

Emery County Archives Oral History Project –2008
Ina Lee Johansen Magnuson

EMERY COUNTY ARCHIVES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INA LEE MAGNUSON

August 2008

Interviewed by Trinadee Grimes

Trinadee: I'm talking to Ina Lee; I'm Trinadee Grimes. We'll start out with your name, date of birth and where you were born.

Ina Lee: Ina Lee Johansen Magnuson, and I was born April 27, 1929 in Castle Dale, Utah.

T: Were you born at home?

I: Yes. I think all of my sisters were born at home except Sonny and Kirk. Sonny Nielson and Kirk Johansen, my brother, were born in the hospital.

T: The next question is who are your siblings and your parents?

I: Okay, my parents are Byron C., just the initial "C" Johansen, and my mother is Udella—Agnes Udella Peterson. They were born here in Castle Dale, I think, but they spent all of their lives here, and they were married—I think they were married in Price, but I don't know when. I could look that up.

There were seven girls and a boy in the family. My oldest sister passed away last March—Patricia Johansen Brinkerhoff. Then I was the second, Ina Lee Johansen Magnuson, and the third one was Zora Johansen Fielder, and the fourth is Jean Johansen Curtis, and the fifth is Kay Powell—she lives in Elko, and Sonny Nielsen and Kirk Johansen. So that's a big family. How was that growing up in a big family—especially all girls except for the baby. The older daughters—we were gone by the time Kirk and Sonny were in school. We lived in the big house by the high school. There was plenty of room in there for all of us, and we had to catch the bus. It would come up the street and turn around and come back, we'd have to run out and catch it because we went to . . . well when went to Ferron to high school—all seven of us, of course the little ones weren't quite in school when we older ones were.

T: I bet you older ones were a lot of help to your mom with the little ones.

I: Yes, we had to be. My older sister was the one who did the housework. She was in charge of it more, or less. I helped my dad. I was the one that was outside doing chores—of the older ones. Of course it changed through the years.

T: I bet that was nice for your dad, you know not having a son that age, having a daughter that was helpful to him.

I: Um-hum. And we generally, not all the time, but a lot of time we had someone—a hired hand living with us to help. Several of them were our cousins from down to Elmo—Merwin Johansen, Roy Johansen, and Glen Johansen, and well, Ruel ? Also lived with us at one time or another and helped. And then we had some other cousins Gary Blackburn that lived with us and helped. And my mother cooked breakfast, dinner and supper for all of us no matter what, and then there would be these people

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come and sit down and eat. I don't know how she managed all of that, but she did.

T: Your dad ran a ranch, didn't he? I bet he always had extra people he was bringing home for dinner. And I have heard in that day, if you ran into someone, you'd say, "Come on home for dinner."

I: Yes. There weren't restaurants then. He ran cattle in Sinbad and on the mountain. The ranch was still around the house. That was before people started selling lots, so we always had a lot of cattle around and horses around. It was a good life.

T: Did you spend a lot of time with your dad on the desert?

I: Well, not so much on the desert. I did some. But when they went on the desert to gather the cattle and move them around, the men would go, and they'd take tents and stay overnight because, well you don't just run down there an back—then. So the girls didn't go. We helped around the house.

T: What kind of things did you do? What chores?

I: Well we milked cows. We always had to milk a cow. When we had calves and things, we had to carry—we had a chopper in the granary and we chop grain and carry to them. We had to feed them every day. And then as we got older, we always had show steers for the stock show, and we had to take care of them. And we had some really good horses there that had to be exercised and taken care of—well I mostly did. Zora helped some, and Sonny when she got older, she did.

We had a big barn that burned down. I don't remember when—what year. The field in back of the house and the barn was grass hay. We'd haul the hay with wagons and teams. The neighbors around would exchange work. Jeff would come over here and my dad would get together and, haul, say this field over here, and then Jeff Tuttle's was over here where this trailer court is in Valley View, and they'd get together and haul. They had a horse and what they called a derrick. It would be a big hay knife. The driver would drive the haywagon with hay up to the barn and let this big fork come down, and it would grab the hay. On the other end was a rope, a chain was what they called a derrick horse and I rode it. What you'd have to do is make it go and pull the other side, and it would lift the fork of hay up and drop it into the barn. Then you had to hurry and turn your horse around and take it back up to the barn before the derrick rope got wrapped around his legs. That's the way they hauled the hay. My mother would always cook for the hay crew, two or three days.

