

Dr. Radke Women's Oral History Collection

**Sherry Parsons - Life Experiences**

By Sherry Parsons

November 3, 2005

**Box 1 Folder 22**

Oral Interview conducted by Heidi Berry

Transcript copied by James Miller      March 2006

Brigham Young University- Idaho

HB: This is Heidi Berry and I am interviewing Sherry Parsons, my Grandma. Could you state your full name?

SP: Sherry Dawn Martin Parsons

HB: Sherry Dawn Martin Parsons. And, how old are you?

SP: I am 67 and a half. I was born January 27, 1938 in Pocatello, Idaho.

HB: So you were born here?

SP: Yes, that is where we are, in Pocatello.

HB: That is where we are, by the way. Did you grow up here?

SP: Yes, I did. I had an older brother, Johnny, a younger brother, Steven, and a younger sister, LeAnne. The time I was growing up, the extended family spent a lot of time together – the aunts, uncles, cousins. We were quite poor, only we didn't know it. Everybody in the neighborhood was. I had a great time when I was a kid – a great time. There was a lot of kids on the street where I lived. And in the evenings, it was roller-skating time. Everybody had roller-skates. And we played cops and robbers and cowboys and Indians on skates, played a lot of kick the can.

HB: Kick the can? What is kick the can?

SP: It is kind of like hide and seek.

HB: What does the can have to do with it?

SP: When you kick the can, you are free. You usually play it at night, when it's dark.

HB: So you can't see the can?

SP: So they can't see you stalking the can. It was fun. And then my friend Gale, she lived across the street, we used to play jacks.

HB: Gale, what was her last name?

SP: Gale Cotant.

HB: Gale Cotant? That was a cool last name. How do you spell her last name?

SP: C-O-T-A-N-T

HB: You used to play jacks?

SP: Yes, we spent hours playing jacks. On our sidewalk, from the porch to the street, right in the middle of it, there was one spot that was smooth, just like glass. So, we played out there because you didn't scrape your hands on the cement, because it was smooth.

HB: So, you lived on a paved road?

SP: Yes, it was paved. It had nice big trees. They used to have what they called a parking strip, where it was grass between the sidewalk and the street. Big, huge beautiful trees on either side of the street, loved the trees, still love the trees. It was great.

HB: How long did you live in Pocatello?

SP: Until 1968 when John and I went to Alaska. I was raised here; I was here all my life.

HB: Were you closer to one sibling than you were to another?

SP: My older brother and I were really close (Johnny) when we were young. Then he got into high school and he got chauvinistic on me so...got too bossy. But we were still good friends and still close, but he was awfully bossy.

HB: How much of an age difference was there?

SP: About three years.

HB: So there was Johnny, then you, and then Uncle Steven. How many years are there between you and Steven?

SP: There are six years between me and Steven and just under eight years between me and LeAnne. I used to take care of Steven when he was little.

HB: Was he a good kid?

SP: Yeah, but he wandered a lot. We had to put a harness on him, because he wandered.

HB: Was that common, to put halters on your kids? Did a lot of moms do it?

SP: I don't recall a lot of moms doing it, but we did. He used to catch bees in his hand. He could catch bees and hold them. We had a neighbor who was not real friendly and she had asked Steven one day what he had in his hand because he was holding it. And he said, "I have a bee in my hand." And she said, "I don't believe you." And he said, "I do. Do you want to see?" "Yeah," so she put her hand out and he turned his hand over and opened his hand and the bee stung her. And she was so furious, so furious. She was ranting and raving to my Dad telling him about how Steven gave her this bee that stung her. And my Dad said, "Did he tell you he had a bee in his hand?" "Yes, but I didn't believe him." My Dad says, "He told you he had a bee." He hopped a train once.

HB: How old was he?

SP: Not very old. He ended up in Montana.

HB: Was he still in school?

SP: Oh yeah. He was just young. He derailed a train once, when he was just little.

HB: How?

SP: Well, about two blocks from where we lived there's a train there and there's switches. And somebody didn't lock the switch. And him and his buddy were over there playing and they pushed it and it switched the track and so the train derailed.

HB: Did he get in trouble?

SP: Oh yeah, oh yeah, got in trouble in Montana too.

HB: With the law? Did he get charges pressed against him?

