is important and necessary for some other things, but it’s the mother who is aware of her children’s feelings. And it’s the mother that’s aware of their needs and more—it’s more their emotional and spiritual and mental needs. A father is so wonderful about you know, playing and providing a steady and stable environment. But fathers just aren’t really good about children’s needs, I decided! And maybe that’s too generalized. Maybe it’s not true. But as wonderful as your dad—as wonderful of a father as your dad is, I cannot see that he could have raised you children to be such wonderful kids as you are without their mother. He is wonderful, and he loved you so dearly! *Loves* you. But it took both of us. It took a mother and a father. And as far as my goals and aspirations, in the last twenty years, everything I’ve done was with my children in mind. Every decision I made. Every difficult experience that I had, my foremost thought was what is the best for my children? And every decision I made was with that in mind. As far as do I feel valued as a woman? I do. I don’t think it’s what I feel from society. I don’t even think it’s what I feel from your dad. I think it’s more of an inner experience. Maybe a spiritual confirmation that I am valued as a woman; that my contribution is vital to at least the society of my children. And that is I think more important to me than anything! That good enough?

AM: Yes. Thank you Mom.