And then when they thrashed grain, they would haul it into stacks. They had a hay binder and would bind them into, what we called, sheaths. They were about 2 feet long and about 8 inches around, and they would throw those on the wagon and put them in a stack. Then a thrashers would come, and it was P.C. Jones that had a thrasher, and he'd go around to all the farmers around and thrash their grain. They would spend a couple of days thrashing that. The thrasher was hooked onto—it must have been some kind of belt—I don't know how it was run. Anyway they would throw the sheaths into the thrasher, and it thrash the grain out and a pile of straw and a pile of . . . and that would be a couple of days. Mother would always cook for the thrashers and that was probably a dozen.

T: Would they stay at your house too or just eat there?

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I: They usually were from around here. No, they didn't. Well, the cousins and them would. But the thrashers were from around here.

T: Oh, I see.

I: My father had a lot of horses, and they run them on the desert. When they would bring them home, there was a round corral built by the barn, and when they would bring them home one person would get on lead on one horse and take off and the rest would follow. They would lead them right into the corral and they would come in and separate what they wanted here and what they wanted there. There were always four or five that needed to be broke, and they would put them into the stable and break them to ride. The rest of them. . . we had a pasture up where the reservoir is in Joe's Valley, and we had a—we have a pasture in Upper Joe's Valley. They would run there in the summer and they would take the horses back on the desert in the fall. Some of them they would sell and break. That was also the way it was with the cattle. The cattle would go on the desert in the fall. Well, first in the spring, the cattle would be home and have the calves and that, and then they would go up on the mountain—on East Mountain and Joe's Valley and run for the summer and then they would come home in the fall. They would ween the calves and take off what they wanted to sell, and then they would take the cattle on the desert, down by Swinging Bridge and down that way. They would run down there in the winter, and it was cold.

T: Yeah, you say the desert and think it might be warm, but anybody that's been on our desert—it's not much warmer than the mountains.

I: No, it isn't. Then in the spring they would come back home and have calves, and the whole cycle again.

T: You said earlier that you had show cows. Did you do something different with them?

I: Yes. We would . . . I can remember the first stock show they had. They had one in Huntington. I must have only been about 12, and then the next year they had it down here in Castle Dale, and they finally went to Ferron. For two or three years we would take some to Salt Lake. They had a stock show up there. I remember one year we took 13 or 14 cows. Of course there was Pat—Patricia, and myself and Zora. Jean didn't want to. Anyway, we took that many and showed them at the stock show in Salt Lake, and that was really an interesting experience. Lillis Jewkes from Orangeville was our leader, and there were members from all over the county. There was like Hugh Petersen, from over to Emery was in the club, and LeGrande Wilberg and Beverly Christensen and Ruth Christensen from Castle Dale, and myself and my sisters, and Nicole Truman from over to Huntington, and a Rex Wilson—Dick Wilson. We were the club and Lillis was our leader. We'd load the calves in the truck. My dad had a cattle truck then, and take them up and we'd all go up. What was wonderful then was that they took all the 4-H and FFA kids to Hotel Utah. They had a wonderful banquet. Everybody dressed up in their nice dresses, and it was really a learning experience for us country kids.

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T: Ah! What a fun experience!

I: We were involved in the show calves all the time I was growing up, and I'm still involved in it.

T: So did you raise the show calves differently? Did you keep the show calves at home?

I: Oh yeah. You had to put them in the corral and fed them grain because you wanted them fat. You had to break them to lead. . . in fact I won the State Showmanship one year and my sister Pat won the Reserve Champion Steer. That was really a good year. I think we won—they had what they called the ? And we won that too.

T: All in the same year?

I: Yeah, that year. We usually won every year.

T: Did they actually have prizes for winning?

I: Yeah, they gave prizes and then they would have an auction and sell them. That's how a lot of kids made their money for school—for college. Oh and there were two Luke girls that club too. I forgot about them.

T: I've always heard about show cows, but I never thought you probably had to raise them differently.

I: Yeah. In fact Monroe had a show calf sale—Brent Monroe—I don't know which you call him.

T: Yeah, we call him Monroe.

I: Last Saturday in Ogden and sold show calves to people all over the west. So it has worked into a business.

T: Besides ranching, do you remember much about the town when you were younger?

I: Yeah. We didn't have oil roads. There was a road down the middle and a ditch on each side because everybody watered their gardens with irrigation water. We didn't have sidewalks.

T: What kind of things did you do for fun? Or did you not have time for fun?