SP: No, he didn't get any charges pressed against him. But he was in big trouble. And then, when I was probably 5, 4, really, really tiny, my great-grandfather lived in Oxford.

HB: Is that in Idaho?

SP: Yeah, that's south of here. And mom used to put me on the Greyhound Bus and I would ride the Greyhound Bus down to grandpa's house. And Aunt Blanche would be standing by the side of the road waiting for me.

HB: Your mom's sister?

SP: No, Aunt Blanche was actually Grandpa Lloyd's niece. So she was one of the cousins, but everyone called her Aunt Blanche, lovely lady, she was super. She knew all the stories and all the songs that a kid ever wanted to know. I spent several summers down there with them. On Saturdays, Saturday was the day you went to do the grocery shopping in town. They lived on a farm. And so everybody would get all dressed up and we'd get to go to town.

HB: You'd get dressed up? Get your best clothes on?

SP: Yeah, you wore good clothes. Grandpa always wore his suit. He was an old Englishman, very proper. And we'd go and Grandpa would do his...with the other farmers around there. Aunt Blanche would do the grocery shopping. Johnny and I would go to the store and to the movie. We go to go to the movie on Saturday.

HB: How much did it cost?

SP: I don't remember. I don't remember how much it cost. Not very much. I know that here in Pocatello you could go to the movie for ten cents on Saturdays. But one time when we were coming back from town and I had a pink ribbon in my hair and the windows were open and that ribbon blew out the window and I was heart broken. Absolutely heart broken and Grandpa wouldn't stop. Had to keep going, had to get home, it's getting late, had to get home. But the next Saturday when we went into town, Grandpa bought me a new pink ribbon. Yeah, he just stole my heart. He was little, very small man, tiny.

HB: Did he come directly from England?

SP: He came from England. When they came over and they were in Oxford, the first winter they were there, they lived in a dug-out in the side of hill until they got a place built.

HB: So did he get married while he was in England and then him and his wife came over?

SP: Yeah, practically the whole town. A lot of the Crowshaws and Lloyds came from England.

HB: Is this your mom's parents or your dad's parents?

SP: My dad's. Grandpa Lloyd raised my dad. He was down there for many, many years with Grandpa Lloyd and Aunt Blanche. He went to school there.

HB: So his wife died?

SP: His wife died very, very young. They had four children. One of the children, Gladys, died when she was eight. John died when he was just a baby and Clarence, Grandma's younger brother, was mentally retarded, I think, and he lived till he was 32. But for a long, long time I thought Grandma, my dad's mother, was an only child. I didn't know anything about these others in the family, until I got into genealogy. Grandpa died when I was eight and then Aunt Blanche went back to live with her mother to take care of her and so Johnny and I used to go over to their place and spend summers, sometimes Thanksgiving. Had a lot of cousins over there, I had a great childhood.

HB: So you grew up in a great neighborhood, did roller skating, kick the can.

SP: Oh yeah, played Jacks. Johnny and I took our bikes and put them together to make a bicycle built for two. We used to hook the water hose up to the hot water to run through the water, because the cold water was too cold. Mom didn't know about that until we got to Alaska.

HB: So where did you go to school?

SP: I went to Roosevelt School, grade school and my first grade teacher was Beverly Griffin. And she was my brother's first grade teacher; she was Robyn's first grade teacher, and Caren's first grade teacher. She was the one I introduced you to at my Aunt's 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary, that one. She's still around. We've guesstimated her age because she would never tell anybody how old she was, never.

HB: Did you ever have any men teachers when you were in grade school?

SP: Not in grade school. The first man teacher I had was in junior high and he was Mr. Tramaine.

HB: How old were you?

SP: I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, 12 or 13.

HB: What year was that?

SP: I don't know. I have no idea, Heidi.

HB: 12, 13 years. What year were you born?

SP: thirty-eight.

HB: thirty-eight? So what is 38 plus 12, Fifty, 1950? So 1950 was when you had your first...

SP: Yeah, '49 or '50. And he was absolutely a dream boat. All the girls thought he was so cute.

HB: Was he married?

SP: Yeah.

HB: He had a family?

