

Transcript of Oral History

Faye Colebrook Hilton

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Cottonwood Heights HS Member

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My husband and I traveled to St. George, Utah, on a beautiful, day in March. The weather was delightful, and the sun was shining brightly. We went to the home of Mrs. Faye Colebrook Hilton and found an equally sunny and delightful person to interview. She welcomed us into her lovely home at 445 East 600 South, in St. George, Utah 84770. Almost everything in Mrs. Hilton's life was "fun". She is a very optimistic lady.

Faye begins:

My name is Faye C. Hilton. I was born in 1918 in Butler to Lewis Colebrook and Lucy Brady Colebrook. I was born in Butler, Utah on one of the Butler hills, the one opposite the schoolhouse, the one that's going to Alta (Brighton High School). I lived on a fifty-acre acre farm there. There were eight children in our family. Two sets of twins: Fern and Faye (that's myself), and my sister, Elva, had a twin brother, Ed.

We all lived in a brick home on the hill. We had a farm life—everything. We had chickens, pigs, cows, horses, guinea pigs, guinea hens. We had everything that we needed and our own horse to ride. We had all the vegetables we needed.

I had a grandpa that lived on another twenty-acre farm down below the hill. He came up every morning with his buggy and horse. They would haul the hay to the barn. I was the pulley rider. I had to ride the horse with a pulley and pull the hay into the barn; and fill the barn full of hay. I did that every day while they were bailing the hay.

After that, we went on snow drifts over to the Butler School. Parley Blair and the Blair family lived next door to us, and we were all friends. We went to the school through the fields to the schoolhouse, and we had a good time over there. My principal was Dalby to begin with. Nellie Inglebretsen was one of my teachers, and Francis Swan was my first grade teacher

I played the piano since I was five years old by ear, and I played all the tunes that I knew and they had the kids march out of school with it. Then I went to Union Junior High, and I went to Sandy Junior High, and I went to Jordan Junior High (Jordan High School). I graduated from Jordan Junior High.

I started to go with Jim. I dated him in 1935 and married him in 1940. He graduated with a Master's Degree from the University of Utah. From there we went to Washington State, where he was working on his doctorate. We stayed for two years there. Then we came back to Salt Lake again.

We moved to Murray, Utah, and stayed there for four years. We had our first child, who was born in 1944—that was James Stewart. Then I had Margaret Ann in 1947. I had Jeff Lawrence in 1955. From Murray, we moved when Margaret was four years old, we moved up to Delta Drive in Holladay. I lived there until 1983, until I moved St. George. Jim passed away in 1964 up in Holladay.

Then I worked for ZCMI. I went down to the ZCMI, and we had a friend that worked at ZCMI. He was a manager. I said, "I want to work at ZCMI." He said, "Okay." He took me over to give me a job, and I called Jim and told him I was working. Then he took me over to "Sportswear", and I worked for twenty years for ZCMI.

Then I moved down to St. George in 1983, and I have lived in St. George for twenty-six years. I've did a lot of volunteer work down here. I worked for my son. He was in social work, and head of the social work down here. I worked for his office for awhile. Then I had to start school. I went there for two or three years. Then I just played for the Relief Society to come in. I played the jazz for the Relief Society while they were coming to their meeting. I did that for about ten years.

I also walked for fifteen years every day up to the boulevard in St. George and around. I must have made three miles every morning just walking every day for fifteen years down here. I've had a good life down here. Now I'm ninety-one, so I've just completed a lot that I am proud of. I've got good children and a beautiful family. They've all been really great with me. They still come over every day, or come down from Salt Lake, and one from Richfield to visit. We have a good family relationship.

Losing Jim at age fifty was the hardest thing that I've had so far in life to contend with. But I did make a life after. He told me to have my three kids go to college. He said, "I want you to have those two boys go to college, Faye, be sure. Margaret could have two years, but that's okay for her, but I did want to get those boys to college." So far, my boys both have their Masters, and she had three years of college. So I hope that I've done what he asked me to.

We would take vacations every spring and fall. We went to Yellowstone in the fall and Las Vegas in the spring every year and took the kids. Jim was a botanist. He liked to stop on the desert and try to find a snake. We were raised with snakes. He liked to have those in the backyard and around for the kids to see.

He taught at the U. When he was at the U, it was his scholarship to take care of The House of Snakes up there at the University. I'd go up with him at night, and we'd feed the rattlesnakes. We'd feed them mice—white mice. We'd take them around on a little stand, and it was fun because I was helping him up at the University of Utah.

I remember Bishop Jones. I played the music while I was at home as a teenager. When I didn't play the music, I had to play the organ; because if the organist didn't show up, I had to play the organ by ear. I knew the hymns by ear, so I played them. Bishop Jones would lead the singing.

