

Palisade Historical Society
Oral and Video History Project
Interview

Oral History # 007 Date: 11/13/2010
Place Floryancic home Length 32:28
Interviewee Lucille (Phillips) Hampton Floryancic Phone: 464-7250
Interviewer Barbara Hampton Phone: 523-6904

Family:

Lucille's father was Ray Phillips. Her mother was Laura Vail, who was distantly related to the people after whom Vail Pass was named. Both of Lucille's parents were born in Iowa and relocated to Palisade, as did many others from the Midwest, during the early part of the 20th Century. Ray came from the small town of Gibson, Iowa (*in the southeastern part of the state*). After Ray's parents had moved to Palisade, he came to visit them. Ray loved the Colorado mountains, fishing, and other things Colorado had to offer, so he decided to move his family to Palisade.

Lucille was two years old when they moved to Palisade. She recalls traveling to Colorado by train and that they brought their furniture, a cow, and possibly a couple of pigs with them. Her family had land at the west end of First Street, about two miles from town where the road turns south and goes down to where the old Mount Lincoln School was (*at 36.1 Road and G Road*). Lucille has one sister, Louise Oliver.

Lucille married Carl "Mutt" Hampton on June 9, 1948 at the Presbyterian Church in Palisade. They had two daughters, Marie and Margie, who still live in the area. Carl passed away in 1984. After the Presbyterian Church in Palisade closed, Lucille started going to the Christian Church on 5th Street. (*The Presbyterian church became the Masonic lodge in 1948.*)

Lucille has three grandchildren – Shawnie, Karie, and Jamie (Niki). She also has six great-grandchildren – Colton, Cadence, Bryce, Kason, Ryder, and Violet. A seventh grandson, Braden, was stillborn

Lucille married Bill Floryancic in 1992.

Schools:

Lucille went to grade school at the Mount Lincoln School and then went to Grand Junction High School. During the time she was in high school, the School Board decided that students from the Mount Lincoln area should go to high school in Palisade because it was closer to their homes, and transportation would be less expensive. Further, it was difficult for the Mount Lincoln students to participate in after-school activities at Grand Junction High School because of the distance involved.

Lucille's father did not want her to go to school in Palisade because he thought she would get a better education in Grand Junction. Lucille was a junior in high school at the time, and her sister, Louise, was just starting high school. Some of the parents made arrangements for carpooling to get students back and forth between home and school in Grand Junction, so they could participate in some of the activities outside of regular school hours.

Peaches in Palisade:

Raising peaches was always a big part of living in Palisade, and it was a lot of work. In the early days, Lucille's father made a living doing custom work in the orchards, such as disking and creasing to make irrigation ditches for watering the fruit trees. Irrigation water came from the Price Ditch and Highline Canal.

From an early age, Lucille worked in her family's peach business. Lucille worked at sorting peaches until she was old enough to pack them. They had a packing shed that was actually in the barn. Lucille recalls that they walked the horses out into an outdoor pen during harvest. Peaches were brought into the shed in bushel baskets on a horse-drawn wagon. The baskets of peaches were then dumped onto a set of rollers on the grader that conveyed them up to a sorting area. Peaches that were unsuitable for shipping were culled out and the rest moved on down the line where the peach grader (*machine*) sorted them by size. The culled peaches had blemishes that made them unattractive or they were too ripe for shipping, so these were sold locally at the packing shed. Peaches were individually wrapped in tissue paper and packed in shipping boxes. Lucille also worked for one of the largest packing sheds in the area, owned by Lige Jordan.

After Lucille and Carl were married, they lived in Vineland (*the area to the east of Palisade along the Colorado River*). The highway (*US Hwy 6*) was built through that area from the Rapid Creek Road to where a new bridge was built across the Colorado River at 8th Street. Lucille remembers the old bridge that crossed the river at 4th Street. Carl and Lucille moved to accommodate the new highway through Vineland and built a new, larger house on part of their property. They had a packing shed along the side of the highway. After the highway was built, the traffic in the area was horrendous. Of course, this was an advantage during peach harvest, as many tourists came through the area and bought peaches from them. Lucille recalls that there were a lot of people around during peach harvest, some who came from other states such as Oklahoma and Kansas. Some came to work in the harvest, and others came to buy peaches. Of course, after I-70 was built, they no longer had the large volume of traffic.

During the summer prior to the harvest, Lucille and her daughters made many wooden shipping boxes, which were assembled using a nailing machine. The empty boxes were stored in the loft of the shed until they were needed for harvest.

Bushel baskets were sometimes used for shipping peaches, instead of shipping boxes. Lucille described an apparatus that made packing the peaches in baskets easier. This was a (*bottomless?*) metal form the size and shape of a bushel basket with the sides made out of finger-like metal pieces. This form was placed upside down on a table, and the peaches were carefully placed inside. After it was filled with peaches, a bushel basket was placed over it. It was then inverted by hand, and the metal container was slipped out of the basket, leaving a nice, uniform pack of peaches in the basket. Later, they acquired an apparatus that turned the basket over, so they did not have to perform that step of the process manually.

The United Fruit Growers shipping platform was on the north side of the railroad tracks, and the Co-Op (Mountain Lion) platform was on the south side of the tracks. The Pacific Fruit Company's platform was on the north side of the railroad tracks, across the tracks from the railroad depot on Bower Avenue. Lucille's family brought all of their fruit to the United platform for shipping. She recalls during harvest seeing all of the farmers' trucks lined up through town, waiting to unload their peaches at the platforms.

There was a huge fire when the Co-Op platform burned (*in August 1971*). There was a cannery beside the railroad tracks off Bower Avenue.

During World War II, Prisoners of War (POW's) were shipped in by train, or maybe some came by bus, to Palisade. They lived in the old Civilian Conservation Corp (CCC) Camp down by the bend in the river. The farmers picked up the prisoners and took them out to their orchards to work. The POW's are credited with saving the crops during that time because they were there to pick the peaches while all other available help had gone into the (*military*) service.

Lucille remembers that after the war, a camp for migrant workers was built next to the CCC Camp. She remembers the migrant workers, mostly men, being very nice. In fact, a few of the local girls ended up marrying migrant men.

It seemed to Lucille that after I-70 was built, there was a change in the weather patterns and air flow around Vineland. They started getting colder weather with more freezing conditions in spring that could damage the peach blossoms. Growers put out smudge pots in the rows between the trees and lit them on cold spring nights to keep the air warm. Some people sprayed the trees at night, probably with water, to stir up the air to prevent the blossoms from freezing.

Old Palisade:

There was a grocery store on Main Street, as well as other stores. Where the plaza is now located in the center of town, there were buildings along the west side of Main Street. Lucille remembers a men's and women's ready-to-wear clothing store and a jewelry store. Across the street (*on the east side*) were the drug store, Post Office, pool hall, a barber shop, and the liquor store going up Main Street toward the railroad tracks. She remembers a house on the corner below 2nd Street beside the railroad tracks where the Herman family lived. Sometime later, they moved the grocery store over to the west side of Main Street.

Lucille recalled Bennett Young's filling station on the west end of 3rd Street. Further east, on the north side of the street, was a movie theater, where Lucille saw her first motion picture. Later, the theater moved across 3rd Street into the space that is now occupied by the Slice 'O' Life Bakery.

Something happened, possibly the Great Depression, which forced many of the stores to close. The businesses vacated the buildings, some of which were eventually torn down. People began throwing their trash into the vacant spaces, which made a big mess right in the middle of town.

Lucille was a member of Eastern Star and went through the Offices. She served as Worthy Matron for that organization for one year.