SP: I'm sure. And he was just really nice, a really nice man. And another male teacher that I had was Mr. Lee. And I really like him too. After all these years, when I was doing the extraction work, typing in the names and stuff at the Temple down there, he took over as the superintendent of it. And he called me on the phone; he remembered me, can you believe that? And he remembered Steven, and that was so many years ago. We had a really great conversation, really nice.

HB: When you grew up, were a lot of your teachers LDS?

SP: I don't know. Mr. Lee was.

HB: How old were you when you had him as a teacher?

SP: I was in junior high, probably eighth grade.

HB: What kind of subjects did they teach in junior high?

SP: We had math, English, Idaho history, regular history, normal stuff.

HB: Did you have school uniforms?

SP: No.

HB: Did you have to wear a skirt to school?

SP: Yes.

HB: Everyday?

SP: Yes. All those years, the girls wore dresses all the time, in the winter. When we moved to Alaska, we were up there for about two years I guess and they moved our office from one building to another but I still had to do work up in this other building

HB: Which building?

SP: I don't know what building. It was up on the hill.

HB: Up on the hill, down-town Juneau?

SP: Yeah, down-town Juneau. And so I would have to go up there before I went to my other office which was down on South Franklin, and I would have to walk and it was cold.

HB: And you were wearing a skirt?

SP: Well, yes. Everybody, girls, ladies had to wear skirts

HB: And this was in 1968?

SP: '70, '72. Anyway, it was cold and I got tired of it. So I told my boss that from then on when I had to be up at that other building and had to come down the hill, I was going to wear pants.

HB: What did he say?

SP: What, What, What? I said, "Hey, it's cold." It's cold and it's hard walking down there. And I said, "The rest of the time I don't have a problem getting dressed up, but on those days I'm going to wear slacks." So I did. So other people started wearing slacks. So it worked out good.

HB: What was your job?

SP: I was in statistics.

HB: Did you work for the state?

SP: Yeah. I worked for the Department of Labor to start and then went to the Department of Public Safety.

HB: So did you go to college, Grandma?

SP: I had just one semester of college.

HB: Where did you go to college?

SP: I went to ISU – Idaho State University. Well, it was Idaho State College at the time. It's a University now.

HB: What classes did you take?

SP: I was taking office management stuff. I found that I liked bookkeeping, but I didn't like the rest of it. What can I say?

HB: Was the campus big?

SP: It was fairly big, not quite as big as now, but it was a nice campus. It was fun.

HB: How old were you when you went to college?

SP: Probably 18.

HB: You just went for a semester?

SP: Yeah. You see, by then I had two kids.

HB: Yeah, Aunt Robyn and Aunt Karen. Were you married?

SP: Not when I was at school.

HB: You were still Sherry Martin?

SP: No, I was Sherry Gerard. But we don't do that name. Not even anymore, at all. We don't do that one. He was not very nice. And then after that I went to work for the telephone company in Pocatello.

HB: Was this right after you had just gotten done with the semester?

SP: No, it was a little longer than that because I worked for an accountant for a while. I worked for Farmers Insurance at one time. I worked for an attorney, a secretary for an attorney. I couldn't handle it.

HB: Why not?

SP: I would get too emotionally involved with the problems that people had.

HB: What kind of cases did he handle?

SP: All kinds. Adoptions, bankruptcies, divorces, spouse abuse, domestic violence, just a variety of things. And I just got too emotionally involved. I couldn't deal with it, couldn't fix it.

HB: So you left the attorney?

SP: I quit the attorney's office and went to work for the telephone company. And I worked there for three years. And then John and I got married.

HB: How did you and Grandpa meet?

SP: Through a friend at the telephone company. One of the installers knew him and he was friends with John...and that's how I met him.

HB: Was it love at first sight?

SP: Almost, almost.

HB: What was Grandpa doing at the time?

SP: He was working at what used to be called West Vaico. It's a phosphate plant. He'd gone to a year or two of college. But when I met him, he was working up at... Bad place to work.

HB: Why?

SP: Dangerous. They were working with phosphate and phosphate burns, really, really bad. You have to cut it out. The only thing that will stop it from burning is to put yourself underwater. And it was dirty, so dirty. And he coughed. Stuff would get in your lungs and he would just cough, and cough, and cough. We left.

HB: So how long did you guys date?

SP: About 6-7 months.

HB: So were you living by yourself with your two girls?