I was in all the plays they had. They used to have road shows. We had road shows in those days—we called them. We'd practice for a road show for weeks. Then we would put on the road show, and then we would go from ward to ward. That was a lot of fun. We were in every one of them.

My best girlfriends—I had three of them. One was Kiyō Mori, and my best one was Helen Blair Knudsen, and Jean Bowthorpe. Winona Green, and Joyce Kunkel were good friends, and they were all neighbors.

When I was younger, I picked strawberries for Mori's. Then Mr. Mori would take the strawberries to market every morning. I'd pick thirty crates a day for ten cents a crate and made three dollars. That was fun. I'd take it to Salt Lake and buy something.

Mother had the eight of us. She took us down to Auerbach's and Paris to buy our clothes. I also took my three kids down to Auerbach's, Paris, and Keith O'Brien's. Daddy Jim's office was down by there in the Felt Building. I would just go out of the Felt Building and go over and get the kids their clothes, and come home.

During the depression, I was home with my dad. I remember my dad, and we had potatoes. We would take a sack of potatoes to the market and buy our Saturday night's groceries because you didn't get much money from the potatoes. So we'd put them in the car, and he'd drive them to Murray to Hoffman's Store. We'd bring home vegetable soup, and that would be our dinner Saturday night, and we loved it. We'd bring home soup and hamburger.

- We always knew we'd have a nice dinner for Saturday night, besides the farm. We had the farm all week, but we wanted something different. So he would he would take the potatoes down to the grocery store for our soup, and it was vegetable soup. He'd bring home Campbell's Vegetable Soup and hamburger. That was our Saturday night dinner.

Dad worked hard on the farm. Mother had to cook for hay men every day. Every day they would come for their dinner—every day when the hay was on, or the peas, or whatever Dad was hauling. Mother would cook a big dinner for them every day for the farmers that came.

I remember Reuben Green was one of them that came down the street to help every morning. We had a big dinner ready at noon. I had to help mix the bread because we had to make eight loaves of bread a week. I helped mix the bread. After the older sisters got married, I helped with the bread and helped my Dad on the farm doing all his farm work.

He'd put me down the silo, and that was full of wheat. When he'd want to sell wheat or get wheat, he'd put a rope around my waist and put me down in the silo, then pull me up from the silo on the rope. I'd fill the sack.

I followed my Dad everywhere he went. He was Water Master for the county. We had to go to Lake Blanche, which was three miles up Big Cottonwood Canyon. I mean, you went up Big Cottonwood Canyon, and you'd see the sign, "Lake Blanche". We would hike three miles up to the three lakes. My Dad would go down to the lakes and measure the water. I'd

hold his hand, and I was afraid he'd fall in. I'd get up twice a week and go with him and walk up the shale. I'd go up with him and walk with him because I didn't want him to go alone. So I would just walk up there with him for three miles to Lake Blanche.

I'll never forget it. We seen snakes that went across the trail. We seen sage hens. We seen some beautiful birds. We seen so many things on the way up there. I just loved to do that. I'd wear out a pair of shoes very quickly.

My brothers and sisters were a lot of fun. One of the things about my dad and mother was that they belonged to a dance club. They went to the dance every Saturday night with my mother's step dad and my grandmother. After her father died, her mother married a Buxton. He had four children. She had four children. They put them together with my grandmother's four, and they had eight children together.

They had an orchestra, so my dad and mother went to the dances every Saturday night. My dad loved to dance. If he needed to take us, he would take us down to the dances, put us in a blanket, and let us sleep in the back of the stage on a bench while they danced, when we were little.

Then he belonged to this club for thirty years. I used to love and come out and watch them play their cards, and have their club when they would come up to our place for their turn. It was fun. Mother would cook a big dinner for all these people—about ten couples—because there were three tables, and she'd cook dinner for them on a Saturday night when they came to our house. That was fun.

About my brothers and sisters: Vivian, my older sister, played the piano just like I did, except she was really good. She was really a pretty girl, and she just took care of the family and tended us while mother and dad went to the dances. She tended us a lot before she got married. Then she got married [to Clyde Buxton] and had three children, and she had a good life. Elva got married to Allen Walker, and he lived in Union. Verla married Franklin Smart, and Ed married LaRae Rich. Tillie married Kent Wiseman. Fern, my twin sister, never did get married. She passed away with cancer at age 37.

We always had music in our family. We played the violin and the guitars and everything that dad bought us. Vivian played the piano. We just had

music in our family all our lives. I had a lot of fun with my brothers and sisters.

I had to milk the cows, feed the chickens, feed the pigs, gather the eggs, help haul the hay, and help haul and pick up potatoes, go to the pea vinery, which was on the end of our fifty-acre farm. I used to have to go up there with dad to take a load of peas and throw them into the vinery. I did everything on the farm. I even had to hold the string while somebody cut the turkey's head off for Thanksgiving. I remember doing that.

