

Biography of Luella Whetzell
by Kristy Whetzell
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Chus / uninteresting history and more
detail was needed.
Peace
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My mother, Luella Whetzel, was born Mary Luella Walker September 22, 1936 in Ogden Utah. Her parents were Ed Walker and Minnie Forman and they lived in Lyman. She was their first child. Later Ed and Minnie had three more children one more girl and two boys. When Mom was small her father worked seasonally in the tie camps. They always maintained a permanent residence in Lyman, which is still standing on Main St., and my Grandfather still lives there. When Mom was younger Lyman was a very small town, even smaller than it is now. "Ten minutes walk from one end of town to the other." It was also very much a small town in the sense that it was made up of one group (Mormons) and most of them had been there a long time. When Mom was ten years old her Mother died of cancer after being sick several years prior to that. Her father remarried shortly after that and eventually she ended up with one sister, two brothers, two step-brothers, and four half brothers and sisters, a family of ten children in all. Mom had many household chores including washing, dishes etc. Also as the oldest of all those children she was left to babysit.

As an adolescent Mom attended dances, went to school, dated and stole chickens which was a local custom. When she was seventeen she married Robert Whetzell, my father, who was from Green River. She met him at a dance in Lyman. They were married April 10, 1954 and they lived in Green River where Dad worked for the Union Pacific Railroad. Green River, at that time was very much a railroad town. About two and a half years later they moved to Rock Springs which didn't disappoint my mother who found Green River "clique-ish and clanish". Rock Springs was "dirty" but the people were friendlier and less snobish. There were also more things to do and places to go in Rock Springs. Mom stayed at home until 1959 when she went to work at the telephone company, which was the family scandal since women just didn't work then. Since she didn't have any children though, her family considered her hopeless and didn't give her too much hassle.

By the time Mom moved to Rock Springs many of the mines had shut down or were on three day work weeks. This was still, however, very much a company town. The whistles blew at shift changes,

the schedules were announced over the radio and there were union stores. When the mines shut down some miners went to FMC and others left. Many of the men who were left here worked for the railroad.

In 1962 Mom and Dad moved to California, then Nevada, then Nebraska. When Mom finally got the chance to come back here she was thrilled. She came to Green River in 1975 at the beginning of the boom. Dad insisted on living there and when they divorced Mom moved immediately back to Rock Springs. She remembers the boom as being a mess with people living "wherever they could park, literally". People lived in cars, tents, trailers, motels, wherever they could find. A lot of these people were "here today, gone tomorrow". They didn't care about the town or the people in it, just the money. Good things came out of the boom though, more activities, more shopping, better services. One of the bad things that came out of it was that people don't know each other as well ~~any more~~ as they did before and don't care about each other the way they used to. The people that are left here now are fairly stable, she says, so things have improved.

in that respect.

As far as the illicit activities in Rock Springs mom says it has been going on ever since she first lived here. Everyone knew that the brothels were above the bars on Front street and that there was gambling in some of them. No one really thought anything of it, it was no scandal, it was common knowledge. When the big 60 minutes thing came out Mom said it was stupid since it had been going on for years and no one minded before.

The country has changed, Mom says. It's changed in the attitudes of people ("People don't care about each other") in the outlook of the people toward the country (no patriotism) and our leaders ("war mongers" "... trying to stab us in the back"). She does not have a solution except a change of leadership "before he gets us in a war". Her advice is to "do what you can".

Mom lives in Rock Springs now and she says she wouldn't move anywhere except "maybe Jackson". She likes it here very much, the people and the place. She is proud to be a Wyoming native (a rare breed) and whenever she ~~is~~ goes

anywhere, no matter how scenic or wonderful, she is always glad to come home because, for her, this is really home.