SP: No, I was living with mom and dad at the time.

HB: Grandma would watch...

SP: Mother worked. My Grandmother watched the kids' part of the time. I also had babysitters.

HB: Your mom's mom.

SP: Yeah.

HB: Extended family working together. That's cool. Do you remember your first date?

SP: No, but I remember my first kiss. In grade school, the guy down the street, his name was Larry. He was probably my first boyfriend. Kind of, he was the first one to kiss me, scared me death. I said, "No more." We had gone to a movie.

HB: How old were you?

SP: Probably seventh grade or something, sixth grade. Scared the daylights out of me. Young, you do such stupid things. Growing up, mostly my dad's family, aunt and uncles and cousins, and my cousin Joanne, we were best friends clear up through high school. From the time we were just little. We lived on one side of the town and she lived on the other side, we were just best friends all those years. It was really neat. But all the families would get together and go up to Cherry Springs and cook breakfast. It's a park, a camping place. And we used to go up there once or a twice a year with everybody and cook breakfast. It was like a caravan going. And we took a lot of the neighborhood kids with us too. And we also went to Lava swimming, Lava Hot Springs and the whole tribe would go so we'd have the caravan going there with all the aunts, uncles, and cousins and stuff. We'd start early in the morning and we'd swim, have a big picnic then come home.

HB: We don't do that anymore. Isn't that funny how it changes?

SP: Everybody left and I think that it is so sad because my kids didn't get to have that kind of relationship with cousins, you kids didn't, and it was great. I had a great childhood, poor as mice probably because we didn't have a lot. Our house was three rooms. There was a kitchen, living room, and one bedroom, and one closet, and one bathroom. And they closed in part of the porch to make a bedroom for me and Johnny and we had bunk beds in there and it was cold.

HB: You guys slept in there all year?

SP: Yeah.

HB: Lots of blankets?

SP: Yeah. Mom and dad used to heat blankets on the stove to wrap around our feet before we went to bed. It was cold.

HB: But was it really hot in the summer, though?

SP: Well, I don't remember being so hot. I'm sure it was. But up above where Johnny's bed was, it was screened in and so they would just take the boards off during the summer time and have the breeze from the outside because it was screened. But in the wintertime all they did was put a piece of ply board up there. It was right chilly.

HB: Did you ever get sick?

SP: No, not that I remember.

HB: Did any of your siblings get sick?

SP: Not from that, no.

HB: That's impressive.

SP: I don't remember getting sick. But you know, we just thought that was the normal way of life. That's just the way it is. You just do it. I took dancing, tap dancing, ballet, and acrobats.

HB: How old?

SP: I was in grade school. I did finally get to toe dance in the ballet.

HB: Do you still remember how?

SP: Well, I can't stand on my toes anymore. I still remember some of the steps in tap dance. I liked that. I liked dancing. Grandpa and I used to dance a lot.

HB: When you were first married?

SP: Yeah, well up until we moved to Juneau and there wasn't anyplace to dance.

HB: Grandpa dancing, that would be funny.

SP: We could just about clear a dance floor. I loved to dance with him.

HB: So how long were you guys married before you moved to Juneau?

SP: Nine years.

HB: In '68 you guys moved to Juneau.

SP: He went up there on vacation and called and said I'm not coming home.

HB: So you said okay?

SP: It was okay with me. I had gone up and stayed with my mom and dad about two, three months but we couldn't get things together at that time. And so I came back home. And then my aunt and uncle were there and kind of talked him into going up there and told him if he didn't like it they would pay his way back. Well, I knew if he went up there he'd like it. I mean, it's a man's country.

HB: Did he fly?

SP: Yeah, they flew up. And he called and said I'm not coming home. Called home and told me to quit my job. I thought, great. At that time I had mononucleosis and was pretty sick. So he was up there, no job. I'm down here sick, four kids, house, and two cars to sell. And get us moved to Alaska. Interesting, interesting. So, I got everything, got the house sold, got the cars sold. Had to threaten a law suit to get one car sold. My attorney friend that I worked for fixed that for me. Yeah, big guy fixed that. Seems to me that there was, I can't remember how it worked, Heidi, but you could take a lot more luggage on the plane, each person could take so much. There were five of us and that's a lot of baggage. And so I had a lot of boxes. And so I got all of these boxes and all of these kids and I'm going out to the airport and this ticket guy was standing there watching, watching all the boxes and stuff come in. I went up to the ticket counter and he said, "Where are you going?" And I said Alaska. And he looked at me and said, "I'm not even going to charge you extra freight." Because they probably could have really soaked me, so he put everything on the plane and away we went. I got up there and John didn't have a job and I had \$300 in my pocket. We didn't have anyplace to live, nothing.