On our fifty-acre farm we grew everything: potatoes, apricots, peaches, apples, carrots, beets, hay, peas, and cherries. We had a lot of things on the farm. We had turkeys, chickens, pigs, horses, guinea hens, dogs, and cats. We had a lot of animals on the farm. I followed my dad on the farm forever. I think I was about eight when I went up to Lake Blanche with him.

My grandpa is Charles Colebrook, and my grandmother is Sarah "Sadie" McGhie. We called her "Grandma Sadie". They lived on a twenty acre farm down on 7000 South and 2300 East where my sister, Vivian lived. My dad gave us our land to build a house on. I did not build on the land, but Dean Smart's mother did. That's where our farm was.

Francis Swan was my first grade teacher. She was a really good teacher. Nellie Inglebretsen was another one. She was my teacher in the fourth grade. There weren't many students in school then, not more than fifteen in a class room.

Our family would go sleigh riding down Butler Hill. We had a bob sleigh. We had a sleigh that we could hitch the two farm horses on, and we'd go around in the sleigh and take the kids. We'd all get in the sleigh and go sleigh riding. We always had our own sleighs to go down the hill. We'd go down the Butler Hill. We would do that every day, and we'd come home from school and go down that hill.

I lived right on top of the hill, and you could see Salt Lake. It was just beautiful from there. You could see all the lights and everything. That was always a beautiful scene.

The Union Show House was the place where they had dances and shows. We used to go on Saturday down to the dances there. Every Saturday night

we would see if my dad was going. Helen would come over, and we'd wait to see if my dad was going to sing in the bathroom. We knew if he sang, we were going to the dances. We would sit there dressed up and waiting for him. As soon as we heard him jazzing and singing in the bathroom, we knew we were going. So we'd go to the dances with them. We loved that.

I liked geometry in school because we had Kenneth Brady. He would let four of us girls come every morning because he would tutor us before we had a test. We'd sit around his desk, and he'd help us. It was fun. I did like chemistry. I was interested in it in high school, and I took that. I liked history, and I kind of liked most of my subjects. My dad couldn't afford to send me to college, but I did do well in high school. I loved school.

My first job was at J C Penney's Department Store in Murray, Utah. I loved it. They had a manager there, and he had to go to the war. He was drafted. I had to take over the first floor and manage that with Jackie Condor. We managed it while Delbert as gone. Mr. Erickson was there as store manager. We had the pulley chain. We would pull the chain, and it went up to the office.

One night we were so busy. We would do our jobs well. Mr. Erickson told us to go down in the basement and spend a couple of hours after work doing stock work. We did. Jackie and I went downstairs, and about 9:00 PM, we came up. There was nobody there, and the door was closed. The lights were on over at the market across the street. There we were in JC Penney's and locked in. Mr. Erickson had forgotten that we were down the basement and went home.

We looked out the door, and there was Grand Central Market--all the lights and everything on. There was Jackie and I in the store. We decided what to do. We had to get up to the phone. We had to make our way up the stairs, up to the office where Mr. Erickson's office was. We called Mr. Erickson and told him to come and get us out. I can remember that.

My job at ZCMI—I loved that. I had to be in Gift Wrap for four hours before Mr. Colson took me to the next job. I learned to gift wrap fast on Mother's Day. I was glad to get out of there at four o'clock and go to the other job. I did have a fun time at ZCMI. We were on commission, and we made good money.

I don't think we had a telephone at home. We didn't when I was growing up. I knew that they had those that were on the wall that you could use, because you'd use those when you went to somebody's place, or to a store, you could use those. That's all I remember about phones because we didn't have one.

I've never been in a hospital. I haven't had any health problems until later years. Then I had a little arthritis.

ADVICE TO HER GRANDCHILDREN: Never go to bed at night without making up and being happy.

- **ADVICE TO HER CHILDREN:** Go through life and be happy. I want them to remember that I was here to take care of them, help them, and do what I could throughout their lives.

I've had a great life, a good life. I've had fun, and I'm still having a good time going here and there to dinners. I've had a good life up to ninety-one.

In Faye's home she has many, many elephants in all sizes and colors. She tells the following story:

One day on my walk up to the St. George Boulevard, I was going by a shop, and seen this elephant in the window. The next day I thought, "Oh, I hope somebody buys that", because it was expensive, about \$80.00. I couldn't afford it. "I hope somebody buys that so I won't have to see it tomorrow."

Well, the next time I went up, it was gone! I thought, "Okay, that's good. I won't have to buy that." About a week after, my son, Jim, and Pam brought it in. I was sitting in that chair, and they put in on my lap. I laughed and said, "What is that?" They said, "It's the elephant that was in the window." I've just been gathering them ever since.