I: Well, we lived clear up there and so we didn't get involved too much in neighborhood things downtown. We walked to school every day down to the elementary and walked back home until we were in the seventh grade. Then we went to . . . there was a high school over here where the jail used to be. There was a high school there. It was a three story building. And then I went to it for a couple of years, and then is the year they decided to consolidate the high schools, and our parents in town didn't want to go to Ferron or Huntington to school. So we stayed home from school for two months and until

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they finally gave in. . . well, the high school burned down is what happened.

T: Oh! The one up here in Castle Dale?

I: Do you have the Castle Dale Calendars?

T: Yeah, Dottie has them in the Archives.

I: There's pictures of the high school. Anyway we had to go to Ferron to the school. What I was starting to say is then we had to catch the bus. It was kind of fun—kind of hard, but it was fun.

T: Did you have paved roads by then?

I: Yeah, but we had an old bus. We called it the cracker box. It was orange and Ronny Petersen drove it. It was just an old fashioned bus, but it was fun.

T: Do you have any stories about your school or classes or anything?

I: The high school was called Central High School, and it was a three story building, and in the top of the building there was an auditorium. We always had gym classes in the top, and I can remember Miss McConkie was our teacher, and we would have gym classes up there. We would play Pritchler's ??? Ball. It was real fun. There were kind of showers—kind of—up there. The boys would have gym up there too, except they built an auditorium onto the elementary school, and the boys would come down from the high school down to the elementary for their gym classes. Also they would have school lunch, and prepare it at the elementary. We would run down from the high school down to the elementary to have our lunch and then run back. I guess that was our exercise. That was when they started the school lunch program. I remember people didn't have much money. But I remember my dad furnished the beef, so us girls didn't have to pay school lunch. But that was fun to run down there. That only lasted a couple of years until them made us move to Ferron.

Let me tell you about the high school. There were three sets of stairs that went up and there would be probably five or six class rooms on each floor. I remember some of the teachers wanted Mr. Nielson—E.A. Nielsen. Mr. Judy was the principal—a different Judy than the. . . and Coach Black, and I think he's still alive. And they had a good chemistry teacher. During the war it was hard to get good teachers, and so they got this man from New York to come and teach chemistry. Oh, I thought I'd never forget his name, but it was an Italian name or something. He had an accent. One day, I think we must have been in a drought because the sun come up red, and it was dusty, and people said, "Oh Mr. (what's his name?) anyway people thought we was being bombed or something, but it was just the dust. So we had a drought then. It was in the 40's because the war was on. But we had some really good people that were teachers.

We've had several class reunions and a lot of time the teachers could come, so we kept in touch with them. We had basketball teams and they would . . . of course later on they went to Ferron and the teachers were different. We'd go play North Emery, South Emery. We'd have some exciting games in the auditorium down where the swimming pool is now. It was fun. It was good days although the war

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went on.

There used to be a CCC camp.

T: I've heard about the one in Ferron, but not the one in Castle Dale.

I: There was one in Ferron and Castle Dale. There are pictures in the calendars. When I was just little, before I went to school, we lived downtown. There is a picture of us (shows picture) that is me and my dad and the four girls.

T: Is that your mom and dad and the four girls? That is a neat picture.

I: Um-hum. Anyway we lived by the CCC camp. Then when my grandfather died, we inherited the house up there. I guess we inherited it because we had six girls. Anyway we walked to school until the school bus came.

T: Do you have any memories of how the Depression effected your family?

I: It didn't effect us—well as kids: It probably had an effect on our parents. But we seemed to have all meat, milk and potatoes that we needed. But I know there were people in town that were poor—poor. I don't remember much about it.

I was county recorder, and in the recorder's office there are some old, old books that showed that people got mortgages. They would mortgage a harness for 25 cents, or a horse and team for \$100. Now days \$100 wouldn't take you to the grocery store, but in those days whatever they could mortgage they did. They were in debt. Let's see, we had a bank—it was Carbon Emery Bank. Most people went over to Price to the bank. Then Carbon Emery turned into Zion Bank.

T: This was probably before your time, but do you remember the Wilberg Resort?

