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## Lucille Fulton Peters interview

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## CWU LIVING HISTORY PROJECT

### LUCILLE FULTON PETERS

I was born Lucille Fulton, Jan.06,1908 in the little town of Twisp, WA 7 miles south of Winthrop, the town that has been restored to the turn of the century mode, After graduating from Ellensburg Normal in 1929, I taught for 10 years in the Winthrop school district, taking time out for one year when I got married.

During the war years, my husband, Homer Peters, and I, together with half the population of Winthrop, migrated to the defense areas where jobs were plentiful. Most went to Seattle but we chose Camas, Wa. where my parents lived. I immediately started working in the Kaiser Child Care Centers in Vancouver where I became Asst. City Supervisor. I stopped to give birth to our only child we named Jacquelyn. When she was three years old, I left her in the care of my parents on their little farm, and resumed my teaching career, this time at the kindergarten level.

I taught kindergarten in Camas until I retired in 1972 after 40 years spent in my profession. Homer and I started wintering in Sedona, Ariz. where my brother lived. We immediately fell in love with the breathtaking scenery, the awe-inspiring red rock monoliths that encompassed the area. It was inevitable that we would move there on a permanent basis, though we always came back to the beautiful Pacific Northwest during the summer months. My husband golfed but I was drawn to the art community and took up oil painting as my hobby. The walls of my little cottage where I now live to be near my daughter since my husband's death, are covered with pictures I have painted. They are always fond reminders of my pleasant retirement life in Sedona.

Homer and I travel-tailored many times throughout Canada and our own United States. I went on several over-seas trips with friends, the last was to China in 1982. I enjoy writing about interesting events in my life and have put together a 145-page manuscript for my family. I have also written a children's story for my 8 great-grandchildren. I continue to remember other episodes and have written enough articles to put together another small booklet.

I am now 87 and, though I broke my hip last summer, I am back among my friends, driving my car, playing bridge, attending book clubs and doing lots of reading. I still find life interesting.

Lucille Peters

[page break]

Central Washington University was known as Ellensburg Normal when I went there during the years 1926 through 1928. It was a two-year educational facility designed specifically to train teachers, However, the year 1 received my teaching certificate, the State Board of Education designated it a three-year college. I began to play catch up by attending three summer sessions. The year I obtained my three year certificate, it was changed to a four year, fully accredited, college, so off went again for three more summer sessions to obtain my Bachelor degree. During my Lifetime Central has grown from a small town teachers training facility to a large, complex institution with a greatly expanded campus, an impressive faculty and a large enrollment.

I spent my first year of residency in the old Kamola Hall. During that year, Sue Lombard was being built, so I spent my second year in the brand new lovely dormitory. Our rooms were spacious, light and airy. I can still remember the smell of fresh paint and the glow of the highly polished oak floors.

On the opening day of class assignment, a group of us were gathered in one of the classrooms where Professor Morgan, then a very old man, was calling out our names from index card. When he came to my name, Lucille Fulton, he paused to scan the students until he spotted me. After carefully scrutinizing my

face, his chin quivered into a small grin and he asked if I were related to Jacquelyn and Nellie Fulton. I nodded affirmatively and told him they were my aunts. At his suggestion I remained after the session to visit with him. He told me that both the girls had attended his class when the college was very young. He spoke fondly of his aunts. "They were two great girls", he reported. "your aunt Nell was a Fine athlete". I came away feeling that this was a nice introduction to my aunts' parents, Frank and Arabella Fulton, who were early day cattle ranchers in the Kittitas Valley. I have been told that my grandfather was one of the promoters of the school when it was in its dream stage. Their son, my father, lived in the valley until he was seventeen years old. I had relatives scattered throughout the area. So there was never any doubt in my mind that Ellensburg would be my place of learning. But, unless I could find work, there was no way I could pursue any form of higher education. I made a personal application in the spring of '29 and in August I received word that I would be hired as one of the kitchen crew.