HB: So you had all four girls by then?

SP: Yeah.

HB: You had Robyn, Karen, Kelcy, and my mom?

SP: Yeah. Your mom, we moved in May, and she turned six in June.

HB: Yeah, that's right. She was born in '61, right?

SP: Yeah.

HB: June 14, 1961.

SP: Yeah.

HB: So you were up there, \$300, no house, no job, six people in your family, what did you do?

SP: Well, my aunt, her husband was in construction and she wanted to spend time with him, so she let us stay at her house, house-sit their house.

HB: Aunt what?

SP: Aunt Mona.

HB: Aunt Mona. And how was she related to you?

SP: At that time she wasn't my aunt. She was married to my dad's brother and he died and she married Stan. And it was their house we were house-sitting.

HB: But she was still Aunt Mona?

SP: Yeah, what do you do, throw them away? So we stayed there, and when I had been visiting mom and dad before, I had worked for the department of labor as a stat tech, I don't know, I can't remember now. Anyway, it was working with statistics. And I didn't want to go back to work when we moved up there. I really rather had stayed at home with the kids, but that wasn't going to happen. They called me and wanted me to go to work.

HB: The state did? How did that happen?

SP: Well, mom worked at the bank and one of the ladies that I worked with in the department of labor came into the bank and asked about me and she said, "She's coming back." That I was moving back up here. So she went back to the office and said that she's coming back.

HB: So they were like, "Let's hire her."

SP: So they called and said they needed someone to work.

HB: So your mom lived in Juneau by the time you guys got there?

SP: Yeah. Mom and Dad went up there for three months and never came home.

HB: And Grandpa pretty much did the same thing?

SP: Yeah. In that same summer, LeAnne lived on the east coast and she was married to Charlie at the time and John was in Alaska and I was in Pocatello and LeAnne called me and she said hi. I said "Hi. Where are you?" "In California, I wanted to know if we could stop and see you." "Well, of course you can. What are you doing in California?" "We're on our way to Alaska." So that put all of us kids back in Alaska with mom and dad. Mom and Dad and Steven, he was going to school in Fairbanks. My oldest brother, he moved up there a year after they moved up.

HB: A year after your mom and dad moved up?

SP: Yeah, Mom and Dad moved up there in '63. Johnny moved up there, probably '64 or '65. And then LeAnne and I moved up in '68. So we were all there. So I thought that quite interesting because LeAnne had tried to talk Charlie into moving and he wouldn't even talk about it. So it really surprised me when they were on their way. I said, "How did that happen?" And she said, "I don't know. He come home one day and said, 'I think we ought to move to Alaska.'" So they packed up and moved.

HB: And they had lived on the east coast before that?

SP: Yeah. Charlie was born and raised back there. Anyway, we all ended up there. And let me see what else. I don't know what else, Heidi.

HB: Well, let me ask you a few questions. When looking back now, being who you are and things like that, looking back when you grew up in the fifties, do you think that it was male dominated society?

SP: Of course. It has always been a male-dominated society. It still is today.

HB: Did you see that when you were growing up?

SP: Oh yeah.

HB: What happened?

SP: Well, nothing in particular. I think it really hit home when I worked for the telephone company because I wanted to work in the plant office wiring phones into the main frame. And I was told I couldn't do it because I was a girl. And me and the boss at the main frame, we went round and round about it.

HB: And he was a man?

SP: Oh, of course. Of course, attitude of guys generally was I could do what I want to but you stay home. I'll keep you barefoot and pregnant, and broke. That's where you belong, in the house. And I always rebelled against that. I still do. It still makes me angry.

HB: Was Grandpa like that?

SP: No, I think he sometimes tried to control me a little bit, at first, and it didn't work. I'm pretty easy to get along with, but after a point. One time we were renting my Grandmother's house and I needed new bunk beds for the kids and a new rug for the dining room. John and I had heatedly discussed this on several occasions and at that time I was working as a cocktail waitress at night. Anyway, I went to this furniture store.