I: Yeah, I remember it, but I was too young. My mother and dad wouldn't let me go, but I remember them having a dance out there. I remember people talking about it, but I wasn't quite old enough. My grandfather Petersen. . .the courthouse was downtown where Doctor Turman's house used to be. The tall brick house, they just painted it yellow—that was the doctor's office—Dr. Turman and Dr. Nixon—He delivered me--Grace Johansen's dad. But next to the doctor's office there was a two story courthouse. My Grandfather Petersen was the janitor there. They had coal stoves in the offices and he would have to carry coal up to the stoves to keep them going. I can remember the building. He lived a block that way. Across the street from him they had the fairgrounds. They had a big wooden grandstand. They had a racetrack and a couple of buildings that they used for exhibitions and things like that. Until things changed and they changed to a grandstand down. . . and redid it all. They had what they called the ECVR—Emery County Vocational Roundup every fall. It is kind of like the fair that they had then. The interesting thing—they had boxing matches, horses pulling things. They used to have dances on the tennis court. The tennis court used to be where the pavilion is behind the courthouse downtown. They'd have dances, and the Lion's Club--it was so much fun every Friday night, and the Jewkes Brothers would play. You've probably heard about the Jewkes Brothers, they would play. This

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was during the war. People were just needing something to do, and it was so much fun to go to that dance every Friday night. Dances were different then.

T: You didn't necessarily go with a date, you could just dance with everybody?

I: Uh-huh. That was good.

T: Oh that subject, my next question is who were your best friends and who did you date?

I: Elaine Wilberg, she was Elaine Cox, she was my best friend, and Beverly Christensen, oh, there were a lot of them.

T: Everybody was good friends? Okay, let me ask a different one. How did you meet your husband?

I: We grew up together. We went to school together—I always knew him, and when he got into high school he worked for my dad. . . (tape skipped). His horse fell with him and then he passed away. Well he was in a coma for a year. That picture is of me and him.

T: That is really a pretty picture. It keeps catching my eye, every time I look over.

I: He was blond and curly headed.

T: And look at your; you are gorgeous!

I: Well, not really, but thank you.

T: Okay, I'm going to go back to county life. Do you remember when electricity came? It seems like some places got it later than others.

I: Yeah. No, it seems like we always had electricity, but it was probably just a light hanging down. That was the way it was in our home over there, but in the basement, there was an old generator kind of thing that they had for lights before we moved up there. Some people had outhouses, but we had a bathroom. I can remember we got the first washer, and I can remember when we got the first refrigerator. That was in the Depression because I can remember my dad was building a fence when this salesman came and wanted to sell him a refrigerator. My daddy said, "No. We can't afford it." In the basement of the house there was a cool room, and they would bury meat in that in ice and sawdust. And then he bought a refrigerator. We had coal stoves and heated your water. In one side they had what they called a reservoir, and you put water in that and then when you was cooking, it would heat water, and then you'd have water to wash your dishes.

T: Wow. I've never heard about that.

Now you were talking about your dad, and I heard that he had a ranch on the San Rafael and he hired people from town to work for him? Is that right?

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I: Well he had a cabin down by the Swinging Bridge. They had a cowboy camp about a half a mile from the Swinging Bridge that the cowboys would stay in, and then he got a lease from the Taylor Grazing Act, whatever that is, and he got permission to build a cabin down there, so we went up about a mile from the Swinging Bridge and built a cabin—well its the cabin that I painted over there.

T: Oh! That's neat!

I: And they used that for the camp when they were gathering cattle and that. But he didn't really have a ranch down there. Well, my grandfather homesteaded some pasture—this is my Grandpa Petersen—in what they call Fuller's Bottom. It's up the canyon from this cabin. They kept trying to make dams hold there, but they never did.

T: What did you do. I guess you got married and had kids and then did you say you worked?

I: When Monroe got hurt and then he died, I worked as a secretary at the school for about four years. I worked in the bank about a year, and then they asked me to run for the Recorder on the Democratic ticket and I did, and I won. I was the County Recorder for 16 years. It was a wonderful job, and it was really a lucky thing for me—a blessing that I was able to get that job.

My husband and I had bought—out where the power plant is—we bought that ranch and we'd had it for about a year. Well Clyde was a junior, and we kept it going, and then Utah Power and Light came in and decided to buy it, and so I made some trades with them, and traded and got ? Breaks down here and ? Ranch up there and got enough money to pay off our indebtedness. The kids were able to ? on and I still had some left for Monroe when he got bigger, because he wasn't very big, and our ranch. Everybody seems to be doing good.

T: So you worked full time downtown and plus you had a ranch and pretty much did that on your own?

I: Well, Brent finally got big enough that he helped, and Clyde. Clyde was working in the coal mine too.

T: Wow. That's a busy day. Plus you're a mom on top of that! That is a busy life!