I don't believe that anyone could earn an education easier than my co-workers and I did. The first year we worked one hour after each meal cleaning tables and washing dishes in the huge dishwasher. The next year we were promoted to a pre-meal status, one hour before each meal, setting tip tables and distributing food. If we wanted a little cash, we signed an "extra" sheet and we were never denied work. We might polish silverware, shine glasses, clean a cupboard, or do some other easy task. Money never seemed to be a problem. Our wants were few, our college life seemed to be self-sustaining. I can't even remember about my wearing apparel. I came to school with the wardrobe I would need for each year and can't recall that clothes were ever a problem. Each generation has put its stamp on this seat of learning. I'm sure the present generation would find it difficult to relate to "the way it was".

All of my teachers were well qualified in their respective fields. They were strict disciplinarians who expected us to study and expected results. The rule was one hour of study for each hour of credit. In other words five classes in one day, five hours of study for

that day. Most of us abided by these standards. A few teachers stand out more vividly in my memory than others. I well remember Professor Fish, our history instructor. Up to my introduction to this able teacher, the broad field of history was marked only by divisions of war and forgotten dates- dull words bouncing off weathered pages. Professor Fish changed all that. He made these words come alive. I can see him now prancing back and forth in front of the class, his sharp, dark, rather beady eyes throwing darts at us from his friendly, animated face. He had the ability to take us with him in imagination to the battle fields where we could fairly hear the cannons roar. Very few teachers can accomplish this feat. Needless to say, his classroom was always filled to capacity.

I was in class on the Monday on day that our science teacher, Professor Beck, came bounding into the room, rather red-faced and fairly beaming. His grin spread almost from ear to ear and I don't think his features resumed normalcy during the entire session. Mr. Beck and his colleagues had been out at Vantage Ferry during the week-end on an archaeological dig and had discovered the clue that would prove a theory of his to be correct. It would also be the beginning of the Ginkgo State Park.

When I chose to write about this, I thought I knew the facts, but soon discovered that after 67 years, my memory has become hazy. What had they discovered? Was it the Ginkgo petrified wood and its relation to China? Was it the elephant bones? Did his discovery reveal a certain prehistoric climate that he was suggesting? All these are in the back of my mind.

I remember the local paper gave a glowing account of Mr. Beck's achievement so I know it was important. The records are surely in the library archives and I hope someone can research this and add it to the "Living History Project". It is an important event in the history of the college.

All of us had great respect for Mary Grupe, our psychology teacher. We had heard of her very high IQ and held her in awe because she had donated her brains for research upon her demise. She expected the very best from us and was rather severe if we didn't

measure up. But she was also just. I was reprimanded one day in front of the class because I didn't turn in a paper on time. When she heard that I had been in the infirmary, she made it a point to apologize, again in front of the class.

I kept a certain notebook for years, not because of the information it contained, but because it was always a source of amusement. Professor Smyser (or was it Smeisner?) taught a course in social studies. It should have been interesting, but (had difficulty with it) The problem was that it began at one o'clock in the afternoon, and I have a conflict with that particular time of day. My built-in time machine has designated that as my low ebb. Given a preference, I would always choose a nap. I would start the session with the best of intentions, listening carefully and taking copious notes. Soon, however, my 'time machine would take over and the notes would turn to scribbles, then to tiny little hen scratches. Just before I would succumb to a snore, I would wake with a start to resume my copious note taking. Luckily, I didn't fail the course, but I remember I had to study extensively before each test.

I think I have the distinction of holding a record at CWU- at least I know I have never been topped. Literature has always been one of my interests, so each time I went to summer school, after signing up for the necessary requirements, I would choose a literature course. In my last summer at CWU I signed up for the requirements but only one literature course would fit into my schedule, With some trepidation I signed on to a

John. Milton course. Five applicants arrived the first day, three men a nun and myself On the second day the nun and one man bowed out, and by the third day I was the only one left. I was certain that the class would be discontinued, but not so. The instructor never said a word, but continued his lectures as though the room was filled to capacity. I sat there taking notes, though feeling rather embarrassed, When the dismissal bell rang, a large group of students were waiting in the hall for the next class. They looked at me quizzically as I left the room, but gradually this unique situation became an accepted fact and we thought no more about it. This is another example of a time and an event that can never be duplicated.