HB: Was this here in Pocatello?

SP: Yes, I charged a whole house full of furniture, a whole house full. And I told them when I went in there the only thing I'm going to end up with are the rug and the beds. And I went home and told John I charged a whole house full of furniture. And I got my bed and rug. And he was really careful after that because he was unsure of what I would do. Almost forgot about that.

HB: A whole house full of furniture and then you ended up with only the rug and the beds.

SP: That's all I wanted. And I told the people when I went into the store, "This is what I'm going to keep." And they said okay. So that's what I did. I'm pretty passive unless you put me in a corner. I used to write over my checks to him all the time because he took care of the money and I wanted pocket money. And we would get into discussions about that because he didn't want me to have pocket money so I'd take the check and blow it.

HB: What did you buy?

SP: Anything. Don't do that to me. So we learned. I have a checking account and he has a checking account.

HB: Even now?

SP: Yes. Yes. We spend money together and we discuss what we spend money on, but he has a checking account and I have a checking account. It's like the TV's. When we lived in Juneau, we had one TV set. I would be sitting there watching the TV and I can't stand baseball, or football, or basketball, and he'd be outside and come in and change the TV to one of these games and then he'd leave. And I'd have to get up and I'd have to change the channel again and I'd miss part of my show. I thought this is not going to work so one year for Christmas, I bought him his own TV set and we've done great since. We've had two TV sets since then. He's got his space, and I've got my space. And it works great, we do good.

HB: So skipping ahead to Juneau, 1968, my mom was six, aunt Kelcy was about eight. How old was Aunt Karen?

SP: About 11 and Robyn was in junior high, seventh grade. She just got out of the seventh grade so she was 13.

HB: She was a teenager in the late 60s. What was that like?

SP: Well, both her and Caren were rebellious, very, but the good thing was up there, you couldn't get very far.

HB: Right, because you couldn't really get out of Juneau without plane or boat.

SP: And everybody knows everybody so if they decide to take off, you could find them easily. That wasn't a problem. It was a great time to raise kids up there. It really was. It was very small, people very, very friendly, people looked out for each other and the kids were safe. They could go to the movie and I knew that I didn't have to worry about it.

HB: So when you moved from Pocatello to Juneau, was the atmosphere different? Would you have been more worried about Aunt Karen and Aunt Robyn if you had stayed in Pocatello?

SP: You bet. You bet. That move up there was one of the best things we ever did, never ever regretted a minute for moving up there, never.

HB: Was Juneau a few years behind the rest of the country?

SP: No, not really, it was just more isolated. You didn't have a lot of the outside influences in there. At that time, drugs was just starting to come in. The hippies were starting to come in. And that started changing everything up there. But it was a great place to raise kids.

HB: Did Aunt Robyn and Aunt Caren get in with that kind of crowd when they were a little bit older?

SP: Little bit.

HB: Was that hard?

SP: Yes.

HB: Were Aunt Kelcy and mom pretty good?

SP: Yes, they were good. We had so many problems with Robyn and Caren that your mom and Kelcy started getting into those ages and we were just waiting for the shoe to fall. Are we going to have to go through this again? But we didn't; Ideal kids. Never had any trouble from either one of them, never, none. It was lovely.

HB: So how old were Aunt Robyn and Aunt Caren when they left the house?

SP: 16.

HB: Was that hard?

SP: Yes. Yeah, it was. But, there are some things you don't have control over and all you can do is live with it, so we did. But it was a fun place. We did a lot of fishing, a lot of hiking, a lot of cooking. I was the designated cook for some reason, probably because of the space so everybody was always at our house for Thanksgiving, and Christmas, and Sunday, and just because. I did a lot of cooking.

HB: So you definitely had more than your parents had?

SP: Yeah, I think so.

HB: Bigger house?

SP: No, not necessarily a bigger house. When I was little the house was little, but by the time I had grown up, they had remodeled the house so they had a really big house, that they lived in there. But I think we didn't have very much, but we had more than mom and dad did. It's hard, you've got four kids and it was basically starting from scratch when we moved up there because neither one of us had a job.