I: Well, my oldest daughter was going to the Y, and she graduated from BYU. Then she went back to New York and worked for the church and worked for a year, and then she went down to Boston and worked, and that's where she met her husband. They live in Virginia. He worked for NASA, and now he works for OSHA or whatever they call it. They have one daughter going to BYU and another one is going to go next year. And Clyde and Darlene stayed here and they started ranching part of it, and Jill and Corey got part—got theirs over there, and Brent got the one that's left over there.

T: Okay, tell me your kids names and where they fit in.

I: Enid Smith, Clyde Magnuson, Jill Hansen, Brent—they call him Brent or Monroe.

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T: And what was your husband's name?

I: Momroe Magnuson. It was in 1970 that a horse fell with him, and in fact he had Brent on the horse with him, and he must have thrown Brent off so he didn't get hurt, but Monroe got a skull fracture and concussion and that, and he was in a coma for 11 months before he was able to die.

T: Did they have him in the Price Hospital?

I: Midvale. His mother lived in Salt Lake. Well, they took him up there when it happened, and he was in the hospital where she could watch him. There was no way I could do it and keep things going.

T: Have you always been in the county?

I: When Momroe and I first got married, we built a basement here. That is what they did in those days. We were buying that and paying on it, and then we built the top on two years before he got hurt. So I've always been here. It's getting wore out too.

T: Oh, I think it's a nice house. It's huge! A big nice house!

We were talking earlier about your remembering the roads before they were paved. Do you remember the difference it made in everyday life when they paved them?

I: There was a road here. It was only one road. It was narrow road, and the next block over there was a road, but you couldn't travel it. And like I said there were ditches on either side. I remember what they call the Ghost Road—they didn't use it, well they used it for wagons and things. And then Bott Lane, you went through the creek. And that wasn't that long ago either.

T: Yeah. When did they build that bridge?

I: I don't think it has been 10 years.

The road used to go through town and turn by Headquarters, and then it would go across the creek and across the steel bridge and out of town. Before they changed it, we always went that way. We would bring our cows in from out where our ranch was, and bring them in and bring them to the spot corral.

T: Did you have more land around here?

I: Yeah it was a big ranch out where the power plant is.

T: Oh, I was thinking around your house.

I: No, we've owned this lot. . we bought it from my uncle—Eugene Johansen's dad.

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T: It's a pretty goodsized lot out there.

I: Yeah. One of these days they'll probably make us move our corrals.

T: Yeah. Changes.

What do you think is the best part of living in Emery County?

I: The people, and doing what you wanted to do. There aren't very many people who can spend their life doing what they want to do. And my family always wanted to ranch and they've been able to do it. And the church—her in the church you're involved and it's a good life. People help each other and love each other. There isn't that much crime. It's just a good clean place.

T: Yeah. I feel like that too. You know your neighbors, and if you want to go across the street and borrow a cup of sugar, it's "Oh, sure." It still is that way, but the world isn't that way.

I: Like you don't have to lock your doors, and I don't take the keys out of the car because if I do, I have to come back into the house and get them every time. It's a wonderful place to live, and we are really blessed to be here. I think we're going to find out one day how blessed we are.

T: And going back to Depression times—most people when I ask them about Depression times they'll say, "We were pretty self sufficient, and it didn't hit us like it did in cities." My grandma and grandpa lived in cities and they knew when the Depression hit, they felt it hard. So to talk to people in this area, they said they pretty much did it on our own anyway.

I: I think we were out here so far that we were used to being self sufficient. Everybody had a milk cow and you had your milk. The cow had a calf and you had your meat, and you had your garden and everybody canned and bottled. You made your clothes and you quilted. I remember my mother bottling meat and putting it in the pressure cooking, and you know that was the best meat. When I think of it, I can still taste that; it was so tender because it was all pressured. I can remember killing pigs—you'd have to scald them—I didn't like that. . .but anyway, we'd have our pork and bacon, and we were self sufficient.

T: I remember my grandmother saying that they would raise as much as they could and then take it to their neighbors and help out those who didn't have enough. And one year it flooded and they didn't have a garden and they had to rely on their neighbors that they had helped out before.

I: My mother in law—my husband's mother is 98 and just going strong. She is the one who taught me how to grow a garden and bottle everything.

T: I think that we're done, but I do have one more thing to ask you. As I'm looking around at all of your awesome pictures. Do you have any that we could scan into our computer and put on file with your history?

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I: Yeah.

T: I'm just going to stop this.