HB: What did Grandpa do?

SP: He started out with a job as a meat cutter. And he did that for about a year, I guess, maybe a little longer. And it was really, really hard on him because he was on his feet all day. Then he applied for a job at the state and he got called and it was just a temporary position and you had to take a test. And your grandpa was down a little, wasn't one of the top ones. But none of these

guys wanted a temporary position. John came home and said, "Its temporary." I said, "Take it." All you have to do is get your foot in the door. So he took the job and it turned into a permanent position.

HB: What did he do?

SP: He was a purchasing agent.

HB: A purchasing agent for the state? So what kinds of things did he do?

SP: He bought equipment and stuff, you know, trucks and barbed wire and all this sort of stuff. He was the one who did all that purchasing. And he kept that job until we left.

HB: Until he retired?

SP: Yep, and I worked the for the state up there for nine or ten years and quit. I got tired of the politics, couldn't handle it anymore, a lot of politicking.

HB: What sorts of things?

SP: Just mainly under-handed kind of things. One of the bosses I worked for, he was hiring people and I was supposed to interview and talk to these people and I asked if these were permanent positions and I was told yes. And so when these people came in and they wanted permanent jobs, and I said yeah, it's a permanent position. And then I found out it wasn't. He said I'd have to tell this person that she'd have to leave. And I said, "You told me that was a permanent position." And he said, "I lied." And I said, "Then you tell her. I told her it was a permanent position. You go out and tell her you lied to me. Because I'm not going to do that, that's your problem."

HB: So you didn't have a very good boss?

SP: Not really. I worked with traffic accidents, doing things with traffic accidents, and we were behind. And so to make himself look good, he buried a bunch of them.

HB: Buried a bunch of accidents?

SP: Yeah. It was stuff like that that finally got to me. I just couldn't do it anymore.

HB: Did you think it was unethical?

SP: Well, of course it is. Of course it is. It was just an accumulation of stuff like that, over the time that I worked. And when I worked for the department of Labor, you had to take tests for everything and I was the stat technician and there was going to be an upgrade to a stat technician 3, for a statistician. I was doing a statistician's job, only I wasn't getting paid for it.

HB: Why do you think you weren't?

SP: Because I didn't have a college degree. But I went in to take the test, I passed the statistician's test and they wouldn't let me have the job. Because I didn't have a college degree. I said, "This is not fair." I've been doing the job. I passed the damn test. And you tell me that I'm not qualified.

HB: Is that when you left?

SP: That was just one time. I think I quit three times. And then I babysat for a couple of years. And then I went to work for the veterinary clinic. I loved that job. I really loved that job. It was the animals, it was the doctors, it was their attitude. It was other people that worked there. It was a great place to work. Old Doc, he was the one who started the clinic.

HB: What was his name?

SP: Cliff Lobaugh.

HB: How do you spell that?

SP: L-O-B-A-U-G-H. Anyway, he wouldn't doc ears because it wasn't normal, dogs weren't born like that. There were some things he would not do, cosmetically. But it didn't make any difference if somebody brought in an animal that had been hurt or sick and if they owned him \$1000, he'd still take care of that animal. He was a big man, really big man, and I saw him work on a little dog one time, and it was during surgery and the little dog's heart stopped. And he worked on that dog for probably a half hour trying to get it to breathe, and doing a heart massage and stuff. To see something like that, the care he had with these animals. I loved to watch him. He was so good. And like I said, he was a big man, and he might have a little kitten or a little puppy tucked under his arm like this, walking around doing this and doing that. It was a great place to work.

HB: How long did you work there?

SP: Three years.

HB: When did you leave, what year?

SP: '90. That was the year we moved down here. It was one of those jobs where you get up in the morning and say, "Ooh, I get to go to work today." Instead of I don't want to go to work, oh, I get to go. Loved it, just loved it.

HB: There's a few more questions that I would like to ask, then we can be done. Thoughts on the Korean War, where were you, what did you think?

SP: The Korean War, I was fairly young when the Korean War was on. It was ending by the early 50s. Grandpa was in the Korean War. He served over in Japan. And so he'd been home a couple of years when I met him. So I really don't remember much about it. The Second World

War I remember because of the rationing and it was during that time when, well they dropped the atomic bomb, and I was always so scared that we were going to be bombed.

HB: By the Japanese?

SP: Yeah, even before they did that. In the old movies where they're bombing and you hear that squeal, that sound still terrifies me. It does.

HB: Childhood fear that just stayed with you?

SP: Yeah. My dad got called and luckily he didn't have to go because he had a bum knee, it would dislocate, so they wouldn't take him. I remember him going down for his physical and that scared me. I wasn't very old.

HB: What was your dad's name?

SP: Lloyd Paul Martin.

HB: Named after his dad?

SP: He was named after Grandpa Lloyd, his dad's dad. In the Vietnam War, I felt like they should have gone in and wiped them out to begin with instead of playing politics like they always do. But what really upset me was the way they treated the veterans when they came home.

HB: Did they treat them really bad?

SP: Oh yeah, everywhere. They were dirt.

HB: Why do you think that was?

SP: Because they were fighting a war they didn't believe in, the "people," quote unquote. We had people like Jane Fonda out there mouthing off about, well, doing the same thing they're doing about Iraq. It's politics. And so when these kids came home from fighting, they took it out on the kids. And they were treated horribly, and it still makes my blood boil.

HB: Were you ever witnessed to an altercation or anything like that?

SP: Not an altercation, but the way they treated them. Most of the GIs that came home had been through so much, such a terrible war, such a terrible way to fight. They were fighting shadows. It was terrible and these kids when they came back, for lack of a better word, were shell-shocked. All's they wanted to do was come home and then they were spit on when they got here, and it made me sick.. It made me angry and it still makes me angry.

HB: Do you have any specific memories of someone just showing disrespect.

SP: Only what you see on the news and that kind of thing. They had a lot of news where they were showing these guys coming home and terrible reception they got, it was nation wide. How can you do that? I hope they don't do that to the kids in Afghanistan and Iraq. These people are putting their lives on the line for us, whether we agree with it or not. Those guys are taking care of us, and we better take care of them. And get the politics out of it.

HB: Do you think that would ever happen?

SP: No, but it should. It should. Politicians have no right to run a war. If you're going to fight, leave it to the military. Politicians need to stay out of it. The only thing they're thinking about is their own pocket.

HB: Do you think George Bush is thinking about his own pocket?

SP: No, I don't. I think he's made mistakes, but I think he's very sincere in what he's trying to do. If they'd let him do it. He's fighting Congress for everything. They don't want him to be President. Let the man do his job, give him some support. Quit politicking.

HB: If only everyone could just get along.

SP: I think he's a good man. I think he's a sincere man. If they would just help him get his job done it would be so nice. But I like President Bush.

HB: Are there any other things that you can remember that you think would be cool to talk about?

SP: No, probably not, Heidi. I loved to fish when we were in Alaska. Grandpa and I went fishing all the time when we were in Alaska, all the time.

HB: Out with the dancing and in with the fishing?

SP: Yeah. One time his boss, when he was a meat cutter, he had this, I guess it's a dory – it's like a big huge rowboat– and he let us use that for fishing. It was out in the bay a little bit and we had to go out and get it. We were using oars, and we ended up going around in a circle. I was laughing so hard; we had more fun in that little boat. It was so much fun. We went out fishing in one of the derbies and it the was the first time I got tired of catching fish. John always baited my hook because I could never get it on right. It was just the two of us out in this little dory; it was raining and it was wet and he'd get me baited up, I'd throw out, and I'd get a fish. He'd be doing his, and I'd get a fish. People were really rude that summer because when there are a lot of boats around and someone gets a fish, you're supposed to bring your line in because the fish could get everything tangled up so we had that kind of a problem. I'd get a fish, I'd get it in, John would get me baited up, he'd start doing his and sometimes he'd get his line in, and I'd catch another fish. And this went on all day and some we had to turn back, but we kept quite a few of them. I'd had enough, I was tired.

HB: Was it all sockeye salmon or kings?

SP: Kings and cohos. We had fun in that boat, so much fun in that boat. But we fished a lot from the shore. Never caught anything, but we fished. We had good times up there, really good times.

HB: Thank you for doing this.

SP: You're welcome. Does it make sense? After a fashion, I hope that works for you.

HB: September 16, 2005, interview with Sherry Parsons by Heidi Berry, her granddaughter.